
Antoni Szałowski – the Essence of His Creativity¹

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“It is the duty of Polish musicologists to know more or less as much about us as they do about the composers who live in Poland” (Palester 1989: 28). This is what Roman Palester wrote in his letter to the organisers of a symposium devoted to the works of Polish émigré composers, organised in Warsaw in 1988 by the Musicologists’ Section of the Polish Composers’ Union. The conference, an event unique in that period, was supposed to include papers dedicated to Antoni Szałowski (1907–1973);² however, in spite of earlier announcements, they were omitted from the programme. Palester described this as “something of a scandal” (1989: 28). Referring to the title of the symposium, „Music wrongly present”, he remarked that it was inaccurate in relation to the list of artists who were to be the subject of the conference,³ since some of them, such as Michał Spisak, used to visit Poland and maintained continuous contact with their native community, while their works were published and performed in Poland. Others, a minority, were re-

¹ This paper is based on the author’s book (2008).

² According to Krystyna Tarnawska-Kaczorowska the paper on Szałowski was to have been written by Adam Walaciński. She also mentions Władysław Malinowski, who was planning a presentation on the influence of the émigré community on the evolution of creative paths, on the example of the music of Palester, Panufnik, Spisak and Szałowski as examples. Cf. Tarnawska-Kaczorowska (1989: 10).

³ The conference papers discussed the music of the following composers: Roman Berger, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati, Tadeusz Z. Kassern, Michał Kondracki, Szymon Laks, Roman Maciejewski, Roman Palester, Andrzej Panufnik and Michał Spisak.

pressed, since the “wrong presence” implied a ban on the performance and publication of their works, as well as on writing about their authors. Alongside Andrzej Panufnik, Tadeusz Kassern and himself, Roman Palester also included Antoni Szałowski in this second group. He wrote:

Szałowski is the only composer [...], whose punishment befell him by way of ricochet. His views were more or less the same as mine or Panufnik’s, but he did not make them public all that often. The administrative ban hit him simply because during the 1950s the three of us were regarded as the official group of émigré composers (Palester 1989: 31).

Szałowski often emphasised the fact that the situation in which he found himself after the Second World War was different from that of Palester and Panufnik. He did not “escape” from Poland, he just remained in Paris,⁴ where he had arrived before the war, on a scholarship from the Fund of National Culture, having completed with distinction (1930) his studies with Kazimierz Sikorski at the Music Conservatory in Warsaw.⁵ In a conversation with Tadeusz Kaczyński, Szałowski admitted that one of his main reasons for going to Paris was the situation of the music community prior to the Second World War in Europe, and particularly in Poland. He remarked: “one made [music] [...] almost in secret, hardly anybody was interested, and some regarded [it] with contempt, considering composition as a totally useless activity” (Kaczyński 1973: 4). This fact also played a part in Szałowski’s deci-

⁴ According to the composer’s wife, Szałowski was not too keen on “émigré circles”. At some point he came to maintain closer contacts with French composers (including Henri Dutilleux and Henry Barraud) than with the Polish ones. These contacts resulted from his collaboration with Paris Radio. In February 1966 he joined the musicians’ section of the CGT union (Confédération Générale de Travailleurs). This was the only union which possessed such a section. For many years he would not apply for French citizenship, although this decision had a damaging effect on his work as a composer and his material situation. He only changed his mind in 1970, on the advice of his wife Teresa, who was concerned about the family’s future. He received French citizenship on 23rd October 1970. This information was obtained from Teresa Szałowska, now Gourmaud, and the documents to which she gave me access.

⁵ Szałowski grew up in a family with musical traditions. His grandfather Antoni (1836–1902) had completed his studies at the Warsaw Music Institute (1866) and received a diploma of music teacher in organ-playing and choir-conducting signed by Stanisław Moniuszko. He obtained the post of organist at the chapel in Wilanów. The composer’s father, Bonifacy (1867–1923), a violinist, was a pupil of Władysław Górski and Stanisław Barcewicz. He was a member of the orchestra at the Warsaw opera, the concert master of Warsaw Symphony Orchestra, and during the season 1896–97 also of an orchestra in St Petersburg. In 1914 he became a professor at the Music Conservatory in Warsaw. He is also the author of *Six Caprices* for solo violin.

sion a few years later, in 1936, when he declined Kazimierz Sikorski's offer of a professorship at the Warsaw Conservatory made on condition that he would return to Poland. He preferred to have a lower standard of living in Paris than a better one in Warsaw, but to know that at least a small number of people took an interest in what he was doing (Ibidem).

Living in Paris, at that time the most important musical centre in the world, enabled Szałowski to come into contact with outstanding artists and musical authorities (Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Ravel, Roussel), and to participate in the changes taking place in music. During the interwar period the main trend in musical avant-garde, regarded as a ferment of a bright future, was the French-Russian "anti-Romanticism" represented by the works of Stravinsky and young French composers. The need to be close to the Parisian centre was frequently stressed by Karol Szymanowski, who claimed that a true and penetrating understanding of the music being created there was one of the necessary conditions for the future development of Polish music (Szymanowski 1925: 94–6). As has been pointed out by Zofia Helman, Szymanowski's influence on the views of young Polish musicians was decisive in establishing two basic directions in Polish music of the 1930s: one was the folkloristic-national trend, originating from the influence of Stravinsky and Bartók, the other – the neoclassical trend, premised on reinterpreting the heritage of European culture while making use of modern musical devices (Helman 1999: 32). In choosing the neoclassical movement, young artists were to imitate French music, and, adopting from it its particular ideal of classicism, to turn Polish music into something of universal value. Not without significance for Szałowski's views was also the attitude of his teacher, Kazimierz Sikorski, who took a lively interest in the issues of new music. He understood the idea of progress in art, and supported his pupils as they moved away from academic formulae and tried to find their way towards the contemporary (Ibidem: 74).

The expectations voiced by Szymanowski with regard to young artists included their continued education under the guidance of outstanding teachers. During the years 1931–1936 Szałowski studied with Nadia Boulanger, the famous "Princesse de la Musique", who supervised the development of many composers of diverse nationalities and ethnic origins as they acquired

the French style of the “noble craft” (Modrakowska 1958: 13). Boulanger, a proponent of pure art, who at that time was faithful to the ideals of Neoclassicism, shared the views of the young “Parisian” Stravinsky about the need to nurture an artistic attitude which would combine musical composition with the classical theory of beauty (Morgan 1994: 3). She inculcated in her charges the “anti-romantic ideals, hostility towards pathos, sentimentality, expression of feelings through music and describing literary programmes” (Helman 1985: 55). Music, understood as an autonomous art, was to be associated with a striving for the classical balance between the emotional and structural factors, and to guide towards a return to *sérénité* as the desired expressive category. In seeking the classical balance, Boulanger acknowledged the need for recognising emotion, intuition and ideas but only if they were combined with knowledge, craftsmanship and discipline (Ibidem: 16).

Szałowski, who, during his early attempts at composition made while he was still in Warsaw, was fascinated by the music of Szymanowski and the sound qualities of the works of Debussy and Ravel, now, as a pupil of Boulanger, turned towards neoclassicism for the fulfilment of his creative ideals. His studies with Boulanger not only helped him perfect his compositional *métier*, but were also decisive in his adopting the neoclassicist aesthetics and in shaping his own stylistic idiom. Initially concentrating on chamber compositions, he underwent something of a metamorphosis, from the stylistically incohesive *Sonata* for piano⁶ to *String Quartet No. 2* (1934), which clearly belongs to the neoclassicist trend. This composition, together with other works, was presented in 1935 at the École Normale de Musique during the composer’s concert, entirely devoted to the music of Szałowski. Judging *String Quartet No. 2*, alongside *Suite* for violin and piano (1931), to be the most interesting works performed at the concert, the French critic Maurice Imbert remarked that the young, ambitious artist had chosen the right direction in the quest for his creative path (Imbert 1935). Szałowski’s successive chamber works continued the stylistic interpretation of the pre-war school of Nadia Boulanger which he adopted, and which manifested itself in motoric rhythm, simplification of melody and harmony, textural transparency, glittering in-

⁶ The first composition written under the guidance of Nadia Boulanger.

strumentation, structural clarity and dimensional symmetry (Helman 1985: 76).

The carefully restrained comments about Boulanger's pupil gave way to enthusiastic praise in 1937, after the Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Grzegorz Fitelberg performed Szalowski's *Overture* – his last composition written in Boulanger's class – at the Théâtre de Champs Élysées during the Festival of Polish Music. This work, which was awarded the Gold Medal at the World Exhibition in Paris, was judged to be the most important event of the 1936–37 season, alongside Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste*, by Florent Schmitt, an outstanding music critic and at that time a highly regarded composer (Schmitt 1937).

Overture reflected the principles of neoclassical style in their purest form. Fascination with movement and colour, accompanied by sensitivity to the importance of melody and timbre, gave birth to a clear, logical construction, carefully thought through in the smallest detail. The composer emphasised his link with tradition by adopting the classical form of the sonata form and preserving the traditional division of the work into exposition, development and recapitulation. In the exposition Szalowski presented two themes, contrasted in their melodic, rhythmic and expressive character. The first theme, light and brilliant, entrusted to the clarinets, is a type of periodic structure made up of two segments which function as an antecedent and a consequent (see Figure 3.1). The second theme, the main part of which appears in the first violins, is remarkable for its smooth, diatonic-sounding contour, graceful motion and delicacy of expression (see Figure 3.2).

In *Overture*, the dominant manner of constructing the form is static (Helman 1985: 171), with individual sections juxtaposed on the principle of contrast and similarity. Emphasis on structural features is achieved using the orchestration technique (Malinowski 1958: 33). The colouristic effect of instrumentation is most fully marked in the building up of thematic ideas and in their development. The individualisation of sound is linked here to the individualisation of movement, while the dynamic influence of instrumentation is characteristic of fragments of the exposition and recapitulation as well as the coda. The project of innovation is fulfilled in *Overture* through

Figure 3.1 *Antoni Szwałowski, Overture, first theme, bars 5–13, clarinet part*

non-traditional organisation of sound material, but also through assigning a new function to the development, where events are not so much elaborated as diversified. The internal dialectic in this composition relies on the continuous build-up and release of the tension, the diversification of motion, colour, timbre and dynamics. At the same time the composer strove to unify the musical ingredients by superimposing the material of the various sections of the form or by using similar types of texture. In his quest for order and perfect proportions he created a work which captivates by the clarity of its line, grace of motion, originality of sound and lightness of its flow.

The success of Szwałowski's *Overture*, achieved through the power of his talent, meant at the same time a collective victory for the new Polish music in its attempts to establish itself on the world arena. It also meant that the interest in the young musician in his homeland grew very quickly. In 1938, during the composer's visit to Poland, a number of concerts took place during which Szwałowski's works were received with great enthusiasm.⁷ Mateusz Gliński wrote in one of his articles:

⁷ The press and specialist publications devoted most attention to *Overture*. This composition was also included in the programme of the 17th Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music which was held in Warsaw and Cracow in 1939.

Musical score for the first system of Figure 3.2. The score includes parts for Cor. (Cornets), Timp. (Kettle Drums), Vn. I (Violin I), Vn. II (Violin II), Vl. (Viola), Ve. (Violoncello), and Cb. (Contrabass). The music is in 2/4 time. The first system shows the beginning of the second theme, marked with a double bar line. The dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *sfz* (sforzando) and *p* (piano). The Timp. part includes the instruction "muta D in C, E in Es, A in As." and a dynamic marking of *p*. The Vn. I part is marked *cantabile* and *p*. The Vl. part is marked *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *p*. The Ve. part is marked *p*. The Cb. part is marked *p*.

Musical score for the second system of Figure 3.2. This system continues the parts for Cor., Vn. I, Vn. II, Vl., Ve., and Cb. The dynamics remain consistent with the first system, including *f*, *sfz*, and *p*. The Vn. I part continues with *cantabile* and *p*. The Vl. part continues with *pizz.* and *p*. The Ve. part continues with *p*. The Cb. part continues with *p*.

Figure 3.2 Antoni Szatowski, Overture, second theme, No. 10 in the score, brass instruments, kettle drums and strings

Szałowski has fully mastered that which is the greatest attraction of the French tradition: the classical moderation of form, nobility and purity of contours, as well as clarity and grace of colour. In this style the traditional *clarté* of texture becomes at the same time synonymous with the most refined artistic taste, providing a guarantee of total absence of brutal or sterile effects. These clear, expressive forms, measured with mature moderation, provide the outlet for Szałowski's individual creativity (Gliński 1938: 20).

Michał Kondracki also claimed:

Another important feature of Szałowski's music deserves particular emphasis. That is, it is purely Polish. This young composer, who has not indulged in even a shadow of a quotation of a folk melody in any of his compositions, is Polish through and through in the character of his inventiveness, in his perfectly crafted arabesques and in his unexpected stylistic and melodic phrases (Kondracki 1938: 173).

Although during his stay in Poland in 1938 Szałowski became aware of a perceptible change in the artistic views of his native milieu, and felt that his works were being accepted, he did not decide to return to Warsaw on this occasion either. It was difficult for the then young artist, acknowledged by the Paris critics as one of the most talented musicians of his generation, to forego contact with the European milieu which was expecting him to make a brilliant career. A pupil of Nadia Boulanger, like other artists working in the capital of France, he was aware of the fact that success in Paris was a measure of success in the world. "If something 'took off' in Paris, it would then be successful throughout the world", reminisced Szałowski in his conversation with Kaczyński (1973). And indeed, after the Paris success of *Overture*, that composition was soon part of the repertoire of nearly all orchestras in the world.

The Association of Young Polish Musicians, established in Paris in 1926 on the initiative of Piotr Perkowski and Feliks Łabuński, also played a not insignificant part in nurturing talented young Polish musicians, promoting Polish music and creating an atmosphere which was favourable to it. Szałowski held various posts in it – that of treasurer, vice-president and president from 1938. With the outbreak of the Second World War, he took with him the most important part of the Association's archive and, together with his mother Felicja, Michał Spisak, Henryk Szeryng and Seweryn Różycki, moved to the south of France. He did not compose much, suffering from

health problems and considerable financial difficulties, but he was comforted by news from Nadia Boulanger, whose letters from the USA told him about such events as the performance of his *String quartet No. 3* (1936) at the International Festival of Contemporary Music in New York (1941), or the presentations of his *Symphony* (1938/39) and *Sinfonietta* (1940), the scores of which she took with her when she travelled overseas.⁸

Szałowski returned to Paris towards the end of 1945. Although it was a time of serious material hardships, the postwar years were the most fruitful period in the development and the reception of his music. A significant role in popularising his music was played by his musician friends (Grzegorz Fitelberg, Nadia Boulanger, Paweł Klecki, Andrzej Panufnik, Waław Niemczyk, Feliks Łabuński, Grażyna Bacewicz). His works were presented during concerts commemorating important events, such as the first anniversary of the victory at Monte Cassino in 1945 or the opening of La Scala, restored after the war, in Milan in 1946. Works by Antoni Szałowski were also presented at International Festivals of Contemporary Music. His *Sonatina* for oboe and piano (1945–46) was performed in Amsterdam in 1948, and the first performance of the concert version of ballet *Zaczarowana oberża* [*The Enchanted Inn*] (1947) took place in Frankfurt am Main in 1951.

During the early postwar years, Szałowski's works occasionally appeared in concert programmes in Poland, but after 1949, when Polish culture was paralysed by the process of Stalinisation, a profound silence descended on the artistic output of émigré composers. His *Symphony*, performed on 24th January 1950 by the Radio Orchestra of Katowice conducted by Grzegorz Fitelberg, was, according to the composer, his last work to be performed in his homeland before his music came under the ban of censorship.⁹ It was a ma-

⁸ *Fonds de lettres autographes "Nadia Boulanger"* (correspondance reçue provenant de particuliers), letters from Antoni Szałowski to Nadia Boulanger: N.L.A. 109 (292–319), letter from Szałowski dated 12th July 1941. (Hyères), Département de la Musique, Bibliothèque national de France, Paris.

⁹ Letter from Szałowski to Seweryn Różycki dated 5th June 1957, Zakład Rękopisów Biblioteki Narodowej w Warszawie, III 10314. In a letter to Eugenia Umińska dated 23rd April 1960, Szałowski writes that after the third "Warsaw Autumn" festival the government of the Socialist Republic of Poland issued an official letter banning performances of his music by Polish Radio, and musicians travelling to the West had Szałowski's compositions crossed out from their concert programmes, Zakład Rękopisów Biblioteki Narodowej w Warszawie, AKC 16 737/25.

for disappointment to the artist to be removed from the Polish Composers' Union in the early 1950s.¹⁰ He blamed this on Jan Maklakiewicz and Tadeusz Szeligowski who, according to him, were afraid of competition should Szałowski return to Poland (Kaczyński 1973).¹¹

By the mid-1950s Szałowski had composed a large number of orchestral, chamber and solo works. Most of them were commissioned by the French Radio, with which he had begun to collaborate immediately after the end of the war. As well as being heard in radio concerts, his works were performed on prestigious occasions at various venues, such as the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, where the international orchestra Jeunesses Musicales conducted by Franz André gave the first performance of his *Suite* for orchestra in the presence of Queen Elizabeth of Belgium (9th July 1953). Szałowski's music was also heard during the Congress of Polish Émigré Culture (10th September 1956), when Waclaw Niemczyk and the Orchestre Radio-Symphonique de Paris, conducted by Andrzej Panufnik, presented Szałowski's *Violin Concerto* (1948–1954), dedicated to the composer's father.

The composition provides an example of a virtuoso concerto with a conventional, three-movement structure. It is distinguished by the transparency of its construction plan, compact narration and clearly drawn main thematic thoughts. The element which links all the parts is the principle of constant differentiation of sound by changes in motion and instrumentation. Rhythm plays an important part in shaping the form of the concerto. The constitutive role of rhythm is particularly apparent in the development phase of the sonata allegro and in the final rondo. Its effect is especially clear in passages with motoric rhythm, where multiple repetitions of the formulae impart a dynamic value to the motion (see Figure 3.3).

In 1955 Antoni Szałowski, together with Roman Palester and Andrzej Panufnik, received the music award of the Polish Guard Company (attached to

¹⁰ Szałowski was a member of ZKP during the years 1946–1954; this information comes from Zymer (2006: 36) (the dates were established on the basis of lists of congresses of the ZKP); cf. Erhardt (1995: 14).

¹¹ Szałowski quoted to Kaczyński the year 1952 as the date of his being expelled from ZKP. The personal file in the ZKP archive contains no information about Szałowski's name being removed from the list of members.

ALLEGRO NON TROPPO $\text{♩} = 88$

VIOLINO PRINCIPALE

VIOLINI I

VIOLINI II

VIOLE

VIOLONCELLI

CONTRABASSI

Fl.

V. P.

V. I

V. II

V. c.

C. B.

Figure 3.3 Antoni Szalowski, *Concerto for violin and orchestra, 1st movement. Allegro non troppo, first theme*

the American Army in Europe) for his artistic achievement. These were the first music prizes to be awarded by the command of the Guard Company; in previous years such prizes had been given to writers, scientists, plastic artists, printing artists and creators of beautiful Polish books. The jury, under the leadership of Witold Małcużyński, included Ludwik Bronarski, Konstanty Régamey, Tymon Terlecki and Paweł Hostowiec (the pseudonym of Jerzy Stempowski). During the award ceremony, which took place on 7th Oc-

tober 1955 at the General Władysław Sikorski Historical Institute in London, Dr Tymon Terlecki, while explaining the jury's decision, referred to Antoni Szałowski in these terms:

Among Polish composers, Szałowski represents the "French" style in the best sense of the word. Avoiding pathos and rhetoric, distant from the conflicts which divide contemporary music into shrines and coteries, he strives above all for perfection and clarity of texture, expressing himself naturally and with truly Latin elegance. In spite of the moderate and muted character of his works, his music is neither dry nor shallow; Szałowski knows how to achieve, with a light touch, a soaring brilliance without recourse to superficial effects (Terlecki 1995: 3).

Terlecki ended his speech with the following:

Antoni Szałowski has not experienced communist oppression. He has lived in France, and in Paris, for the last 25 years. [...] One would not exaggerate by saying that Szałowski has been paying a heroic price for his freedom – the price of an evangelical, sometimes more than evangelical, poverty. It is a good thing that the award of the Guard Company will let this recluse know that we are not indifferent to his stance (Ibidem).

Szałowski, who did not take part in the awards ceremony, sent to the Polish Guard Company a letter which included this passage:

You have reached out a helping hand to a musician who, over a quarter of a century, has written 50 chamber and symphonic compositions, half of which have been published by great music publishers in France, England and the USA and are being performed throughout the world, yet who cannot support himself out of the royalties and has not even got the right to complain, since it is obvious that every country takes care of its own artists first of all. In a word, I can only thank you as a human being, since as an artist I have nothing to say about my music. I hope that it is good music, and I make an effort to make it so to the extent of my abilities when I write it, but what it is like beyond that should be judged by others – the listeners and the critics, and I bow to their judgment (Ibidem: 4).

The ceremony, broadcast by Radio "Free Europe" and widely reported in the émigré press, was not mentioned in Poland. The period of oblivion, which lasted a number of years, meant that even later publications, appearing after the "October thaw" of 1956, did not attach much importance to the works of émigré artists (Helman 1992: 223).

The change of direction which took place in 1956 in Poland meant that artists turned to new compositional trends and techniques. The music com-

munity in Poland, which was slowly freeing itself from the shackles of Socialist Realism and opening to the world which for so long had been presented as the source of evil and depravation, now eagerly absorbed all the “experiments” and “bourgeois excesses”. A fascination with the avant-garde meant that towards the end of the 1950s the repertoires of Polish philharmonics included such numbers of new music compositions as never before or since (Gwizdalanka 1999: 233). New compositional ideas were to be presented at the International Festival of Contemporary Music, “Warsaw Autumn”, initiated by Kazimierz Serocki and Tadeusz Baird. It took place for the first time as early as October 1956. The attention of listeners was focused on either the latest offerings, or those which had previously been unknown because of censorship during the Stalinist era or financial restrictions before the war. Alongside works by Stravinsky, Schönberg and Bartók, the rich concert programmes also included many works by composers of older and younger generations. The only ones who were omitted were, in the words of Stefan Kisielewski, the “rebellious émigrés”, a term applied to Palester, Panufnik and Kassern, and the “loyal émigrés” represented by Kondracki (Kisielewski 1957: 20–22). At one of the concerts, the Grand Orchestra of Polish Radio conducted by Stanisław Wisłocki performed Szałowski’s *Overture* twice, once in the opening and at the end as an encore. Reporting the festival, Kisielewski wrote:

Apparently the author was upset that we Bolsheviks played *Overture* without his permission. Never mind: we play it and we will go on playing it, as that work has an eternally young, enrapturing magic of freshness, elegance and brilliant temperament (Ibidem).

Szałowski’s music was heard again during the “Warsaw Autumn” in 1959. At the third festival (15th September 1959) the Warsaw Reed Trio (J. Banaszek, J. Foremski and K. Piwkowski) performed his *Trio* for wind instruments which, like *Overture*, had been composed in 1936. Positive opinions about Szałowski’s works came from critics who had been brought up on the same, neoclassical aesthetics. Opposition to them came from young musicians, passionate about avant-garde trends, for whom neoclassical compositions, which in Poland carried associations with the period of socialist real-

ism, were no longer viable. On the other hand, articles by Polish composers – Palester, Régamey and Kisielewski – referred to the need for a new synthesis in music, where the existing classicist ideals of clear form would be combined with expressiveness, with new sound qualities and the individuality of the artist (Helman 1985: 71). By not following in the footsteps of Boulezists, by not changing his compositional apparatus as did Stravinsky and, among Polish composers, Palester and Panufnik, Szałowski was becoming unfashionable. One of the critics who during the “new wave” period still tried to defend the lost cause of the neoclassicists was Stefan Jarociński. In an article published in *Ruch Muzyczny* in 1961, he wrote:

I do not understand [...] why at one or another of the turnings of our contemporary history we decided to place a seal of secrecy on the works of Antoni Szałowski; it is as if he had ceased to exist and to compose. [...] Is it the case that composers worth their salt are two a penny in this country, taking it in our stride when our musical culture loses an artist of Szałowski's calibre? (Jarociński 1961: 14–15)

Still in the same year, Szałowski's music could be heard again in his homeland. The orchestra of the National Philharmonic, conducted by Stanisław Wisłocki, performed the concert version of *The Enchanted Inn*, and a year later the full ballet was premièred at the Warsaw Opera House (7th February 1962). The music director was Bohdan Wodiczko, while the staging and choreography were entrusted to Witold Gruca, who at that time was making his debut.

The one-act ballet *The Enchanted Inn* (1943–1945),¹² where the main characters are the Tapstress, a young and lusty peasant woman, the flirtatious and elegant Prince and the god of wine, Bacchus, is remarkable for its light, concise, witty narrative, woven around the cult of wine and joy of life. Moving the action deep into the historical past (sixteenth century) and using a mythical character enabled Szałowski to maintain the emotional distance postulated for neoclassical music. Maintaining such a distance is also aided by the aura exuded by the work, one of gaiety and flirtatiousness, of jocular, grotesque, and a situation where the conflict is slight. In *The Enchanted Inn*,

¹² The libretto was written by Witold Conti, a film actor who was killed in 1944 during the bombing of Nice.

Szałowski recalls the classical models, where dances and pantomime scenes are linked by the threads of one plot. The treatment of the musical matter: lightness and purity of the phrases, lively rhythms, sophisticated harmony, attractive orchestral colours, grace and elegance, all allow one to discern features of the French style in the music of the ballet. The sound layer corresponds perfectly to the subject of the work, itself close to the French tradition, and fulfils an unobtrusively descriptive, at times clearly illustrative function in relation to the plot of the ballet (Turska 1997: 380).

In the Warsaw staging Gruca rewrote the libretto and moved the action to the twentieth century; he gave it the character of a grotesque, a persiflage of standard American films (Waldorff 1962). Although *The Enchanted Inn* in its new stage version met with the approval of the critics and the audiences,¹³ Szałowski never accepted the wilful change of the libretto. In the new stage version the distant, unreal world gave way to current events, comicality turned into irony, and the carefree play became a dangerous game. The change of content and time of the action broke the principle of distance from reality, assumed by the composer. The composer could not recognise his ballet in the Warsaw staging; it was to have been characterised by simplicity of content, and its expression was to have been not sarcastic, but cheerful and smiling instead.

In spite of his resistance to new trends in music, his perfect mastery of the compositional *métier* ensured the continued presence of Szałowski's works on the stages of the world. At a time of general fascination with the compositions of Pierre Boulez, Luigi Nono or Karlheinz Stockhausen he could not expect the same degree of popularity as previously, but he still received commissions. At the beginning of the 1960s, among his major works performed in Poland were: *Aria and Toccata* for chamber orchestra (1962) and *Concerto* for reed trio and orchestra (1962), which combined the features of solo concerto and concerto grosso. Thus, at last, relatively new works by Szałowski were being performed.

¹³ Jerzy Waldorff described *The Enchanted Inn* as the true sensation of the evening. Cf. (Waldorff 1962).

z groma comez szlachetnym otumianiem, bezaka napetnia siq uinam]

Pisa mamo 128 (animato)

The image shows a page of a musical score for orchestra and voice. The score is written in a single system with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are: CC (Cello), Cmno (Violin), Cclasta (Violoncello), Vln I (Violin I), Vln II (Violin II), Vlna (Viola), V Cella (Violoncello), and C. Bani (Contra Bass). The vocal line is labeled 'Cantata'. The score is divided into two main sections. The first section is marked 'S. Li' and the second section is marked 'Pisa mamo'. The tempo for the 'Pisa mamo' section is indicated as '128 (animato)'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'ppp' and 'pp'. The vocal line has lyrics written below it. The score is written in a single system with multiple staves.

81 Allegro $\text{♩} = 420$

Tr.

Cim.

Cel.

Arpa

Vni I

Vni II

Va

V.C.

C.B.

81

Figure 3.4 Antoni Szalowski, *The Enchanted Inn*, before No. 81 in the score, filling the barrel with wine

The composer himself never courted recognition or fame. Persevering and confident in the pursuit of his art, he was also a very private person, keeping his distance from the artistic milieu, indifferent to artistic fashions and novelties. By remaining faithful to his ideals, he was forced to work in very difficult material circumstances, isolated from the native community and not fully integrated with the artistic world of Paris. In 1958 he wrote in one of his letters to his friend, Seweryn Różycki:

These days I do not meet with my former friends at all, there are things that separate me from them; we do not have any common platform of understanding and each of us is in a sense alone.¹⁴

It was at that difficult moment in his life that Antoni Szałowski met his future wife, Teresa Bończa-Uzdowska, a young woman from Warsaw, daughter of General Bończa-Uzdowski.¹⁵ She had graduated from the Department of History and Archeology of Warsaw University as a student of Professor Aleksander Gieysztor; and she came to Paris on a scholarship. This was the beginning of a new stage in the composer's life and creative activity. At last he had his own family, where he found support and which gave a deeper meaning to his earthly existence. He cared for his son Piotr with great devotion,¹⁶ drawing motivation for creative work from his family life. In 1960 Antoni Szałowski received the first prize of French RTV for the radio ballet *La Femme têtue* composed in 1958. It was the first time when the Paris broadcaster awarded a prize to an artist who was not a French citizen.¹⁷

At the same time Szałowski completed a commission for compositions inspired by medieval literature and paintings – *Cantata* for female voices and orchestra to poems from the *Carmina Burana* collection, and symphonic picture *Résurrection de Lazare* based on Giotto's fresco, in which he tried, in

¹⁴ Letter from Szałowski to S. Różycki (26th July 1958), Zakład Rękopisów Biblioteki Narodowej w Warszawie, III 10314.

¹⁵ General Władysław Bończa-Uzdowski commanded the 28th Infantry Division (from 1927), which he led in the defensive war in 1939. During the years 1939–1945 he was a prisoner-of-war in Germany, cf. Petrozolin-Skowrońska (1995: 519).

¹⁶ Piotr Szałowski now lives in Canada. He has worked as a press photographer, journalist, graphic artist, artistic director and creative artist in advertising, as a specialist in educational programmes and as a producer of video games. In 2007 he published his first novel *Le froid modifie la trajectoire des poissons*.

¹⁷ Letter from Szałowski to Eugenia Umińska, op. cit.

a sense, “to go beyond the formal and aesthetic norms of Neoclassicism,”¹⁸ highlighting the expressive possibilities of harmony and orchestration. Evidence of the composer’s desire to break out of the classical patterns is also provided by Szałowski’s late works, such as *Music for Strings* (1969–1970), a composition integrated in terms of material, which provides an example of reinterpretation of the traditional model of the sonata form, without the previously expected symmetry of sections and clear segmentation of the form (see Figures 3.5 and 3.6).

While during the 1970s works of émigré composers such as Palester or Panufnik remained absent from Polish musical life, Szałowski’s works appeared sporadically in concert programmes (mainly his prewar chamber compositions and *Overture*).¹⁹ The Polish première of Szałowski’s last composition, *Six Sketches* for chamber orchestra (1971–1972), took place during the sixteenth Music Spring in Poznań (4th April 1976). On that occasion the orchestra of Wrocław Philharmonic was conducted by Marek Pijarowski. Zygmunt Mycielski and Władysław Malinowski, who reviewed that concert, both agreed that the music of Szałowski, one of the greatest composers of his generation, went far beyond neoclassical formulae and deserved greater attention. Malinowski wrote in *Ruch Muzyczny*:

One would like to believe that this performance will break the conspiracy of silence against the composer, and return him to Polish culture (Malinowski 1976: 13; cf. Droba 1976: 8, Dziadek 2003: 109–111).

Although in recent years we do occasionally find the name of Antoni Szałowski in concert programmes, he appears primarily as the author of a few chamber pieces and *Overture*. These compositions were recalled during the seventh Polish Radio “The Parisians” Music Festival, which took place in Warsaw on 23th–30th May 2004.²⁰ It was also performed on a number of occasions in 2007 to commemorate the centenary of the composer’s birthday. This residual presence of Szałowski’s works in Polish concert life demon-

¹⁸ Information obtained from the composer’s wife.

¹⁹ In 1972 Szałowski received the lifetime achievement music prize of the Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation in New York.

²⁰ The National Symphony Orchestra of the Polish Radio conducted by Jan Krenz. The concert took place in the Witold Lutosławski Concert Studio of the Polish Radio.

Allegro $\text{♩} = 116$ (annunzio)

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a string ensemble. The first system includes staves for VIOLONS I, VIOLONS II div., ALTOS div., VIOLONCELLES div., and CONTREBASSES. The second system includes staves for V. I., V. II., A., V. C., and C. B. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' with a quarter note equal to 116 beats per minute. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system shows the beginning of section 'a' with dynamic markings like 'pizz' and 'p'. The second system shows the continuation of the music for the same instruments.

Figure 3.5 *Antoni Szalowski, Music for strings, first movement. Allegro, first theme, bars 1–6, beginning of section “a”*

strates that this composer still awaits his place in the musicological literature and the history of Polish twentieth-century music. That is the point from which the significance of his legacy “ought to radiate, regardless of all the convolutions of his artistic and life paths” (Mycielski 1973: 3).

Allegro $\text{♩} = 116$ (minimom)

The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes Violins I and II, Altos, Violoncello, and Contrabasses. The second system includes Violin I, Violin II, Alto, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' with a quarter note equal to 116 beats per minute. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system shows the beginning of section 'b' with various dynamics like 'pizz', 'p', and 'pp'.

Figure 3.6 Antoni Szalowski, *Music for strings, first movement. Allegro, first theme, bars 16–18, beginning of section “b”*

In summing up this brief sketch of the work of Antoni Szalowski, which converged with the “actual Neoclassism”²¹ of the school of Nadia Boulanger,²²

²¹ Zofia Helman employs this term to describe one of the branches of neoclassicism in Polish music, alongside the “archaising trend” and “romanticising neoclassicism”. Cf. Helman 1985: 76.

²² The concept of the “school of Nadia Boulanger”, in use in many Polish and foreign musicological publications, refers to Boulanger’s didactic activities and the works of the composers who studied under her. Cf. (Jasińska 1998: 129).

one should emphasise the remarkable stylistic cohesion of his compositions. Although his final works, distinguished by deepened emotionality, greater stress on the expressive quality of harmonics or orchestration and a freer approach to form, indicate an attempt to break out of the substantial neo-classical norm, they do not, in the end, lead to an essential change of musical language and, instead, add what might be termed an incidental shading. Neoclassicism's typical postulate of the objectivity of art was achieved by Szałowski through distancing himself from programmatic character and semantic interpretations of music. The selection and organisation of musical means in his works indicates an acceptance of technical rules and subordination to the discipline of construction. His compositions, logically constructed and restrained in expression, are at the same time light and cheerful, marked with humour, calm and lyrical subtlety. All these features are part of the concept of *sérénité* as an expressive category, which results from a harmonious combination of intellect and feeling.

Szałowski's belief in the need to build the present on the foundations of the legacy of the past found its expression by adopting the models of form and genre particularly characteristic of the epochs of Classicism and Baroque, and in referring to the traditional principles of organising sound material. Turning to tradition thus allowed him to come close to major-minor tonality and modality, the use of contrapuntal and concerting techniques, and the organisation of the sound material in the forms of sonata, reprise or series. From the school of Boulanger, the composer adopted the idea of linear, but on the whole non-contrapuntal, thinking. He used imitation (e.g., *String Quartet No. 3, Overture*, fugato in the *Concerto* for reed trio and orchestra), but we do not find in his works such solutions as those employed by Spisak (fugue in the *Concerto* for 2 pianos, *String Quartet No. 1*), and Palester (double fugue in *String Quartet No. 3*). Szałowski felt closer to the classical than to the baroque model. The superimposed lines in his works define the vertical flow in his compositions, while repeatability and ordering of motives are coupled with the principle of centralisation. On the other hand, the foregrounding of the metro-rhythmic factor and assigning to it the role of a structural, form-creating element, as well as activating its expressive effect, point to the influ-

ence of Stravinsky and are most apparent in motoric constructions. Evidence of drawing on the sources from the past is provided in Szałowski's music by the use of the concertante technique. Its constructive role manifests itself in the ordering of timbrally differentiated sections which determine the shape of the micro- and macroform. The attractiveness of motion and timbre which is characteristic of his work and which links them to the French tradition results from the composer's particular fondness for, and sensitivity to, colour qualities. The special quality of colour is achieved through the clarity of text, chamber character of instrumental line-ups and differentiated selection of voices, as well as the appropriate shaping in terms of melody and motion, dynamics and articulation.

It is true that the greatness of an artist, who after all often makes use of a repertoire of forms and is linked to one or another, closer or more distant, tradition, depends on the degree to which his creative inventiveness transforms and enriches that repertoire, thus opening new paths for the development of music. In that sense, the value of the works of Antoni Szałowski, a faithful follower of a particular musical tradition, as were many other pupils of Nadia Boulanger, might be viewed as being somewhat historical. On the other hand, it should be emphasised that Szałowski, who found "his world" in Neoclassicism, did not merely move among "routine Neoclassicist formulae", but succeeded in imbuing his music with individual features. The artist mastered the art of composing to perfection, and confirmed this perfection with every work he produced. It thus seems vital that the works of Antoni Szałowski should not remain forgotten, that such compositions as *Overture*, *Sinfonietta*, *Violin Concerto*, *The Enchanted Inn* or *Music for Strings* should once again find their artistic expression in new performances, while their composer, the indefatigable "messenger of faith in joy as a means of musical expression" (Droba 1976: 8), should come to be appreciated as an artist whose works have enriched the landscape of Polish contemporary music.

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