

OPERA W KRAKOWIE OPERA LIRICA DI CRACOVIA

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OPER IN KRAKAU



OPERA OF CRACOW OPERA W KRAKOWIE



The façade of Juliusz Słowacki Theatre (cover)
The stairs of Juliusz Słowacki Theatre

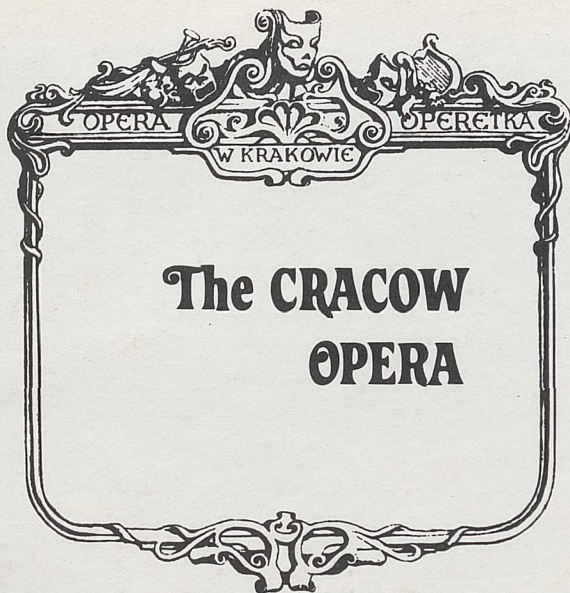
OPERA AND OPERETTE OF CRACOW

Address: ul. Senacka 6,
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Director and Artistic Supervisor:
EWA MICHNIK

Office, telephone:
Kraków 22-08-79, 22-62-10

Opera performances:
JULIUSZ SŁOWACKI THEATRE
Pl. Św. Ducha 2. Kr.



The first traces of attempts to put up operas in the former capital of Poland, the ancient city of Kraków, can be found already around the middle of the 17th century. The subsequent period of wars and invasions from the neighbouring countries — in accordance with the proverb "inter arma silent musae" — brought about a discontinuance in the production of operas, so that the next opera premièrès in Kraków took place almost a century later.

The first operas were performances put up in the palaces of magnates and they were based primarily on Italian repertoire, but soon — around 1780 — opera in Kraków became a public entertainment in which, beside foreign troupes (mainly Italian, Czech and German), there were also Polish artists.

In the 19th century the Kraków Opera (which, like every artistic institution in the

world, went through its ups and downs, triumphs and discomfitures, and moreover through the cataclysms of wars and insurrections) already had a Polish repertoire with our famous national opera *Halka* by S. Moniuszko in the foreground (1866).

After the erection of the presentable Municipal Theatre in Kraków (1893) for an audience of ca. 900, in spite of the fact that the theatre was meant primarily for drama, the Opera acquired a suitable setting by true European standards (it is worth mentioning here that the style and architecture of the Municipal Theatre of Kraków were based on the design of the Grand Opera of Paris).

The Kraków Opera had among its performers such world-famous singers as Ada Sari, Jan Kiepusza and Adam Didur. During the war 1939—1945 the activity of the Opera at the Municipal Theatre — at present called the Juliusz Słowacki Theatre — was prohibited by the authorities in occupation. However soon after the Second World War operas were staged in Kraków again: a historic event was the premièrè of *Hrabina* (Countess), a patriotic opera by S. Moniuszko, which was conducted by the excellent conductor dr Zygmunt Latoszewski and performed by famous singers, such as Ewa Bandrowska-Turska and Wiktor Bregy.

During the last thirty years the activity of the Kraków Opera has encountered difficulties of all sorts and kinds: there have been housing, material and economic problems. In spite of that, however, the Opera boasts artistic events of high standard. After the war the theatre was led by directors

who were also conductors of international repute, such as Walerian Bierdiajew, Jerzy Katlewicz, Kazimierz Kord, Robert Satanowski and Krzysztof Missona. For a few years now the director and the artistic supervisor of the theatre, which produces both operas and operettas, has been Ewa Michnik. It was from the Kraków Opera that singers of the calibre of Teresa Żylis-Gara or Wiesław Ochman once set out to win laurels in the world. Many premières at the Kraków Opera, such as *Don Quichotte* by Massenet, *Faust* by Gounod, *Pique Dame* by Tchaikovsky, *The Miraculous Mandarin* by Bartók, on account of the creative originality of production and the high artistic and musical standard, received favourable reviews — also in numerous foreign magazines.

The artistic achievements of the Kraków Opera are not a matter of accident: the city of Kraków creates a strong basis and support for all kinds of cultural activity. Kraków is the site of the oldest university in Poland — the Jagellonian University, at which musicological studies (including a specialisation in opera) are maintained at a high standard, and the Musical Academy, whose Rector is the world-famous composer Krzysztof Penderecki, and which provides suitable education for future singers, conductors, instrumentalists and composers. In Kraków there are drama and art colleges which educate future producers, stage managers, scene-painters, etc., who can become active also in the field of opera. In recent years the activity of the Kraków Opera has demonstrated considerable diversity. Beside the traditional repertoire of operas

by Mozart, Verdi, Bizet, Puccini or by our native composers Moniuszko or Szymanowski, there has been a vivid development in the sphere of operetta (where beside the Viennese classics also the modern musical scores success) and in the sphere of ballet which has included works by both European (Tchaikovsky, Bartók, Delibes, Schönberg) and Polish (Różycki and Szymanowski) composers.

The cycle of Baroque chamber operas (by Handel, Purcell, Scarlatti, Pergolesi), supervised and conducted by Ewa Michnik and usually performed in beautiful antique halls, has attracted special attention of the public.

Moreover, for the youngest audience a children's opera has been created and popular fairy-tales are converted into attractive musical shows. The youngest audience, which enthusiastically applauds *Red Riding Hood*, *Snow White* or *Cinderella*, is the future circle of admirers of "true" opera. This young public is thus being educated by the Kraków Opera, which is concerned about its new audience and the development of art.

Jerzy Parzyński

Translated Jerzy Krzyszczeń



Ewa Michnik — Artistic Director

REPERTOIRE — SEASON 1986—1987

<i>title</i>	<i>composer</i>	<i>musical supervision</i>
OPERA		
HALKA	Stanisław Moniuszko	Roman Mackiewicz
LA TRAVIATA	Giuseppe Verdi	Ewa Michnik
DIDO AND AENEAS	Henry Purcell	Ewa Michnik
XERXES	Georg F. Händel	Ewa Michnik
LES PÊCHEURS DES PERLES	Georges Bizet	Ewa Michnik
LA BOHÊME	Giacomo Puccini	Ewa Michnik
TETIDE IN SCIRO	Domenico Scarlatti	Ewa Michnik
KING ROGER	Karol Szymanowski	Ewa Michnik
LA SERVA PADRONA	Giovanni B. Pergolesi	Rafał Jacek Delekt
RIGOLETTO	Giuseppe Verdi	Ewa Michnik
IL MATRIMONIO SEGRETO	Domenico Cimarosa	Ewa Michnik
TOSCA	Giacomo Puccini	Ewa Michnik
ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE	Ch. Willibald Gluck	Ewa Michnik
DER BETTELSTUDENT	Karl Millöcker	Ewa Michnik
BALLET		
COPPELIA	Léo Delibes	Raissa Kuzniecowa-Szajewska (choreography)
SNOW WHITE	Bogdan Pawłowski	Roman Mackiewicz
ANNA KARENINA	Rodion Szchedrin	Rafał Jacek Delekt
OPERETTA		
DER ZIGEUNERBARON	Johann Strauss	Marian Lida
THE BLUE CASTLE (musical)	Roman Czuby	Zbigniew Toffel
DER ZAREWITSCH	Franz Lehar	Marian Lida
MY FAIR LADY (musical)	Frederic Loewe	Marian Lida
DIE LUSTIGE WITWE	Franz Lehar	Zbigniew Toffel
CHILDREN'S MUSICAL THEATRE		
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD	Eugeniusz Szwarc	Marian Lida
CINDERELLA	Maria Billizanka (libretto)	Marian Lida
A HEART OF ICE	Marian Lida	Marian Lida



Rigoletto - Andrzej Biegun



House-keeper - Małgorzata Darecka

Deidamia - Barbara Adamik

Tetyda - Teresa Wessely,

Antiope - Jadwiga Galant

Ulysses - Zygmunt Jankowski

Licomedes - Zbigniew Szczuchura



La Traviata — Krystyna Tyburowska (Violetta)

SOME PRESS COMMENTS

DIDO AND AENEAS

So there is more appreciation for Ewa Michnik's baton. This talented lady introduces a lot of confusion to my world of aesthetic concepts and opinions. (...) I observed her manual technique: delicately fluent but also precisely defining the rhythmical and dynamic elements; the movement of her hands was very beautiful and performed in the shortest and most appropriate way to the very end (...). In sum, the performance was ambitious, valuable and it gained a warm reception.

Jerzy Waldorff, „Polityka” 50/1980

The première of *Dido and Aeneas* was an event because of its exceptionally high musical standard (...). This was brought about by the unusual music by Purcell played beautifully, at an adequate tempo, with a delightful refinement of phrasing and naturalness of breath.

Ludwik Erhardt, „Ruch Muzyczny” 26/1980

The production is coherent, without tedious passages, distinguishing itself by its rare culture of performance. The orchestra (...) played in a stylishly beautiful way, perfectly reacting to the precise (and beautiful!) gestures of the conductor.

Anna Woźniakowska, „Dziennik Polski”
18/1981

LES PECHEURS DES PERLES

The music of the performance was very well prepared. Ewa Michnik perfectly controls the musical part of the performance — the coordination of the orchestra with the soloists and the choirs; she maintains a precise rhythm and a lively tempo and excellently increases tension in the effective choral culminations which are performed with great imaginativeness, sublimity and dynamism. The orchestra surpasses its usual performance (...).

Leszek Polony, „Ruch Muzyczny” 8/1981

The auditorium of the Juliusz Słowacki Theatre was filled to capacity, a thunderous applause (...), an unending ovation after the performance — this is how the audience received another première of the Kraków Opera (...). First of all, the orchestra — playing subtly and with elegance, thus making a perfect background for the choir (so important in this opera) and the soloists. I mention the choir first because it simply roused my admiration with the perfection of its ring (...). I liked Leila most of all (...), Jadwiga Romańska, as always, delighted one with the beauty and faultless technique of her voice. As Leila, both as an actor and as a vocalist, she was beautifully lyrical.

Anna Woźniakowska, „Dziennik Polski”
48/1981

Ewa Michnik once again presented her outstanding conducting abilities, this time in

a romantic repertoire. She excellently controlled all the performers with a precise coordination of the orchestra with the choir and the soloists. The final scenes were imaginative, sublime and dynamic. Each act was a logical musical whole crowned with a fine culmination. It was one of the best musically prepared productions of the Kraków Opera. (The part of Leila) performed by Jadwiga Romańska can be numbered among the greatest vocal creations of this outstanding soloist. The silken quality of her voice, the beautifully modulated piano, the sublime nuances of tone-colouring, the admirably subtle coloratura — all this contributed to the unusual value of this creation. Leszek Polony, „Gazeta Krakowska” 50/1981

LA BOHEME

The première of *La Bohème* (...) was another success of this rejuvenated theatre and a real event in Kraków (...) *La Bohème* in both of its première casts (...) — was a production which would not be considered a disgrace for theatres of the European standard. It was sung in (very good) Italian, infallibly conducted by Ewa Michnik, who entirely controlled the orchestra and the soloists (...). In sum, the staging of *La Bohème* was a great success of the Kraków Opera (...). One thing is certain: Ewa Michnik is managing a first-class theatre: young, ambitious and genuine!

„Życie Literackie” 3/1982

I must admit that for the first time I heard the Opera orchestra sounding so well, so watchfully reacting to all the actions of the conductor (...).

Anna Woźniakowska, „Gazeta Krakowska” 35/1982

The opera production prepared under the musical supervision of Ewa Michnik, who is

also the conductor, is in perfect trim. The soloists sing with an exemplary discipline, the choirs ring with a full and colourful sound and they impress one with their fidelity to the musical text (...). The part of Mimi, performed by Jadwiga Romańska, stimulates and moves the audience.

Jerzy Parzyński, „Echo Krakowa” 68/1982

KRÓL ROGER (King Roger)

However the real triumph of Ewa Michnik and the highlight of the season was *Król Roger* (King Roger), an opera by Karol Szymanowski, put up in the Bernardine church. Owing to the exceptionally good acoustics, one listened to the work with bated breath. The choirs and the orchestra, competently conducted by Ewa Michnik, sounded excellent.

„Życie Literackie” 22/1982

The orchestral setting was prepared in a most precise and careful way. Ewa Michnik once more proved her excellent conducting qualifications, a profound understanding of music and an exquisite control over the orchestra.

Leszek Polony, „Ruch Muzyczny” 8/1982

ZEMIRE ET AZOR

Ewa Michnik, working with an orchestra and performers on the stage, reminds one of an answer given by von Karajan (...) that he would be able to conduct with a broken arm in a sling (...). Mrs Michnik, as far as I was able to espy, imposed discipline with her eyes and, I should say, with a vibrating tranquility, suggesting the rhythm and dynamics of the performance in such a way, that everyone was immediately close to her intentions. As a result the music acquired delicacy, nicety and roundness of its phrases

like the folding of robes on carved Baroque figures, and precision reflecting careful preparation.

(From the article „A pan gada, gada, gada...” by Jerzy Waldorff in *Polityka* 1983, no 17, p. 10. A review of the premiere of *Zémire et Azor* by A. Grétry and a report from the 200th Anniversary of the Kraków Opera.)

Both the musical supervision of the production and conducting were done by Ewa Michnik. She gave the performance an appropriate tempo and character, from the overture to the grand finale. I must mention the highly precise and stylish performance of the orchestra. It is very important in this type of music. Similar qualities were demonstrated by the majority of the performers of the solo parts (...).

Anna Woźniakowska, „*Dziennik Polski*”
69/1983

(...) The orchestra has a considerable amount of artistic independence and does not serve merely as an accompaniment. The opera premières staged in Kraków under the leadership of Ewa Michnik have, already for a few years, enjoyed a well-earned renown of being very carefully prepared and conducted with precision and logic of rendition. Therefore I listened to the music at the premiere of *Zémire et Azor* with real satisfaction.

Jerzy Parzyński, „*Echo Krakowa*” 67/1983

ORPHEUS and EURYDICE

The guest performance was presented by the theatre that had already performed for us within the same season and shown Cimarosa's opera *IL MATRIMONIO SEGRETO*. Even then one had to express his deep respect for musical abilities of this ensemble and particularly its conductress, Ewa Michnik. The performance of Gluck's opera con-

firmed it in full. Both the orchestra and the choir fascinated the audience by their precision and musicality. The same can be said of the singers.

Erich Krautmacher, „*Rheinische Post*”,
12.03.1986

Among the virtues of the performance one finds also a kind of "beautiful simplicity" which is so characteristic of Gluck and the author of the libretto, Calzabigi. Its presence could be felt above all in the musical interpretation.

The conductress, Ewa Michnik, inspires her orchestra for clear articulation and richly graduated performance, which renders priority to stage action with no simultaneous loss of colour.

„*Fürther Zeitung*”, 13.03.1986

The excellent opera choir deserved much appreciation. It showed its best glistening with homogeneous and intonationally clear singing.

The ballet also made a very favourable aesthetic impression on the audience.

„*Ruhr Nachrichten*”, 08.03.1986

RIGOLETTO

It was the first time since the distant year 1931 that Roncole Verdi could admire a wonderful and perfectly successful opera evening dedicated to *RIGOLETTO* performed in front of the Master's house. (...)

The excellent performance of the orchestra of the Cracow Opera conducted by Ewa Michnik, as well as equally brilliant work of the singers, who sang the opera in nearly faultless Italian, provided the audience of Parma and Busseto with a spectacle which was very dear to their operatic souls.

Corrado Lamour, „*La Libertà di Piacenza*”,
31.07.1985



Dido and Aeneas — ballet scene

PRODUCTIONS AVAILABLE FOR FOREIGN TOURS AND GUEST PERFORMANCES

LA TRAVIATA by Giuseppe Verdi — (Italian version)
RIGOLETTO by Giuseppe Verdi — (Italian version)
LA BOHÉME by Giacomo Puccini — (Italian version)
LES PÊCHEURS DES PERLES by Georges Bizet — (Italian version)
TOSCA by Giacomo Puccini — (Italian version)
ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE by Christoph Willibald Gluck — (German or Italian version)
IL MATRIMONIO SEGRETO by Domenico Cimarosa — (Italian or German version)
XERXES by Georg Friedrich Haendel — (Italian version)
TETIDE IN SCIRO by Domenico Scarlatti — (Italian version)
DER ZIGEUNERBARON by Johann Straus — (German version)
DER ZAREWITSCH by Franz Lehar — (German version)
DER BETTELSTUDENT by Karl Milloecker — (German version)
ANNA KARENINA (ballet) by Rodion Szczerin
IN THE CIRCLE OF LOVE AND DEATH — a ballet to the music by Cracow composers
SNOW WHITE (a musical for children) by Bogdan Pawłowski

GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL AND FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES

Primary contacts and talks regarding invitations for the Cracow Opera to participate in foreign festivals and to organize guest performances and tours can be made directly between our office and the Organizer. Final agreements and contracts, however, are to be approved by the Polish Arts Agency PAGART — Warsaw, Plac Zwycięstwa 9. PHONE: 26 36 38 TLX: 816737 paapl

In general we tend to provide all elements of stage set, property etc. If need be we are also prepared to carry technical equipment (sound, lighting etc.), supplementary to local stage facilities or necessary for open-air presentations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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The foyer in Juliusz Słowacki Theatre
A curtain painted by Henryk Siemiradzki
1843—1902 (cover)

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