

Academy of Art in Szczecin
Faculty of Musical Education

Abstract of the PhD thesis

**Sacred music composed in the 20th and 21st centuries versus
capabilities of a modern choir of men and boys on the basis of
selected choral compositions**

Jacek Sykulski

Thesis supervisor:

habilitated PhD Sylwia Fabiańczyk-Makuch

The subject matter of this thesis is the concert staged in the church of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of Consolation in Poznań on 30.03.2019 by the Poznań Boys' Choir, directed by Jacek Sykulski. The concert was part of the 48th International Festival of Contemporary Music "Poznań Music Spring".

The task posed by the author was to confront selected sacral music compositions of the 20th and 21st centuries with the capabilities of a modern choir of men and boys. In the view of the author, musical compositions test the skills and capabilities of the choir singers in view of a number of criteria, including among others: their technical aspect, audio, emotional and expressive context. All these criteria are applied in the evaluation of the degree to which the boys' choir has successfully performed extremely difficult modern compositions.

The thesis, furthermore, attempts to evaluate aspects related to performance of respective pieces of music during the concert with the specific and unique vocal range of the choir of boys and men.

The thesis has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter stresses the importance of the sound of a boy's voice and its role in the performance of sacral music over the centuries. The author considers voice mutation a crucial issue in this respect. The chapter, furthermore, discusses the ethical issues pertaining to the voice phenomena related to puberty in choir boys.

The second chapter presents basic competencies of a conductor of a choir of boys and men, necessary, in view of the author, for the work with the specific type of singers.

The last, third chapter of the thesis is a thorough analysis of 11 sacral compositions by renowned modern composers of choral music mainly. All the musical pieces discussed in the thesis have been intended for choirs of boys and men or have been mainly sung by such choirs. The third chapter begins with the introduction of the Poznan Boys' Choir in the context of its history and in reference to its present performances.

The thesis ends with a brief summary of the issues presented in all the chapters.

A recording made during the concert and music scores of the performed compositions are enclosed to the thesis.

Programme of the concert:

1. T. Szeligowski – *Pieśń o Wniebowzięciu*
2. A Koszewski – *Magnificat*
3. P. Łukaszewski – *Ego sum pastor bonus*
4. J. Sykulski – *Hodie Christus natus est*
5. J. Stalmierski – *Spiritus flat, ubi vult*
6. H.M.Górecki – *Amen*
7. J. Tavener – *As One who has slept*
8. R. Mauersberger – *Das Vaterunser*
9. A.Pärt – *Magnificat*
10. A.Pärt – *Bogoróditse Djévo*
11. U.Prauliņš – *Credo (Missa Rigensis)*