SZYMANOWSKI

Masques
Op. 34

Mazurkas
COMPLETE
Op. 50
Op. 62

Études
Op. 4
Op. 33

THE 1970s
LOS ANGELES
RECORDINGS

CAROL ROSENBERGER, PIANO

DELOS

DE 1635

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KAROL SZYMANOWSKI

(1882-1937)

CAROL ROSENBERGER, piano

MASQUES, Op. 34 (21:45)
Scheherazade • Tantris the Buffoon • The Serenade of Don Juan
ÉTUDES, Op. 4 (14:38)
ÉTUDES, Op. 33 (13:53)
CD 1 (50:23)

MAZURKAS, Op. 62 (5:18)
MAZURKAS, Op. 50 (52:22)
CD 2 (57:40)

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI

(1882-1937)

Carol Rosenberger, piano

CD 1 (50:41)

MASQUES, Op. 34 (21:52)

1. **Scheherazade** (9:55)
2. **Tantris the Buffoon** (5:55)
3. **The Serenade of Don Juan** (5:58)

ÉTUDES, Op. 4 (14:40)

4. **No. 1, Allegro moderato** (3:48)
5. **No. 2, Allegro molto** (1:40)
6. **No. 3, Andante – In modo d'una canzone** (5:22)
7. **No. 4, Allegro – Affetuoso e rubato** (3:48)

8. **ÉTUDES, Op. 33** (13:54)
   Presto • Andantino soave • Vivace assai • Presto delicatamente velocissimo * Andante espressivo • Vivace (Agitato e marcato, Vigoroso) **• Allegro molto** (Con brio. Burlesco) **• Lento assai mesto** (Espressivo) **• Animato** (Capriccioso e fantastico) **• Presto** (molto agitato) **. Tempestuoso • Andante soave** (rubato) **• Presto** (Energico)

CD 2 (57:42)

MAZURKAS, Op. 62 (5:18)

9. **No. 1, Allegretto grazioso** (2:28)
10. **No. 2, Moderato** (2:50)

MAZURKAS, Op. 50 (52:22)

11. **No. 1, Sostenuto. Molto rubato** (2:30)
12. **No. 2, Allegramente. Poco vivace** (2:23)
13. **No. 3, Moderato** (2:48)
14. **No. 4, Allegramente, risoluto** (2:37)
15. **No. 5, Moderato** (2:32)
16. **No. 6, Vivace. Junako** (2:03)
17. **No. 7, Poco vivace. Tempo oberka** (1:52)
18. **No. 8, Moderato** (non troppo) (3:03)
19. **No. 9, Tempo moderato** (3:03)
20. **No. 10, Allegramente. Vivace. Con brio** (2:54)
21. **No. 11, Allegretto** (1:16)
22. **No. 12, Allegro moderato** (3:20)
23. **No. 13, Moderato** (3:40)
24. **No. 14, Animato** *z elegancja I grandezza* (2:00)
25. **No. 15, Allegretto dolce**. *Naiwnie I sentymentalnie* (2:44)
26. **No. 16, Allegramente. Vigoroso** (3:29)
27. **No. 17, Moderato** (2:41)
28. **No. 18, Vivace. Agitato. Tempo oberka** (2:42)
29. **No. 19, Poco vivace. Animato e grazioso** (1:24)
30. **No. 20, Allegramente. Con brio** *Rubasznie* (3:10)

Total Playing Time 1:48:23

This re-release of all of Carol Rosenberger's Szymanowski recordings — made in Los Angeles in June 1973 and March 1976 — places the performances into a historical context that could not be clearly determined at the time of their creation. The composer was still languishing in obscurity, more than three decades after his death, and Cold War cultural exchanges did not include the few recordings of his music that had been made in Poland.

Research by Szymanowski scholars in subsequent years has shown that Rosenberger's performances for Delos of the Études, Op. 33, the Twenty Mazurkas, Op. 50, and the two late Mazurkas, Op. 62, were the first to be issued in the United States and Western Europe since the advent of long-playing records after World War II.

Artur Rubinstein brought some attention to the Twenty Mazurkas when he performed four of them in his 1961 live recording at Carnegie Hall for RCA. The discography compiled by Szymanowski authority Kornel Michalowski several decades ago shows a recording of the complete Op. 50 on the Polish label Muza by Barbara Hesse-Bukowska — also in 1961. That recording received no circulation in the West and is long out of print.

Rosenberger's recording of the complete Op. 50 was made in 1976 and released the next year on a vinyl LP that is no longer available. When Delos in 1986 issued a CD compilation of Rosenberger's Szymanowski sessions, space considerations dictated that only seven of the Op. 50 selections – Nos. 1-3, 7, 11, 15 and 18 — could be included.

The still-little-known Études, Op. 33, were first recorded at 78 RPM by the Polish pianist Jakob Gimpel in 1939-40, and at 33 RPM by another Pole, Andrzej Dutkiewicz, in 1961. The Mazurkas, Op. 62, were premiered on record by Edwin Kowalik in 1970. These recordings too were for Polish labels, not heard in the West and are long out of print — and not available on CD.

Given this history, Rosenberger's status as a pioneer in the rediscovery of Szymanowski in the modern era — particularly in the West — is indisputable. The composer's solo piano literature has achieved greater penetration in recent decades, through recordings and live performances by distinguished players such as Marc-André Hamelin, Martin Jones, Janina Fialkowska, Cedric Thiberghien, Martin Roscoe, Piotr Anderszewski, Mikhail Rudy, and Sinae Lee. With hindsight, Rosenberger's recordings must be regarded as a key early milestone in the long-overdue renaissance of Szymanowski's wonderfully original music.

— Mark Abel, American composer

I first discovered the piano music of Karol Szymanowski while browsing in a music store some months before my 1970–71 concert tour season. I was just planning the tour program, and had decided on a Scriabin sonata and a Fauré

Barcarolle, in addition to a substantial offering of late Beethoven, but had not yet thought of an ideal companion to the Scriabin and Fauré. There in the stacks was a tall, thin volume — pages still uncut, text all in Polish — of the **Études, Op. 33**. Peeking into the uncut pages, I was excited by what appeared to be unusually interesting piano writing, somewhat reminiscent of Scriabin.

The twelve miniature Études — some only a page in length and each linked to its successor without pause — form a glowing mosaic of colors and textures. Dedicated to Alfred Cortot, these studies touch briefly and in concentrated form on a great variety of piano techniques, as do the Twenty-Four Preludes written by Szymanowski's more celebrated countryman Chopin. There is much delicacy and subtlety in this music, too — whether in the spacious pieces with their luscious harmonies or in some of the livelier études' twinkling passages.

Audience and press interest in the Études, as I took them on tour in the United States and Europe, reflected my own, and I began looking for more of Szymanowski's music. Although much of it was out of print at the time, the publisher kindly sent me photocopies of music written in the same stylistic period as the Études, Op. 33 (1916): the Sonatas Nos. 2 and 3, the Metopes and the **Masques, Op. 34**, also from 1916. One look at the first of the three Masques, **"Scheherazade,"** convinced me that this exotic work was my next Szymanowski project.

As many of his compositions reveal, Szymanowski was passionately interested in Arabic-Persian culture. The composer Sorabji wrote that Szymanowski achieves "an astonishing kinship of spirit (that] succeeds in giving us in musical terms what we instinctively know and recognize as the essence of Persian Art." In "Scheherazade" Szymanowski weaves a sensuous, mysterious, truly spellbinding tonal tapestry, using such musical suggestions of the Near East as a hypnotic ostinato and figuration built around the smallest tonal intervals. In this atmospheric depiction of *The Thousand and One Nights* heroine, as in all three of the Masques, Szymanowski's canvas reaches beyond the piano; it is orchestral in its scope. He evidently intended to orchestrate the entire set of Masques, but never got around to it.

"Tantris the Buffoon" (Tantris the Jester) was inspired by a travesty of the Tristan and Isolde story. Tantris is Tristan in clown's disguise; and the musical figuration in this tragicomic Masque captures the dichotomy between the clown's surface antics and the heavy-heartedness that lies beneath. **"The Serenade of Don Juan"** creates, in large-scale declamatory style, the musical image of the assertive guitarist/serenader. With its passionate melody and its insistent, thickly scored Spanish rhythmic patterns, this intense work builds to a brilliant, nearly orchestral climax.

When I played the Masques in New York City the following season, a surprise backstage visitor was Alan Barrody-Szymanowski, nephew of the composer, who brought me two more treasures:

copies of both then-out-of-print **Mazurkas, Op. 62**, Szymanowki's last works, written in 1933–34. These delicate, imaginative, improvisatory pieces captivated me immediately. They combine the loveliest of Szymanowski's Impressionistic writing, such as the slow Études from Op. 33 and "Scheherazade", with the essence of his nationalistic period.

When Poland became an independent state at the end of World War I, Szymanowski's patriotism drew him into a period of intense devotion to the cause of Polish identity, through the development of a new Polish music. He worked hard to expand the educational and artistic horizons of young Polish composers, and acted on his conviction that the new Polish music should be revitalized by its roots — Polish folk song and dance. Much of his music from the 1920s incorporated these folk elements: the **Mazurkas, Op. 50**, for example, were strongly influenced by the folklore of the Tatra Mountains, where Szymanowski spent a great deal of time. These Mazurkas, twenty in number, are more stringent and severe than the Op. 62 Mazurkas, but often haunting — especially the slow, improvisatory ones. Artur Rubinstein, a friend of Szymanowski's and his champion in early years, used to play four of the Op. 50 Mazurkas on recital programs.

I also wanted this presentation of Szymanowki's piano music to contain the early **Études, Op. 4** (1902). No. 3 of this set, the touchingly melancholic Étude in B-flat Minor, was first introduced internationally by Paderewski, and has long been familiar to devotees of piano music as a single offering in the encore-piece category. It is Szymanowski's only piano piece to achieve some measure of popularity, at least until the 20th century. The four Études, late Romantic in style, were written while the young Szymanowski was still under Wagner's spell. They are subtle in inflection, harmonically rich, and dominated by Szymanowski's ardent lyricism — qualities that remain constant in his music through all of its stylistic changes.

Alan Barrody-Szymanowski, who had become a dear friend by the time I recorded this music, was excited about the project, and offered to write detailed liner notes. In addition to being a passionate devotee of his uncle's music, Alan was a fine musicologist and scholar. We are happy to make available his extensive notes (please see page 8) for the first time since their appearance on the original LP jackets.

— Carol Rosenberger

"Rosenberger's breadth of scope became fully evident in the second half of the program, where she responded ardently to the luxuriant textures of Szymanowski's Études. . . . Her playing was alive to every fleeting sense impression yet was intellectually commanding."

—*The Daily Telegraph*, London, 1970

"Ravishing, elegant pianism" wrote *The New York Times* of American pianist Carol Rosenberger, whose four-decade solo career has

yielded over 30 recordings on the Delos label. Many are enduring favorites worldwide, and have brought her such commendations as a Grammy Award nomination, *Gramophone*'s Critic's Choice Award, *Stereo Review*'s Best Classical Compact Disc and *Billboard*'s All-Time Great Recording.

Since her first concert tours, which elicited such praise in New York, Boston, London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin and other capitals, Carol's distinguished recital programs and guest appearances with orchestras carried her to most major European and American cities. She has been the subject of articles in many of the nation's leading newspapers and magazines, and in 1976 was chosen to represent America's women concert artists by the President's National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year. In *Stereo Review*'s 1977 survey of 24 outstanding young concert pianists worldwide, she was the only American woman to be included.

As an artist-teacher, Carol has been on the faculties of the University of Southern California and California State University, Northridge. Across the United States, she has held performance workshops for young musicians, especially focused on "Preparation for Performance," an area into which she has special insight through an agonizing experience of her own.

At age 21, poised to begin her concert career, Carol was stricken with polio. It took ten years of retraining and rebuilding before she was able to begin playing again, and another five years before she had the physical stamina that would allow her concert career to begin officially. Her dramatic story proved to be an inspiration to many.

As the *Milwaukee Sentinel*'s Jay Joslyn put it: "Polio destroyed every tool a pianist must have except heart and mind. With legendary dedication, Ms. Rosenberger overcame her musical death sentence. The insight and understanding she gained through her ordeal is apparent in the high quality of her musicianship."

Carol's book about her remarkable story, *To Play Again*, an April 2018 release from She Writes Press, is described this way by Jim Svejda of KUSC radio: "In addition to being one of the finest pianists of her generation, Carol Rosenberger is also one of the most eloquent.… Hers is an important and inspiring story and she tells it superbly."

In addition to her many artist appearances on Delos, Carol has produced and co-produced some of the most celebrated titles in the Delos catalog, including the Music for Young People series. In 2007, Carol's close friends and co-producing partners, Delos founder Amelia Haygood and Delos Director of Recording John Eargle, died within six weeks of each other. In the midst of great shock and loss, Carol recognized that she was needed in a new role — the directorship of the Delos label. To this day she continues as Delos General Director. For more information, please visit www.carolrosenberger.com

Original program notes by Alan Barrody-Szymanowski

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI (1882-1937) composed a number of works for the piano which rank among the triumphs of the impressionist school.

Foremost among these are the virtuosic **Études, Op. 33**, and the **Masques, Op. 34**. Their remarkable sonorities and gossamer textures extend still further beyond the new pianistic horizons revealed by Ravel. Yet Szymanowski did not permit his inventiveness to totally dominate his music at the expense of what he was trying to say. His Études and Masques are models of concentration within the contexts he had chosen.

As early works preceding the abovementioned compositions, the **Four Études, Op. 4**, have their own undeniable fascination. Composed by Szymanowski in the years 1900-1902, before he was twenty, they display an emotional intensity which places them stylistically beside the First Preludes. Dedicated to Tala Neuhaus, they relate to Chopin's Étude No. 3 in E Major, Op. 10, in that each of the four is structured almost like Songs Without Words, rather than defining technical problems. Already Szymanowski was composing with a poetic coloring all his own, in an introspective manner creating mood through shifting shadows, incomplete images and unusual harmonies.

Szymanowski's piano works have roots in the chromatic idiom of Wagner as well as in Chopin. As these études convey, Szymanowski's gifts are a unique enjoining of melancholy and patriotism with the excitement and ecstasy of youth.

No. 1, *Allegro moderato (dolce legatissimo poco rubato)* has what might be called "instinctive" style, with taste and judgment notable in a young composer.

No. 2, *Allegro molto (leggiero e veloce)* is reminiscent of Stravinsky's "Petrouchka" period, and this is of interest in view of the fact that "Petrouchka" did not appear until 1911. Szymanowski deals with multiple melodic planes: The bass line divides into two ethereal voices, focusing attention on the wide and narrow lines of melody which scamper over yet a third voice in motifs that change and crisscross.

No. 3, A*ndante-In modo d'una canzone (con dolore)* blossoms into the fullness presaged in the Preludes, Op. 1. The mood is one of nostalgia, giving way to a muted joy.

No. 4, *Allegro (ma non troppo) Affetuoso e rubato* is almost Wagnerian in sound and concept. The melodic motif is resolved into a style that points toward Szymanowski's later polyphonic writing within a romantic context.

Szymanowski's most productive years lay between 1914-1916, when he composed the Metopes, Études Op. 33, Masques, the Third Symphony and the First Violin Concerto. Dedicated to Alfred Cortot, the Études are a cycle

of twelve compositions created as a continuous composition. Each étude is written to be performed without a break. The *Attacca* designation at the conclusion of each indicates the link with the étude that follows.

The composer's uppermost idea may well have been to create a compendium of piano techniques written in meaningful steps with the added significance of veiled inner voices (developed to a very high degree in the Masques and the Third Sonata). Each number presents a definite pianistic problem to be solved, though not fully exploited within its own measures. (The first eight études hold their dimensions within thirty measures; No. 5 has thirteen and No. 11 has only nine). From this standpoint, they could almost be considered Preludes. The whole series is structured to point up certain peaks, namely Études Nos. 5, 8 and 11.

Szymanowski has been called a "composer's composer," a perfectionist who never ceased to refine and polish the brilliant facets of his music. His work is largely Polish impressionism with a blend of the exotic East. A master of orchestration, he thought always with an orchestral mind, giving his music a richness of texture and a jewel-like quality that is almost oriental in its splendor. For him, the literature, legend, folk and church music of alI nations were the composer's natural treasury of musical inspiration; to express that, he often reached for coloristic effects that challenged the piano's furthest limitations (as well as the performer's).

Each étude is embellished by what might be described as a baroque veil of ornamentation. From the opening *Presto* in 2/ 8, persuasive in its delicacy, the music at once moves the listener, then spurs him by way of the Second Étude *(Andantino soave)* and the sweeping octaves of the Third *(Vivace assai)* and the *Presto delicatamente velocissimo* in the Fourth, to the soft *Andante espressivo* of the important No. 5. This last is a tender and gracious melody, delicately ornamented, murmured over, in a kind of Brahmsian harmonization.

Étude No. 6, *Vivace (Agitato e marcato, Vigoroso)* is in 3/8. It immediateiy sets up another succession of discursive ideas. Étude No. 7 *(Allegro molto, Con brio. Burlesco)* is in 6/ 8 and assumes more character as it rolls onward toward the Eighth Étude–*(Lento assai mesto Espressivo*), an important section that begins and ends quite softly: Two melodies are superimposed; the right hand is calm, the left is troubled and feverish.

Étude No. 9 *(Animato)* is in 3/8, capricious and fantastic, and leads the listener into the even more agitated *Tempestuoso* of Étude No. 10 *(Presto)* 4-5-3/8, enriched by the contrasts of a tormented chromatic coloring which growls and storms before it folds into the piercing sadness of Étude No. 11 *(Andante soave)* in 12/ 8. Brief as this seemingly peaceful song seems, it holds a restrained passion which will not settle into calm. Étude No. 12 *(Presto, Energico)* 3/8, longest of all with its 99 measures, shatters the restraint with passion and breathlessness, engendering some surprising harmonic couplings.

As with Ravel, what critics sometimes call Szymanowski's lack of sentiment was simply his scrupulous care to avoid the obvious and unimportant. He concluded early in his career that form mattered not so much as the creative expression he poured into it. The piano (later the violin) was to him a means of natural self-expression, to be developed through composition. Because of injuries sustained in a fall when he was a small child, Szymanowski physically was not equipped for the concert career his own virtuosic playing would otherwise have presumed. In his compositions, his main preoccupations were beauty of tone, shading, and the creation of a shimmering haze of harmony which first veiled his ideas and then slowly revealed them.

Szymanowski was 33 when he set to work on his Masques late in 1915, dedicating the composition to Sascha Dubiansky, Harry Neuhaus and Artur Rubinstein. As in his Metopes, there is in this narrative music a definite program that extends beyond the pianistic experiments and problematics. He clearly leans to developing a showpiece, stating in a suave and silken manner the transitory nature of life itself.

"Scheherazade" was clearly patterned after "The Thousand and One Nights" tales. Its exoticism is unmistakable. **"Don Juan's Serenade"** similarly has Mozart's hero in focus. Lecherous, treacherous, perfidious, he is at last only an inept libertine. Szymanowski creates a visual image of the Don accompanying himself on a guitar; throughout is the rhythmic character of a Spanish dance. **"Tantris the Buffoon"** was inspired by Ernst Hardt's poem in which Tantris is actually Tristan in a clown's disguise, seeking to feast his eyes upon his beloved Isolde for the last time.

In a letter to his friend Stefan Spiess, Szymanowski discussed his newly conceived musical parodies, and his intention of evoking, in music, contrasts of the human spirit. In "Tantris," the composer aimed at a blending of jocoseness and pathos in a tragic situation. All three Masques present a juxtaposition of human weakness and the power of Fate. The three are linked dynamically into a whole: the epic, lyrical, tonal "Scheherazade," followed by the lyrical scherzo-like character of "Tantris," and then the perceptive dynamics of "Don Juan." There is a crescendo of musical values, spilling over with motor energies and moving emotionally to fullest expression.

The Masques belong more in the realm of sadness than joyfulness. Beneath their lyricism and filigree ornamentation there is a mood of contemplation so typical of all the composer's writing. Here, too, Szymanowski works in orchestral terms, at the same time reducing the music to accommodate the capabilities of the piano. In "Scheherazade," the abundance of thematic outpouring at times becomes so complex that it is a formidable challenge to the pianist, however gifted, who presents the work in performance. Szymanowski himself was aware of this and intended to rework not only "Scheherazade" but the complete Masques for piano and orchestra, but never realized his goal.

In "Tantris," the composer utilizes one musical plan, two voices. Incidental motifs help only to fill out particulars, creating a background for the total sound effects that are supported by dissonance. Lyrical motifs are portioned out, suggesting the psychological character of Tantris' buffoonery. Furthermore, all lyrical motifs are reduced to a minimum in the entire work and become accents of constantly shifting movement or descriptive mood.

This is part of Szymanowski's own impressionistic technique, in which there is no place for broad development of melody. Characteristics include ostinato motifs in tonic and dominant; staccato forming middle motifs punctuating main sounds; later, all types of tremolo, accenting, in turn, semi-running harmonies that move and interweave continually. At first appear only hints of remotely related sound, which are later revealed in several planes of sound groupings. Each theme lives as briefly as a firefly, heightening the tonal/ harmonic picture, hinting at other motifs heard earlier—a sound here and there heard fleetingly, later being resolved melodically to paint in the fuller canvas.

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Szymanowski inherited not only the Polish romanticism of Chopin, but that of all other Polish romantics. He also shared the enthusiastic patriotism that runs through the development of Polish music. In his own mazurkas, however, he broke away from the Mazurka tradition that was clearly imitative of Chopin, for Szymanowski had discovered the uniquely attractive musical folklore of the SubCarpathian mountaineers. The ancient culture of the Podhale region (the mountainous southern region of Poland that spans the Carpathian mountain range—Tatra on the Polish side, Carpathian on the Czechoslovak side—every bit as splendid as the Alps in their primitive ruggedness) has been well preserved due to its geographical isolation from the rest of Poland.

It was in 1921 that Szymanowski was first introduced to the primitivism and individuality of the music and art of this region. Fate helped to deepen this acquaintance: due to failing health, he lived for a while in Zakopane. The impression was overwhelming: from the first moment he "breathed" this music, it became, in his words, "indispensable to living."

Between 1922 and 1935 he made frequent trips to Zakopane, moving deeper and deeper into the atmosphere, culture and arts of these marvelous people. In his own words:

"These are the only people in Poland who have created a collective instrumental music based on an original rhythmical and harmonic system." All that he could see about these mountain people was truly original: music, dances, customs, clothes. sculpture, painting, dialect. His artistic sensitivity enabled him to penetrate deep into the spirit and "hidden" culture of Podhale. His love affair with the Podhalean people inspired some of the most beautiful works of his "national" period: "Harnasie" (a three-act ballet for orchestra/chorus and tenor solo), the "Stabat Mater" and the Mazurkas, Opus 50 and Opus 62.

It is with the **Mazurkas, Opus 50** that the composer reached a high point in his musical creativity. In 1924, he wrote the first sixteen; the last four were completed in 1926, and the two assigned as **Opus 62**, in 1933-34.

The mazurka, a strictly Polish national dance, originated as a vigorous peasant dance and later degenerated into the conventional ballroom mazurka. Szymanowski took the triple-time rhythm of the primordial mazur, with its fantasy and epic grandeur, and reset it, expressing this in extraordinary music so abundant with elaborate sound and blazing colors. Patterning his mazurkas on original folk idioms. Szymanowski's themes do not derive directly from the Goral's music, but are saturated by its unusual scales, rhythms and colors. The composer's strong individuality transforms them into a deeply personal expression.

In one of his articles in "Skamander" he wrote: "Frederyk Chopin is a perpetual example of what Polish music is, as well as being one of the greatest symbols of Europeanized Poland, losing nothing of its racial individuality, and poised at the highest cultural level."

Szymanowski's Mazurkas are the modern equivalent of Chopin's Mazurkas. He admitted the Podhalian folk motifs with the form and rhythms of these particular dances, sprinkling motifs into the mood or over the general character of the music, and in such a way contributed to it without overpowering their original character. In other words, he cross-bred the Mazurka, and by so doing, revived it into a modern expression of emotions and experiences which the hardy mountain folk inspired in him. The combination of melodies from the south of Poland superimposed against the over-stylized music of the lowlands, each with their own features, is one of the traits of the peculiar character of the Szymanowski Mazurka. Thus, they are a kind of all-Polish synthesis.

The composer's lifelong ambition had always been to lift Polish music from provincialism and underdevelopment, and to rank it with the highest achievement of European cultural creativity. Szymanowski stretches the romantic mazurka of Chopin forwards into the 20th century, as well as backwards into the ancient folklore material. In his Mazurkas Op. 50 we see this dual hallmark of national style. The Mazurkas bring together folklore and Chopin's pianistic form of the mazurka.

Mazurka is defined as "A family of Polish folk dances" — in triple meter and performed at various speeds (slow to rapid). Characteristic of these dances is the heavy accenting of normally weak beats. Three related dances are the Mazur,. the Kujawiak and the Oberek. The dotted rhythm

is the most common and is found in all types.

When one attempts to establish the salient differences among these three dances, contradictions, ambiguities and vague definitions are encountered. Even Polish scholars do not agree.

The MAZUR is most elusive and capricious with regard to accent placement. Frequently it falls simply on the first beat, depending on the shape of the melody. The important note of the melody, that is, the final note in a succession, or a syncopated note, or one of longer value receives the strongest pulse, regardless of its position in the triple-metered measure.

The OBEREK has a more rhythmic and vigorous vitality, characterized by its accompaniment in the bars of a persistently-repeated chord or open fifth, giving it a coarser, more primitive quality.

The KUJAWIAK is regular and symmetrical in phrase structure and in accent. Because of the polyphonic texture, the overall rhythmic structure becomes highly sophisticated. The following are examples of what the composer himself considered the three lowland dances to be in Podhale stylization:

Op. 50, No. 18 (measures 1-11) — OBEREK
Op. 50, No. 14 (measures 31-34) — MAZUR
Op. 50, No. 5 (measures 1 to 4) — KUJAWIAK

Another characteristic of this music is the application of syncopatically sharpened rhythms. This is typical of the Podhale folklore, is also found in the folklore of neighboring Slovakia and Hungary, and is a favorite Bartokian effect (Mazurka 2, Mazurka 20). Speaking of rhythms in Szymanowski's Mazurkas, we must not forget parallels in rhythmic styles of contemporary composers of twentieth century music. Great regenerative elements of rhythms in music, as was achieved in the beginning of this century, opened the way for a convergence with natural folkloristic rhythms as typified by Stravinsky and Bartok.

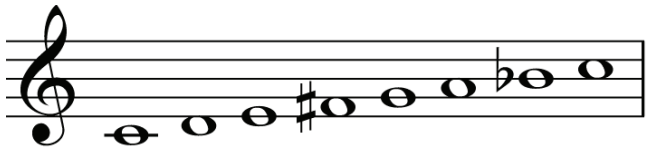
Szymanowski was not by nature "rhythmical," as was Prokofiev or Stravinsky; his individuality clearly propelled him to express himself in a romantic vein when it came to treating rhythmic elements. However, by the time he composed his Mazurkas, although strongly amenable to the influence of Chopin, he nevertheless moved contemporaneously from two directions, not only folkloristically, but also in the tendency of his own times.

An example of this: in view of the fragments of the improvisational character of Mazurka 1, we find countless fragments in which the rhythmical elements are very strongly accented and moving along the first plan. In this we find analogy with the type of writing found in Stravinsky and Prokofiev's rhythmically structured motor pulsations (Mazurka 18). Characteristically, Szymanowski sometimes emphasizes an almost maddening sameness of rhythm through measured accentuation of identical chords in the bass (Mazurka 12).

In comparing Szymanowski's Mazurkas with Chopin's, it is easy to see that in Szymanowski's work the harmonic element plays a far more meaningful role. Chopin's melodies thrust out, in most instances, with the harmony performing a rather functional, companion-like role. In Szymanowski's pieces there is a wealth of complex harmonies, and this is the important element; it decides the individual expressive delicacy of this music. The expositional harmonic element is typical of all his creations, regardless

of their stylistic transformations, and must be credited to the highly individual feature of this composer's rarified talent. Szymanowski shuns the lightsome and popular tone of the "salon" flavor. His Mazurkas represent a sublimated expressiveness and refined aesthetic flavor, establishing a new conception of an ancient form.

There is a clear diversity of the melodic graduation within the frame of the works. The tonal melodies find equal treatment among the folk scales: Podhalean, Lydian, Phrygian, Tzigane, as well as major-minor. He used the Podhalean folk scale as coloration of the twelve-tone scale. While the Mazurkas are unquestionably a product of the early 20th century, they are by no means tone-row oriented in the Schoenbergian sense. The point of departure is simply the folk scales as raw material. The Podhalean Scale



can be heard in such passages as the opening motifs of Op. 50 No. 1 and Op. 50 No. 13.

Szymanowski, although not utilizing directly the harmonic vocabulary of the Podhale highlanders, did derive and assimilate the aesthetics of this primitive and bleak harmony through intimate contact with and listening to the string groups or village bands in actual performance. How else could he have created that utterly unique sound — harsh, angular, as if hewn from stone?

The Opus 62 pair of Mazurkas is a curious throwback stylistically to his impressionistic second period. The pieces can be regarded as "Mazurkafastasies." More abstract in style than the Opus 50 Mazurkas, those of Op. 62 are masterful creations and fittingly a "swan song" in that Szymanowski wanted Poland to achieve musical nationalism without provincialism.

The Mazurkas are the composer's reaction against the complex density of sound and style that saturates almost all of his first two periods. These pieces are highly concentrated. In them is economy of material and clarity of texture, factors both distinguishing and characteristic of the "national" period. Every note in them counts and inherently belongs to the basic structure of each example.

The same structural (and textural) development occurred from Szymanowski's earlier examples (Nos. 1-6) through the middle and last mazurkas. The contrapuntal texture becomes more and more complex as you follow from one Mazurka to the next, and a corresponding effect is there in the structural design.

In the earlier Mazurkas, Szymanowski follows faithfully the four-measure phrase principle, as laid down by Chopin, but as you go into the Mazurkas following No. 6, you will find phrases built in units of five, six, seven and even ten measures.

The Mazurkas are severe but intense in their special musical language, which Szymanowski wished to be a true reflection of the authentic music of

the Polish mountaineers. In his attitude toward his art, he had become increasingly austere, rejecting all effects of virtuosity and maintaining the aristocratic aloofness of a "20th-Century Chopin."

Had Szymanowski lived on beyond World War II (as did Bartok, Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Sibelius), he would have more quickly attained a greater stature. He was somehow a victim of historical circumstances, finding his musical *raison d'etre* relatively late in his brief life. The time stood at a calamitous hour in history. With the emergence of the post-war era, the world was engulfed in the present and looking toward the future, not the immediate past with its unfulfilled hopes and ambitions.

For a while Szymanowski remained the most unduly neglected composer of the 20th Century. His keyboard works, with their great complexities of texture and rhythm, presented formidable difficulties to performers. True, Europe had given him some due, and thought of him as the musical genius he rightly is. But it was only with the advent of long playing records that his own prophetic words surfaced: "I know how to wait. My time is yet to come."

-Alan Barrody-Szymanowski

Mr. Barrody-Szymanowski, distinguished author and musicologist, was the nephew of the composer.

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Assistant Recording Producer (Masques, Études): Katja Andy
Recording Engineer: Carson C. Taylor
Assistant Recording Engineer: Hildegard Hendel
Transfer from original sources: Robert Kirby, Fantasy Studios
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"Atma," the villa in Zakopane where Szymanowski lived between 1930 and 1935, and the site of a museum in his memory. His last five works were written there.

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