

# Polish Music on Stage / US Edition

Paderewski Festival  
Paso Robles  
Opening concert

Park Ballroom,  
Paso Robles  
November 4th, 2022  
7:30 p.m.

## Cracow Golden Quintet

Natalia Jarzabek – flute  
Damian Świst – oboe  
Tomasz Sowa – clarinet  
Małgorzata Wygoda – bassoon  
Konrad Gołda – French horn

### Program:

**Tadeusz Szeligowski** – Quintet for Wind Instruments (1953)

*Allegro con brio*  
*Andante cantabile*  
*Allegro scherzando*  
*Allegro moderato*

**Grażyna Bacewicz** – Quintet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, and French horn (1932)

*Allegro*  
*Air. Andante*  
*Allegretto*  
*Vivo*

**Ignacy Jan Paderewski** – Menuet Op. 14 No. 1, Légende Op. 16 No. 1  
[arr. by Marek Żebrowski]

**Wojciech Kilar** – Quintet for Woodwind Instruments

*Sinfonia*  
*Scherzo*  
*Chorale variée*  
*Rondo-Finale*

### Program Notes

“The one charm about the past is that it is the past,” wrote Oscar Wilde in his 1890 novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. After almost one hundred years of looking into the past or, more precisely, looking for the models to emulate in the mythologized imaginings of the past, the Anglo-Saxon tradition the end of the nineteenth century brought about the reverse of this mindset. Similar tendencies also appeared in France and were soon to sweep across all European cultures. And yet, ironically, the demands of art for art’s sake, Aestheticism and ideals that would not rely on history, only resulted in paradoxes. What, then, were the roots of all those notions? They were obviously grounded in the past, in history, and in its objectivised perception of Classicism and Antiquity. That is how Neoclassicism became the leading trend in Europe in the early twentieth century. Each culture had its own peculiarities, sometimes representing the apotheosis of perfection and life, and at other times shocking the listener with its brutality. One tendency was common, though; it was to combine the classically conceived ideas of proportion, order, organisation of the sound material and its universal character with the modern harmonies, rhythms, and textures. This tendency, along with its way of perceiving the function of art, settled in the Polish culture for far longer than elsewhere.

Neoclassical music gave Polish composers a wealth of options. Firstly, it was a chance to enter the world of modern music soon after the efforts of the artists belonging to Karol Szymanowski’s generation helped overcome the tradition of the positivistic mission of music. Secondly, it offered at least a relative safety at the time when the Soviet authorities were eager to banish Polish artists accusing them of formalism. And, thirdly, it provided means of effective communication between the composer and the recipients of his or her music. The fact that Polish compositions written in the first half of the twentieth century drew on the folklore, and dance elements in particular, facilitated synthesising its Polishness with aspects that were universal, worldwide, and open to the needs of the listeners. We must emphasise, however, that it did not mean that Polish artists were servile to the official diktats. Quite the contrary, it was a testimony to the attitude that saw Polish compositions performed in the leading cultural centres of the world and treated on a par with the works written by the likes of Sergei Prokofiev, Béla Bartók and Paul Hindemith.

These ideals are perfectly exemplified in three compositions presented tonight. Their most prominent example is the *Quintet for Wind Instruments* by **Grażyna Bacewicz** (1909–1969). The work was written in 1932 and won the “Aide aux Femmes de Professions Libre” competition held in Paris one year later, when Bacewicz studied in France under the watchful and demanding eye of Nadia Boulanger. Boulanger, who taught several generations of Polish twentieth century composers, pointed out that Grażyna Bacewicz could masterfully combine the classical with the modern. This trait of hers is already on display in the *Quintet’s* first movement, where the traditional use of contrasting musical ideas is juxtaposed with some of the composer’s favourite harmonies. The fast movement *Allegro*, where the neoclassical sprightliness clashes with sentimental notes leads to an equally classically conceived second movement, a cantilena aria. The *Allegretto*, short but eventful in its danceability, is a linking passage between the narrative of the *Andante* and the *Vivo* finale, which is, typically for Bacewicz’s music, quite energetic and rhapsodic. Worth noting here is the movement’s humorous aspect—one of Bacewicz’s personality traits—that also determined how she was perceived as a composer. Her sense of humour won her music a lot of admirers from around the world.

The formal construction of Grażyna Bacewicz’s *Quintet* is reflected in Szeligowski’s work written exactly twenty years after the Paris premiere of Bacewicz’s work. Born at the end of the nineteenth century, **Tadeusz Szeligowski** (1896–1963) represented a slightly older generation of artists. Thirteen years Bacewicz’s senior, he found himself under Nadia Boulanger’s guidance as early as the late 1920s. His *Quintet* is characterised by more solemnity, heard already in the composition’s initial bars. The rhapsodic theme of the sonata-allegro form seems to nostalgically glance back at the days gone by while also hinting at the lyrical second movement. The *Andante cantabile* slow movement is the apotheosis of the above-mentioned nostalgia, where Szeligowski develops a sentimental and vocal-like theme resembling a romance and combining a Romantic melody with a compositional style that is elegant and undemonstrative. The second movement sounds like a simple tune, beguilingly natural and gentle. Analogous to Grażyna Bacewicz’s *Quintet*, Szeligowski’s third movement *Allegro scherzando* is also a dance, but much more tense, dramatic, and internally competitive with regard to the successive musical ideas it proposes. Szeligowski takes this narrative into the *Allegro moderato* finale. Initially, the narration slows down and becomes more serious only to regain its boisterous aspect a moment or two later. The composer tries to search for an equilibrium between qualities that are seemingly irreconcilable: elegance and seriousness on the one hand, and universality, characteristic of the neoclassical style, on the other.

**Wojciech Kilar’s** (1932–2013) *Quintet* originated at about the same time as Tadeusz Szeligowski’s woodwind quintet. It was written in 1952 when Kilar (who would later become famous for such works as the score to *The Ninth Gate*) was still a composition student of Bolesław Woytowicz in Katowice. Just like Szeligowski, Kilar was born in Lwów (now Lviv in Ukraine), and his *Quintet* points to Kilar’s later works while attesting to the durability of neoclassical traditions that persevered in Poland. It was not until ten years later that Kilar commenced his brief escapade into sonoristic music with his famous *Riff 62*. Just like the *Quintets* by Bacewicz and Szeligowski, the first movement of Kilar’s *Quintet* is in a sonata form. The second movement, however, is less traditional and rather than being a song-like piece, it is a *Scherzo*. In it we can hear Kilar’s fascination with the Highlander music of the Polish Tatra Mountains, which was apparent even in his very last compositions. The *Quintet’s* third movement is another glimpse into the future: the inspiration drawn from Europe’s Christian legacy is exemplified here by the composer’s use of traditional plainchant. Its characteristic severity, however, is replaced with an atmosphere of intimacy, intense contemplation and perhaps even prayer. For the *Rondo-Finale*, Kilar opted for an energetic rondo form. Although the creative ideas are rather condensed, the composer—just like in the first movement—unleashes here his abundant melodic gifts.

The tonight’s program is rounded off with two miniatures composed by Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941) and arranged for wind quintet by Marek Żebrowski. The *Légende* in A flat major, which opens Paderewski’s collection of piano miniatures, *Miscellanea* Op. 16, is a fine representative of the Romantic instrumental miniature genre. The composer treated this fairy-tale work as a “song without words” and this composition is still popular in the most prestigious concert halls around the world today. The equally famed *Menuet* from the collection of solo piano works published as Op. 14, is in fact a pastiche of a pre-Romantic, Mozart-type solo piece for keyboard.

Karol Stanisław Furtak  
Translated by  
Adam Zbyszewski

## Polish Music on Stage / US Edition

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