

# Summary.

## The Music Courts of the Polish Vasas

### Introduction

#### A Difficult Beginning to the Vasas' Reign in the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania

After the death of Stephen Batory on 12 December 1586, in Poland, which was an electoral monarchy, the gentry took part in a double election. Two persons were elected to be King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania: one of them was Sigismund Vasa (born 1566), son of the Swedish king, John III, and Catherine Jagiellon, the sister of Sigismund Augustus, the last Jagiellon on the Polish throne, and of the still-living Anna Jagiellon, Stephen Batory's widow; the other was the Austrian Archduke Maximilian Habsburg.

Sigismund Vasa was crowned King of Poland on 27 December 1587, but Archduke Maximilian did not give up his claim to the throne. On 24 January 1588, a battle took place at Byczyna (Silesia) between his army and the forces supporting the Vasas, the latter being victorious. The conflict between the Commonwealth and the Empire was finally resolved with the help of the mediation of Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini (future Pope Clement VIII), sent to Poland by Pope Sixtus V.

Sigismund Vasa brought with him to the Commonwealth his Swedish court, led by Eric Brahe (in 1587, en route from Gdańsk to Cracow, Sigismund was accompanied by 260 members of Swedish gentry, 100 reiters, 80 bodyguards, 8 footmen and 10 trumpeters; until at least mid-1588 there were about 100 Swedes at court, but over the following years their number continued to decrease.

The first years of the reign of Sigismund III in the Commonwealth brought, on the one hand, a reform of the royal treasury and, on the other, a period of uncertainty as to whether the monarch might not give up the throne and go back to Sweden to claim his hereditary crown. There was anxiety that he might escape, and expectation that it might happen in 1589, when the King met his father, John III, in Reval. Finally, however, Sigismund returned to Cracow, and in 1592 married Archduchess Anna of Graz, the daughter of Charles Habsburg, ruler of Styria, and Maria née Wittelsbach, sister of the future Emperor Ferdinand II.

In September and October of that year there was an inquisition session of the Sejm [Polish parliament], when Sigismund III was forced to sign undertakings which limited his power over the state. He made various attempts to improve that position during his rule over the Commonwealth, which lasted over forty years.

### I. The „music” of Sigismund III Vasa

During the initial period of Sigismund's reign, the cappella left behind by the deceased Stephen Batory remained at court almost intact. Under the direc-

tion of Krzysztof Klabon it consisted of about 20 adult musicians (ten singers, eight instrumentalists, including organists and lutenists), as well as a number of boys — six descants and a few instrument-playing pupils. Members of the ensemble came mainly from the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania.

In 1589 the framework of court organisation was put in place, and the company of musicians was included within it. There were supposed to be 24 of them, with, additionally, 12 trumpeters and 2 drummers. The royal treasury was expected to spend about 4200 florins per year on the cappella, which did not include benefits in kind (such as bread, beer, oats, fabrics), and more than 1300 florins annually on trumpeters and drummers. Thus, in total, the cost of maintaining the musicians was estimated to reach about 5500 florins

The „stars” at the musical court of Sigismund III in the initial period were Italians: the lutenist Diomedes Cato and the organist Francesco Maffon, but also the Polish lutenists Kasper Sielicki and Koś, and the maestro di cappella, singer and lutenist Klabon, from Ducal Prussia.

Our knowledge about Sigismund’s young years and his education, which included singing and playing the harpsichord, as well as his later patronage of music and musicians, allows us to suppose that he did not find the standard of the royal cappella satisfactory. We are probably entitled to assume that, growing up among Polish Jesuits, and having contact with Jesuit musicians who came especially to the Swedish court from the Roman Collegium Germanicum, Sigismund became familiar with polyphonic religious compositions popular in the 1580s even before his arrival in Poland. These might have been compositions of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina and his pupil, Annibale Stabile.

At present we only know of one source (from 1591) which seems to provide evidence that, during the first years of his reign in the Commonwealth, Sigismund Vasa made efforts to strengthen the cappella he inherited from Batory, and to import Italian musicians. In connection with this undertaking, a monk skilled in music, Augustinus de Ferrariis, offered his services to the court. However, we do not find any traces of his activities in Poland.

The first state and dynastic event during Sigismund’s reign with a truly royal setting involved the celebrations organised in honour of the King’s marriage to Archduchess Anna. Those engaged in this undertaking included musicians from Graz (among them Pietro Antonio Bianco) and dance master Ambrosio Bontempo, as well as *commedia dell’arte* actors, royal musicians and private ensembles of Polish magnates.

In 1593, on hearing of his father’s death, Sigismund travelled to his homeland, where he was crowned King of Sweden. He was accompanied by a group of musicians, which included the following: maestro di cappella Krzysztof Klabon, instrumentalists — Francesco Maffon, Stefan Bauman, Jakub Sowa (murdered in Sweden), Jan Kurowski, Paweł Fantazja and Sebastian Leszczyński (who was both a trombone player and a singer) and vocalists — Walenty Żegota, Father Grzegorz, Paweł Piątkowski, Paweł Wieliczka and Mikołaj Habrek.

By the time the King found himself back in Cracow in 1594, he already knew that, in spite of having been crowned King of Sweden, he would be

unlikely to rule over that country, in view of the Protestant opposition. At that time also he sent to Rome his secretary, Krzysztof Kochanowski, who, having the support of the church hierarchy, recruited for his ensemble 16 Italian musicians, led by the former Prefect of Collegium Germanicum and maestro di cappella of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Annibale Stabile. In February 1595 they started on their journey from Rome to Cracow. Unfortunately, Stabile died either on the way or immediately after arriving at Sigismund's court (before 15 April 1595). The King immediately sent another delegate, Canon Bartłomiej Kos, to Italy. With the support of church dignitaries in Rome, he also tried to persuade various musicians to come to Poland. On the recommendation of Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini, the relative of Clement VIII, as well as the Pope himself, one of the most prominent composers of his times, Luca Marenzio, set off for Cracow in October of that year, together with a number of other musicians. The court of Sigismund III was also visited by musicians who did not enter his service, such as the singer Francesco Rasi, who came for a brief period in 1596 with the retinue of Bishop Benedetto Mandina. The latter was negotiating the creation of an anti-Turkish league of Catholic states; it is highly probable that Clement VIII supported Sigismund III in his efforts to import Italian musicians in order to win the support of the King of Poland for these papal plans.

The restructuring of the cappella was also aided by the family of Sigismund's wife from Graz and Munich, where at least some musicians were recruited. The Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Duke of Mantua were also involved in supporting the royal search. Of significance were also the Italian contacts of Polish magnates, particularly Zygmunt Gonzaga Myszkowski and Mikołaj Wolski.

During the early days of Sigismund's Italian cappella, many musicians came to Poland for brief visits, their places then taken up by new arrivals from Italy. Neither did the early maestros di cappella stay for long. After the departure of Luca Marenzio, who directed the ensemble for two and a half years at the most, the next Italian musical director, Giulio Cesare Gabussi, from Milan, stayed in Poland for only about a year. Asprilio Pacelli remained as Sigismund's maestro di cappella for much longer, over 20 years. Before arriving in Cracow towards the end of 1602, he had held a similar post in the Roman Cappella Giulia.

Until the beginning of the 1610s, Sigismund's ensemble, together with the court, stayed mainly in Cracow. They travelled to Warsaw for the Sejm gatherings, accompanied the King to other towns within the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and, in 1598, with a "slimmed down" cast, the company of Sigismund on yet another journey to Sweden after which, in 1599, he lost the Swedish crown. Warsaw did not become the main royal seat until the 1610s, although the monarch and his court often went to Cracow (mainly for coronations and funerals of members of the royal family), and to Vilnius, Grodno, Częstochowa, Toruń, Gdańsk, Lvov and other cities.

In 1604 the printing works of Bazyli Skalski in Cracow published an anthology called *Melodiae sacrae*. This anthology was prepared by an Italian musi-

cian working at the court of Sigismund III, Vincenzo Gigli (known in Poland as Lilius), and contained religious works composed by the then current or former members of the royal cappella, primarily Italians. Lilius's dedication to the royal brother-in-law, Archduke Ferdinand of Graz, pays special attention to the works of royal maestros di cappella, who are mentioned in turn: Annibale Stabile, Luca Marenzio, Giulio Cesare Gabussi and Asprilio Pacelli.

An elegant manuscript collection of Masses (containing, among others, two Masses by Stabile), held at the Archdiocesan Archive in Warsaw, might possibly be regarded as a souvenir of that Roman musician's stay in the Commonwealth, perhaps brought as a gift for Sigismund Vasa.

Most probably in December of 1595, Luca Marenzio (b. in 1553 or 1554 in Coccaglio near Brescia, d. 22 August 1599 in Rome), a prominent Italian musician, famous above all as composer of madrigals, took over the duties of royal maestro di cappella. His remuneration at the court of the Polish king, probably previously agreed in Rome, was enormous, amounting to 1500 scudos. The ensemble he directed numbered, in March 1596, 23 people (including Marenzio himself), and cost the royal treasury 12 thousand scudos per year. Sigismund III also maintained a group of a dozen or so Polish musicians, who continued to be directed by Krzysztof Klabon.

Sources confirming Marenzio's activities in the Commonwealth of Poland are very scarce. We do know, however, that he continued to compose. Musicologists are divided in their opinions as to the Polish origin of Marenzio's madrigals published in Venice in 1598, after his return to Italy, which he reached still in 1597 or at the latest in the autumn of 1598 (the work in question is the collection *L'ottavo libro de' madrigali a cinque voci*). What is certain is that during his stay in Poland he wrote religious compositions, which were performed. For instance, at the Collegiate church of St John the Baptist in Warsaw, on 29 September and on 13 October 1596, Luca Marenzio conducted a performance by the cappella of vocal-instrumental *Te Deum laudamus* and a newly composed Mass in echo form (this was probably *Missa super Iniquos odio habui*). As well as the Masses, the repertory of the royal cappella undoubtedly contained other religious compositions by Marenzio (among them three polychoral compositions published only after the death of the maestro, in Vincenzo Lilius's anthology).

Sigismund III took a personal interest in religious music and ensured that musicians should perform whole liturgical texts, even those which were usually omitted in Italy. The extant sources point to the conclusion that he particularly valued polychoral music. This does not mean that Marenzio did not compose secular music during his stay in Poland, although we have no surviving sources to confirm it. The King himself may well have participated in musical performances.

After Marenzio's departure from the court, the management of the cappella passed again to Krzysztof Klabon (the Italian-Polish ensemble he directed numbered 37 persons in 1599), and in 1601 (almost certainly in May or June) to Giulio Cesare Gabussi, who arrived from Milan. This composer, who was born in Bologna in 1555 or 1558 and died in Milan on 12 September 1611, was

a pupil of Costanzo Porta and worked as maestro di cappella at the cathedral in Milan. His works were particularly renowned for their excellent contrapuntal technique. A motet included in the anthology compiled by Vincenzo Lilius provides a trace of his activities in Poland.

The year in which Asprilio Pacelli arrived in Poland, 1602, is also the date of the document which provides a numerical summary of musicians, both Polish and Italian (by then the cappellas had been combined into one unit), and the expected cost of their employment. The sum of 12 thousand florins, the same as when Marenzio led the cappella, was assigned for the remuneration of the cappella's 38 musicians and its other expenses. So far it has not been possible to ascertain the remuneration of Asprilio himself; however, one can surmise that it would be similar to that received by Annibale Stabile and Luca Marenzio. We do know that, during his stay in Poland, Pacelli was sufficiently well-off to grant significant loans, and among his debtors was the papal nuncio, Francesco Simonetta, who died in Poland in 1612.

Asprilio Pacelli, the first Italian maestro di cappella who made his home in Poland and remained there until his death (4 May 1623 in Warsaw), was held in great esteem by the grateful King, who had an epitaph plaque with the sculpted head of the musician made and put up in the Collegiate church of St John the Baptist in Warsaw (it was destroyed during the Second World War). The long period of Pacelli's management of the cappella helped to keep the company stable, and the musical education and experience of the maestro significantly influenced the standard of the ensemble and the skills of particular musicians, both Italian and native.

Pacelli (born in 1569 or 1570 in Vasciano near Narni in Umbria) spent almost all his life in Rome before arriving in Poland. As a boy soprano in the 1580s he sang in Cappella Giulia, an ensemble led at that time by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina; he was then associated with various Roman congregations and Jesuit colleges, and finally with Cappella Giulia. He composed primarily religious music — Masses, motets, *madrigali spirituali* and *canzonette spirituali*. The first collection of his motets, published during his service at the court of the Polish king, *Cantiones sacrae* (Frankfurt am Main 1604), has unfortunately been lost. The second collection of works in this genre — *Sacrae cantiones* (Venice 1608), has survived, and so has a song about St Stanisław Szczepanowski, written to a Polish text by Stanisław Grochowski (Cracow ca. 1604). His *Missae* (Venice, 1629), published posthumously, have been preserved only partially. Pacelli's motets, published in Vincenzo Lilius's *Melodiae sacrae*, are also incomplete today. Numerous compositions by the royal maestro di cappella, some of them unknown from other sources, are to be found in manuscript copies in cities which include Cracow, Gdańsk, Berlin and Rome.

Other prominent Italian musicians at the court of Sigismund III included (from as early as 1595) Vincenzo Bertolusi from Murano near Venice, organist and composer of keyboard music, vocal motets (among them two motets published in *Melodiae sacrae*) and madrigals. His collection of 29 polychoral motets (*Sacrarum cantionum [...] liber primus*, Venice 1601) was published

during his stay at the Polish court. In 1607 Bertolusi, together with three other musicians, moved to the court of the King of Denmark, Christian IV, where he died a year later (18 September 1608).

It is possible that the singer referred to in the royal accounts in the years 1598–99 only as Giovanni Battista was the composer Giovanni Battista Cocciola, well-known in later years, author of many religious polychoral works, but also compositions for small numbers of voices (the great majority of them preserved in the so-called Pelplin tablature). However, these works were probably composed after the musician's departure from the royal court.

Diomedes Cato, a prominent lutenist and composer, returned to the court of Sigismund III after a break most probably around 1603. Unfortunately we know little about the musician's life. Recently it has been discovered that he died in Gdańsk and was buried on 27 April 1628. His close ties with the royal court must have lasted at least until 1606.

Among the authors of 20 motets included in *Melodiae sacrae*, the rank-and-file of the ensemble is also represented by such members as: Jacopo Abbatis (originally Giacomo Abbiati) from Reggio, Antonio Patart, Alfonso Pagani, Ippolito Bonanni, Sebastian Pika, Giulio Osculati, Lorenzo Bellotti, Vincenzo Lilius himself, Raffaele Veggio, Simone Amorosi, Andreas Hakenberger and Andrzej Staniczewski. As many as seven of them composed polychoral works. In that group, Giulio Osculati and Andreas Hakenberger are known for their much larger volumes of compositions produced in a later period.

Among the musicians who worked in Sigismund's cappella under the supervision of Asprilio Pacelli, the one whose career was most successful was Giovanni Valentini (born probably in Venice ca. 1582/83, d. in Vienna on 29/30 April 1649). He arrived in Poland in 1604 as an unknown organist. During his stay in Poland he published in Venice at least three collections of compositions: *Canzoni* (1609) and two collections of motets (the first one is lost, the second appeared in 1611). In 1614 the musician left the service of the Polish king and moved to Graz. When Archduke Ferdinand became Emperor in 1619 and moved to Vienna, Valentini held there the position of first organist for a number of years, and from 1626 until his death he was the imperial maestro di cappella.

Many Italian musicians left Poland, particularly during the years 1606–1607, which saw the Zebrzydowski rebellion, and the prolonged war with Moscow (1609–1612). The King responded by ordering further recruitment in Italy — for example, in 1612 the royal singer Giacomo Abbiati was recruiting musicians in Rome. It was not always possible to persuade Italians to come to Poland. Among those who refused the royal offer were, in 1609, Francesco Campagnolo, a singer from Mantua, Claudio Monteverdi in 1625, and unidentified musicians who escaped Sigismund's agent, Antonio Taroni.

The cappella also began to take on Polish musicians who had gained experience abroad, such as Jerzy Szymonowicz, a cornet player, who had worked for a number of years in Rome (employed in the ensemble of the Polish Vasas from 1614), or Adam Jarzębski, who before becoming a violinist at Sigismund's court (ca. 1617), had belonged to the musical company of the

Brandenburg Elector John Sigismund in Berlin, as well as having travelled in Italy. In Poland he made his name as the composer of a collection of ensemble instrumental works *Canzoni e concerti*, preserved in a manuscript dating from 1627.

In or about 1621, the royal court saw the arrival of an organist, Tarquinio Merula (born ca. 1595 near Cremona, d. 10 December 1665 in Cremona), who remained there until about 1625. During his stay in the Commonwealth he published in Venice, in 1624, three collections of compositions (*Il primo libro de' madrigaletti*, *Il primo libro de' madrigali concertati* and *Il primo libro de' motetti e sonate*), and probably also composed the para-operatic *Dialogo di Satiro e Corisca* to the fragment *Il Pastor fido* by Gian Battista Guarini (Venice 1626).

It is possible that Merula, while at court, taught the son of Vincenzo, Franciszek Lilius, most probably an organist, who continued his studies in the mid-1620s in Rome with Girolamo Frescobaldi, and who in 1630 took on the management of the cathedral cappella in Cracow (d. prior to 6 November 1657).

It is most likely that after the death of Asprilio Pacelli the post of royal maestro di cappella remained vacant for about eighteen months. After that period, at the turn of 1624 and 1625, the court was joined by Giovanni Francesco Anerio (born in 1567 in Rome), a renowned composer, credited with being the author of the first oratorios. He remained in Poland until at least 1629, and then he left for Italy in order to arrange for the publication of his newly composed works. He died on the journey and was buried on 12 June 1630 in Graz. The extant repertory of Anerio's works composed in Poland is dominated by religious polychoral pieces (for example, *Missa Sigismunda* for three choirs and basso continuo dedicated to the King). It is highly probable that Anerio also composed secular music, and directed the first opera to be staged in Poland (or the first such event to be confirmed by sources). This was a revised version of *Gli amori d'Acis e Galatea*, to the words of Gabriello Chiabrera, a *dramma per musica* performed previously with music by Santi Orlandi in Mantua (in 1617). It was performed at the royal castle in Warsaw on 27 February 1628. The Warsaw première was organised on the initiative of Prince Ladislaus, the eldest son of Sigismund III and heir to the throne. He became acquainted with the *dramma per musica* genre during his peregrinations in Europe in 1624/25; this version of the opera had an added prologue and a finale with references to the dynastic and historical circumstances in Poland. It is possible that the music to accompany these texts was composed by Anerio.

There are grounds for thinking that the first operatic performance in Poland had taken place even earlier — in May of 1627. However, we do not know whether Ladislaus's plans were ever realised — he had commissioned from Francesca Caccini a *dramma per musica* about St Sigismundus, a king and a martyr.

At that time the cost of maintaining the royal ensemble increased to about 22–23 thousand florins per year, nearly double compared to the beginning of

the seventeenth century. This was largely a result of the enormous inflation prevalent in the Commonwealth at that time.

It is probable that after Anerio's death Sigismund III did not appoint another maestro. He himself died soon after, on 30 April 1632.

## II. At the Court of Anna Vasa

Sigismund Vasa's sister, born in Sweden in 1568, unlike her brother who was an ardent Catholic, converted to Lutheranism in her youth. For this reason her presence was not welcome at the court of the Polish king, and she spent the last twenty or so years of her life far from her brother, at the castles of Golub and Brodnica (Royal Prussia), where she died in 1625.

Being highly educated, she must have mastered musical knowledge to some degree, but we know very little about her musical entourage. Polish Catholics protested strongly against Lutheran services being held for her in the royal circles, and against Protestant singing performed during such services. It is for this kind of singing that Anna was praised by Martin Opitz in a panegyric published on the occasion of her funeral in the following words: "...heavenly thoughts live where she lived in spirit. And she imitated them not only through silent religiosity, but moreover through singing, hymns, praises of God and songs...".

While Anna still remained at the royal court, musicians seeking employment in the ensemble of Sigismund III looked to her for support (such as, for example, the former singer from the court of the Duchess of Urbino, Lucretia d'Este). Approximately during the same period Anna Vasa was supporting the trumpeter Balcer Freitag.

There must have been musicians in Anna Vasa's entourage when she went to live in Golub and Brodnica. We have information from that period about the balls and wedding celebrations she arranged for the ladies and gentlemen of her court. Undoubtedly music played a part in them, but on the basis of extant sources we may only guess that the musicians employed at her court were those whose remuneration was a matter of special concern to her, which she took up with her brother. Among them may have been Paweł Płaskowski, whose name probably also appears as Paweł Pieląszkowski (violinist?) and Sigismondo Patart.

## III. Under the reign of Ladislaus IV

Ladislaus Vasa (born 9 June 1595), son of Sigismund and his first wife, reigned from 1632 until his death in 1648. In the second half of 1620s and in the 1630s he had considerable influence on the changes introduced in the musical ensemble of Sigismund III, and on the musical and theatrical life at the royal court. Even as a royal prince he had his own musicians. He must have had his trumpeters and drummers when he left in 1617 for the Smolensk campaign, and in 1621, when he was victorious over Turks at Chocim. The earliest mention of one of his musicians known by name, trumpeter Paweł Dominik, dates from 1620. The title page of the collection *Il primo libro de' madrigaletti a tre* from 1624 by Tarquinio Merula tells us that that particular organist of

Sigismund III was also musician *di camera* of the prince. We also know that in 1624, after the death of the Primate, Wawrzyniec Gembicki, Ladislaus was interested in attracting the Primate's best musicians to his court.

Soon after that he started on his travels in Europe (1624–25), which developed further his interest in music and theatre. He listened to religious music, including the performance of Cappella Sistina in Rome and in St Mark's basilica in Venice, where he admired the ensemble conducted by Claudio Monteverdi. He was enchanted by the voices of court and monastic female singers, and took part in ballets, masques and operas staged during the carnival in Florence and Mantua. He tried unsuccessfully to recruit to the Polish court some renowned singers — Adriana Basile-Baroni and her daughters, as well as Claudio Monteverdi himself. However, his visit to Italy did result in the arrival at Sigismund's court of the bass-singer Alessandro Foresti, and the castrati Baldassare Ferri and Virgilio Puccitelli. The latter eventually became librettist and secretary to Ladislaus after he inherited the throne.

Soon after his father's death, Ladislaus appointed Marco Scacchi as maestro di cappella. Scacchi (born ca. 1600 in Rome, d. In Gallese in 1662) had been working at Sigismund's court since the first half of the 1620s as violinist, and had been a pupil of Giovanni Francesco Anerio. The musician was already directing the royal cappella during the funeral of Sigismund III and his wife Constance in January 1633. Immediately afterward he conducted a performance of his own polychoral Mass composed for the coronation of the new king, and a little later he also published two collections of his works: *Missarum quatuor vocibus liber primus* (Rome 1633) and *Madrigali a cinque, concertati* (Venice 1634). Other compositions by Scacchi were published in his theoretical-musical work *Cribrum musicum* (Venice 1643). They were used as examples by Hieronymus Ninius and Angelo Berardi in their theoretical writings, copied by scribes from various centres in Poland and abroad, and published in an anthology edited by Ambrosius Profe. Scacchi gained his place in history primarily all as a participant in a theoretical dispute with an organist from Gdańsk, Paul Siefert, and as an author of a classification of musical genres.

There are no extant lists of names of cappella members from the reign of Ladislaus IV. Their names are identified on the basis of varied and widely scattered sources, and it has to be acknowledged that our knowledge of the personnel of the ensemble is very imprecise. During the initial period the ensemble, including discants and pupils but excluding ceremonial musicians, numbered about forty. These were partly very long-term members of Sigismund's cappella, such as Vincenzo Lilius, Grzegorz Gabriel Graniczny, Giacomo Abbiati, Giovanni Marco Materanus, Erard Leslau and Jan Gommer, and partly those whose employment did not go so far back: Jerzy Szymonowicz, Adam Jarzębski, Hieronim Cesari, Adam Gołda, Alessandro Paradisi, Giovanni Maria Brancarini, Baldassare Ferri, Ignazio Giorgio Recinetti, Alessandro Foresti, Jan Wolff, Walentyn Kołakowski and Sigismondo Patart. On becoming king, Ladislaus carried out a number of changes in the ensemble, importing from Italy and Austrian courts mainly such singers as would be able to

carry out his plans for operatic performances. Vocalists employed at that time included such Italians as: Lodovico Fantoni, Giovanni Battista Jacobelli, Vincenzo Scapitta da Valenza, Francesco Basile, Gioseffo Amadei, Giovanni Maria Scalona, Pietro Coppola. Instrumentalists were also being brought in, both from Italy (for example Francesco Coppola and probably the *teorba* player Giovanni Battista Gisleni), and from various regions of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania (such as the trombone player Jan Bischoff, viola player Piotr Elert, organist Bartłomiej Pękiel, or composer and musician of unknown specialism, Marcin Mielczewski).

During the celebrations of the marriage between Ladislaus IV and Archduchess of Austria Cecilia Renata (in September 1637) there were guest appearances by the singers Margherita Basile–Cattaneo and Lucia Rubini, who arrived in Warsaw from the imperial court, and also by the instrumentalists Giovanni Battista Rubini and Johann Nauwach. Kaspar Förster junior, a singer and composer born in Gdańsk, was brought in from Rome. He stayed with the royal ensemble until 1652, and was still singing during the reign of John Casimir, later becoming *maestro di cappella* at the court of the Danish king Frederick III.

Much valuable information about the personnel of the royal ensemble, locations and occasions of its performances, as well as about the houses and mansions which some of Ladislaus's musicians bought or built with the money earned at the royal court, is to be found in Adam Jarzębski's „guide” to Warsaw — *Gościniec abo Krotkie opisanie Warszawy* (Warsaw 1643). Names of 50 musicians who supposedly belonged to the royal *cappella* in 1643 or a little earlier are also given in *Xenia Apollinea*, a musical supplement to Marco Scacchi's *Cribrum musicum* (Venice 1643), which contains canons composed by them. Recent research shows that in some individual cases the musicians in question were associated not with the court of Ladislaus IV, but that of his brother Charles Ferdinand or of the friendly magnates.

The most important artistic phenomenon during the reign of Ladislaus IV was his court opera theatre, which gave performances at the royal castles in Warsaw and Vilnius, and prepared one *première* in Gdańsk, to celebrate the arrival of Louisa Maria Gonzaga de Nevers, the second wife of the Polish king, in 1646. The years 1635–1648 saw at least ten performances of *drammi per musica*, at Ladislaus's court, prepared and staged by his courtiers. These were: *La Giuditta* and *La Dafne* (Warsaw, 1635), *Il ratto di Helena* (Vilnius 1636), *La S. Cecilia* (the most sumptuous spectacle, staged in the new theatre hall at the royal castle in Warsaw, 1637), *Narciso trasformato* (Warsaw, 1638), *Armida abbandonata* (Warsaw, 1641), *L'Enea* (Warsaw, 1641), *Andromeda* (Vilnius, 1644), *Le nozze d'Amore e di Psiche* (Gdańsk, 1646), *Circe delusa* (Vilnius, 1648). Librettos in Italian to eight or nine of them were written by Virgilio Puccitelli, the main stage designer and producer was Agostino Locci, the music was very probably composed by Marco Scacchi (although this is confirmed by contemporary sources only in the case of *Il ratto di Helena*), and we can surmise that the choreography of the operas and the ballets in the years 1637 and 1638 was in the hands of the Italian dance master Santi Venturi, who was imported from Vienna.

The most elevated state and dynastic ceremonies took place in churches. Coronations and funerals of kings and their families by custom took place at Wawel Cathedral in Cracow (exceptionally, Cecilia Renata was crowned at the Collegiate church of St John the Baptist in Warsaw). Moreover, the royal cappella performed in many Warsaw churches, as well as those locations where the court was staying at the time (e.g. cathedral and Jesuit church of St John in Vilnius or the monastery at Jasna Góra in Częstochowa). Masses for such occasions were undoubtedly composed by Marco Scacchi, who also wrote other religious works (in total about 15 are extant). Church music was also being written by other composers from the royal court; alongside the Italians, there were Bartłomiej Pękiel (about 30 of his religious works are extant), Marcin Mielczewski and Kaspar Förster junior (these composers are represented today by about 70 and about 40 church compositions respectively). However, it should be borne in mind that only a part of these composers' religious works may have been written during their sojourn at the court of Ladislaus IV. The three last-mentioned musicians also composed works for instrumental ensemble, although Pękiel's compositions of that type have not survived to our day, and the extant canzonas by Mielczewski might have been written after the composer had left the royal cappella. As for Förster's sonatas, they are certain to have been composed later.

We learn more about the material status of Ladislaus's musicians from sources dealing with property ownership (for example, land or houses in Warsaw) than from the royal accounts detailing payments to them from the treasury. No payroll details giving the names of cappella employees survive from the reign of Ladislaus IV.

During the initial period of his rule, Ladislaus's spending on the cappella amounted to about 22–23 florins a year. The expense of maintaining the company must have risen sharply in 1637, in view of the celebration of his marriage to Cecilia Renata. At the beginning of the 1640s the expenditure stabilised at a level which did not rise beyond 40 thousand florins, but, because of a financial crash, royal treasury was late in paying out considerable sums to the King's musicians. During the period of preparations for the arrival of Ladislaus's second wife, Louisa Maria Gonzaga de Nevers (1646), the cost of maintaining the ensemble rose to about 46 thousand florins, and toward the end of the King's life it fell to about 40–42 thousand florins.

The highest payments were made to Marco Scacchi, who toward the end of his stay in Poland was undoubtedly receiving more than 3 thousand florins a year, not counting his other sources of income. We know the actual sums regularly paid to musicians only for the period 1650–51 (1650–53 in the case of musicians used for ceremonial occasions), and thus not until the reign of John Casimir.

#### **IV. Musical passions of the youngest royal princes**

John Albert (born 25 May 1612), Charles Ferdinand (born 13 October 1613), Alexander Charles (born 14 November 1614) and Anna Catherine Constance (born 7 August 1619) grew up during the period when the court cappella's

activities were led by Asprilio Pacelli, and then Giovanni Francesco Anerio. At least some of them took music lessons with the organist Angelo Simonelli.

The best documented activities are those of the musical entourage of the Princes John Casimir (more about this in the next chapter) and Charles Ferdinand. As for Anna Catherine Constance, it may have been the case that a royal musician of unknown specialism, called Dominik Voldambrinus (Wlandenbrandinus), had distinguished himself in her service, since he possessed landed property within the lands at her disposal. We also know that the Princess participated keenly in the planning and performance of ballets at the court of Ladislaus IV. On 8 June 1642 Anna Catherine Constance married Duke of Neuburg, Philip Wilhelm, and left for his duchy.

John Albert and Alexander Charles died young (aged 22 and 20 respectively) and probably did not succeed in creating their own musical entourages. Konstanty Hieronim Połubiński spoke about the musical education of the latter in his funeral speech. Alexander Charles made his name in musical history as the person for whom a repeat performance of *Il S. Alessio* (with appropriate changes and significantly extended) was arranged in 1634 in Rome at the Barberini theatre, and to whom the printed score was dedicated.

Charles Ferdinand, bishop of Wrocław and Płock, lived until 1655. Most probably he began to create his cappella in the 1630s. Perhaps dedicating a collection of instrumental work to Charles Ferdinand — *Canzoni, fantasie et correnti* (Venice 1638) by Bartolomeo de Selma y Salaverde had some connection with these efforts. In 1642 the Prince had at his disposal an ensemble of six or more singers and probably some instrumentalists. During approximately the same period there were Italian musicians at his court — singers Marcantonio Ferrucci and Giovanni Vannarelli who came from Rome, and one called Zamponi, whose origins are uncertain.

From the turn of 1644 and 1645 the Prince–Bishop, who resided mainly in Mazovia (Brok, Wyszaków), and occasionally also in Silesia (Nysa, Opole, Wrocław) employed Marcin Mielczewski (d. 1651) as his maestro di cappella. It is highly probable that many of this composer's works, including, for example, the majority of his concertato Masses, were written during that period. We also know from the musician's last will and testament that he left all of his compositional output to Prince Charles Ferdinand.

The ensemble directed by Mielczewski included, among others: the organist Aleksander Daszkowicz (Daszkowski), and perhaps another organist called Skotnicki, and a number of musicians whose specialisms are unknown — Hieronim Cesari, Stanisław Górski, Jacek Kluczewski, Jan Wierzbowski. As far as the bishop's ceremonial musicians are concerned, the only one we know about is the trumpeter Karol Ferdynand Fokytel.

## **V. Music and musicians in the life of John Casimir**

During the reign of Ladislaus, a person associated with John Casimir was the viola player Piotr Elert. When the Prince, who was trying to make his way to Spain to take up the post of Admiral of the Spanish fleet and Viceroy of Portugal, was imprisoned by Cardinal Richelieu in France in 1638, the musician

was among those whose efforts helped to free him. This undoubtedly had a positive influence on Elert's future career.

After his return to Warsaw in 1640, the Prince spent much time engaged in entertainment, which included organising ballet performances. Among musicians in his entourage at that time, apart from Elert, one can also mention today Jan Sypniewski, who played the kettle drums.

During the years 1643–46 John Casimir stayed in Italy. His musician while in Rome and Frascati was the soprano Pietro Crati, who then went to Poland and remained in the service of John Casimir after the latter became king (his rule lasted from 1648–1668).

During the coronation ceremony (17 January 1649) the royal cappella probably performed *Missa omnium tonorum* for four choirs by Marco Scacchi, who remained in Poland as the royal maestro di cappella only another few months. His *Iudicium Cribri musici* was published by Piotr Elert's printing works in Warsaw, probably in 1649, and his *Canones Nonnulli Super Arias quasdam Musicales Domini Christophori Wernerii* came out in Königsberg the same year, after which Scacchi departed for Italy.

From the second half of 1649 the cappella was probably under the leadership of vice maestro Bartłomiej Pękiel, who is not described in sources as the royal maestro di cappella until 1653. It seems that during that time Pękiel intensified his activity as composer. His polychoral concertato Masses — *Missa Concertata La Lombardesca* and *Missa a 14* were probably composed during that time (as to the dialogue *Audite mortales* and the church concerto *Dulcis amor Jesu*, one cannot exclude the possibility that they were composed still under the reign of Ladislaus IV). Other musicians whose works expanded the ensemble's repertory must have included Kaspar Förster, Vincenzo Scapitta da Valenza, and Aldebrando Subissati.

Unfortunately a number of circumstances, including the Cossack uprising, war with Moscow, and the plague which raged in Warsaw in mid-1650s, caused many musicians to leave Poland. Some members of the cappella (Adam Jarzębski, Bartłomiej Wardyński and Grzegorz Gabriel Graniczny) died during that time.

In 1652 the group of singers assembled over the years by Ladislaus IV practically ceased to exist. Among those who left the ensemble for good were the alto Kaspar Förster, who went to Italy and from there to Denmark, where he became the royal maestro di cappella; also the tenor Giovanni Battista Jacobelli, nominated as Canon of Warmia, and the bass Deodato Barochio. Temporarily absent from the cappella were the soprano Baldassare Ferri and the tenor Francesco Basile, who were singing at the royal court in Sweden. In 1654 the violinist Aldebrando Subissati left for Rome.

In spite of being engaged in wars, the king kept appointing new musicians to replace those leaving the cappella, predominantly recruited from the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. Musical life at court continued, being particularly sumptuous (except at the time of the plague) during the carnival, when Queen Louisa Maria (widow of Ladislaus IV, whom John Casimir married) organised ballet performances.

Swedish invasion in 1655 was the final blow which destroyed the cappella. The royal couple found asylum in Silesia, and the musical ensemble remained dispersed for a number of years. Baldassare Ferri, who joined the imperial service, left Poland at that time. Vincenzo Scapitta da Valenza also left for Vienna (where he died shortly after), and so did maestro di cappella Bartłomiej Pękiel.

After the Swedish occupation ended, the task of rebuilding the royal ensemble (from 1657) was undertaken under the leadership of Jacek Różycki, a pupil of the cappella when its maestro was still Marco Scacchi. On the other hand, Bartłomiej Pękiel became in 1658 the director of the vocal-instrumental ensemble of Wawel Cathedral in Cracow.

Jacek Różycki remained as director of musical ensembles of Polish kings for 46 years — under the reign of John Casimir (until his abdication in 1668), followed by Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1669–1673) and John III Sobieski (1674–1696). After Augustus II of Saxony came to the throne in 1697, Różycki continued, for a number of years, until his death in the summer of 1703, to hold the post of the second maestro di cappella, apart from Johann Christoph Schmidt.

We know very little about royal music during the last 11 years of the Vasas' reign (1657–1668). Undoubtedly, however, it did not regain the standard reached in the first half of the seventeenth century. Local musicians formed the backbone of the cast. As for the Italians, Lodovico Fantoni and Giovanni Battista Jacobelli remained in Poland, but they made their careers in the church, and certainly were no longer involved in the performing arts. The old soprano of Prince John Casimir, Pietro Crati, and the alto Giovanni Maria Scalona, may have still sang in the ensemble. The Italian violinist Antonio Farinacci (who died in 1671) may have played in the royal ensemble until the end of the reign of John Casimir. A member of the ensemble whose specialism is unknown was another Italian, Bartolomeo Sisini. Newly engaged musicians from Poland included the singer Fabianek,

Szymon Strodownik, who played the lyre, violinists and viola players were Marcin Chojnacki, Szymon Jarzębski, son of Adam, Jan Baltazar and — probably — Wojciech Karczewski and Franciszek Gross.

John Casimir remained fond of entertainment and dancing until the end of his days, and Louisa Maria continued to organise ballet and comedy performances. Pierre Corneille's *El Cid*, with Polish text by Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, was most probably staged on 26 February 1662. The performance was preceded by a sung prologue. Compositional work in the ensemble was undertaken by the maestro Jacek Różycki (about 20 of his religious compositions have survived to this day).

The funeral of Queen Louisa Maria, which took place on 22 September 1667 at the cathedral in Cracow may be regarded as the last powerful chord struck in the history of the cappellas of the Polish Vasas. As we are told in a report preserved at the Vatican Library, the Mass performed then was a *Requiem* for two choirs, with an exquisite concerto of voices and instruments, performed by the best musicians selected from the whole of Europe,

of whom some, having once served at that court, returned to pay their last respects to a Great Queen”.

John Casimir abdicated on 16 September 1668. A few months later he left for France, and he died there, in Nevers, on 16 December 1672. His body was brought back to Poland in 1675 at the request of John III Sobieski. It was thus the cappella of that later king, but undoubtedly led by the old maestro of John Casimir, Jacek Różycki, which took leave of the last Vasa on the Polish throne (and with him his heir, Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki) during a solemn funeral ceremony at Cracow cathedral on 31 January 1676.

*Translated by Zofia Weaver*