

MIŁOSZ MAGIN

David C F Wright DMus

It continues to grieve very many of us that great composers are not known or are neglected and, to make matters worse other lesser composers are given priority treatment, and said to be great composers and are elevated to positions that they do not deserve.

Milosz Magin was an outstanding Polish composer born in Lodz on 6 July 1929. He had an amazing talent very early on and later studied with Margenta Trombini-Kazuro for piano and Kazimierz Sikorski for composition and then he went to Jan Makiaskiewicz who became his mentor. Magin also studied the violin and cello as well as ballet.

Sikorski lived from 1895 to 1986 and among his works are four symphonies which are fascinating works. Makiaskiewicz (1899-1954) studied with Dukas in Paris, was an organist and choirmaster, composed glorious sacred works, two violin concertos and a cello concerto.

Magin graduated with the highest distinction from the Warsaw High School for Music in 1957. He won prizes at international piano competitions including the Chopin International Piano Competition, the Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud Competition in Paris and the Vienna da Motta Competition in Lisbon. There is no doubt that he was a brilliant musician.

And so, why is he not known? Favouritism and injustice in music is scandalous.

Magin's wife, Idalia, stayed with her husband in Portugal, Germany and London before they settled in Paris in 1960. His career was interrupted in 1963 when he broke his wrist in a car accident but courage and resolve restored his piano technique and he recorded the complete works of Chopin who was still regarded as Poland's national hero. Other composers did not get a look in. Magin did not compose a series of Nocturnes, Waltzes and Mazurkas. On you tube you can hear him play Chopin's Piano Concerto no 1, the 24 preludes and the awful Op 61. There are some recordings on this service of his playing some of his own works.

A return to composition and teaching in the 1960s resulted in some acclaim. Pupils came to him from all over the world. There can be no higher praise for such a superb teacher. As for his works, there are four piano sonatas, four piano concertos, a cello concerto and two symphonies scored for strings sometimes with percussion in all these orchestral works. There is a violin concerto, a clarinet concerto and Cracovienne for piano and orchestra of 1950. He wrote much piano music of quality which, fortunately, bears no resemblance to Chopin and it is well written but why don't we hear it?

The Piano Concerto no 2 is a real joy, a happy and attractive piece but never trite or banal. The Piano Concerto no 3 is more profound but also a satisfying work. The piano sonatas are to be commended and the writing for the piano is exemplary.

The nationalistic influence in his music is shown in the titles of some of his piano works such as :

Petite Suite Polonaise

Triptyque polonais

Miniature polonaises

The polonaise is the most played Polish style and at the siege of Poland under the Nazi socialists various polonaises were played and broadcast.

Idalia was also a fine pianist and with her husband set up the Milosz Magin International Piano Competition in Paris every two years.

He died of a heart attack during a concert tour in Tahiti on 4 March 1999. He was 69.

I am grateful to Peter Cook for supplying some rare recordings

It is time that Magin's music is performed, at least, as often as Chopin.

(605)

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