



GRESHAM COLLEGE
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Music in History Transcript

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Music in History

Professor Adrian Thomas

Introduction

Good afternoon, and welcome to a new year of Gresham lectures on Music. In previous years, I have focused on the repertoire and context of Central European music, from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, investigating 20th-century phenomena two years ago and, last year, exploring compositional thought and practice from Chopin to Lutosławski. This year, I shall be moving even further back in time, exploring territory that is virtually unknown and unrecognised in the West: music from medieval times, through the Renaissance and Baroque up to the beginning of the 19th century. The music itself is fascinating and imaginative; it is also highly revealing of its historical, political and cultural contexts. I hope that you will be as taken aback by the richness of its character and the significance of its historical role as I have been in preparing these lectures.

Today, I shall be working my way back to the earliest known Polish composition that uses the Polish language - a medieval battle hymn - by considering a number of issues that I believe are particularly relevant to the study of music and to the study of history in today's world. I shall be looking at ways in which we do, or do not, place music and the other arts within the broader historical perspective. And I hope that I can offer a few solutions to what I perceive as a crisis for the coverage of music outside its immediate sphere of activity.

The 'Ordinary Reader'

In the current issue of the BBC Music Magazine (October 2005), two contributions struck me as relevant to this topic. One was Richard Morrison's 'Comment' column, the other was a review of Nicholas Kenyon's new *Pocket Guide to Mozart* (London, 2005). While lambasting the press and music industry for giving attention and vast sums of promotional investment to, as he puts it, "opera stars' who have never sung a note in an opera house", Richard Morrison has a more worrying concern. In one passage, he asserts: "So few people now have even a rudimentary grounding in music theory, history or performing styles and standards. So few visit concert halls. Little wonder that most people have no mental yardstick, no critical faculty, for measuring musical quality." Looking at this problem from a more positive angle, the reviewer of Kenyon's book on Mozart commented: "Kenyon writes lucidly about the music, and isn't afraid of stretching the ordinary reader with occasional remarks about key progressions and the like, but his overall approach is general and highly accessible". **(1)**

We live in an age when accessibility is the watchword. It has pluses and minuses. Over the past few decades it has changed the nature of music education, of musical habits, of musical promotion. And it is characteristic of our times that music is understood by most people as meaning non-classical. As far as most television programmes are concerned, music means popular, not classical. And as an example of the unthinking, promiscuous depths to which programme makers can sink, last weekend's edition of the 'X Factor', the cruellest of talent programmes, used the second movement of Górecki's famous Third Symphony - the one in which a young girl prays to the Virgin Mary from her Gestapo cell - as background music. Can anyone really say that that is musically or ethically appropriate? No wonder Richard Morrison is upset.

There are some saving graces, at least in this country, such as BBC radio and, despite its many deficiencies, the classical recording industry. But bookshops generally stock little in the way of classical volumes, and were it not for the university-based presses, like CUP in Cambridge, or gallant publishers such as Ashgate in Aldershot, both with print runs of often only 500-1000 copies, there would be precious little for the musically literate reader.

What we have now is a huge gulf, or, rather, a series of gulfs. A populace that is not instinctively in tune with classical music, be it contemporary or from the past. Media that are directed towards popular music and a culture where the new and old in architecture, art, film, literature and theatre are talked and written about, and are of broad general interest, but where the mention of non-popular musical output frequently draws blank stares. And we have a publishing world where the perfectly valid musicological press is so specialised as to have a tiny market presence and a more generally accessible musical press (that of pocket guides, popular histories, biographies, etc.) that is not that much more available than specialised volumes to those

whom Kenyon's reviewer called the 'ordinary reader'.

Who is this 'ordinary reader'? We cannot these days assume any musical literacy, but does that mean that we must give up on expecting the 'ordinary reader' to have the curiosity for knowledge and the energy to pursue it, with or without technical terms? I would hope not. Or are we simply going to place the onus for dissemination of music on live performance, broadcasting and CD production (each of which requires a professional degree of musical literacy from the participants) and leave the printed word to wither? What kind of writing about music is possible or relevant today? In other words, we have to ask ourselves serious questions if new progress is to be made. What outlets for the discussion of music remain untapped? How can the musical knowledge and experience of the 'ordinary reader' in the 21st century be advanced and enhanced by the printed word?

The Remit of History

Biography is a well-tried, respected and much-read genre. The best examples are those that integrate the biographical facts with the thought and output of the subject in a way that genuinely illuminates the creative process and context. By all accounts, Jane Glover's just-published volume *Mozart's Women* (London, 2005) does just that. One might think of biography as being history with the familial touch. And it is to history that my attention turns, because history has now become a noun, as well as a discipline, that can be qualified by any number of adjectives. Political, economic, social and military histories have distinguished pedigrees; and sometimes these broach musical topics, as in Cyril Ehrlich's writings on the economic and social history of the piano. **(2)** In recent decades cultural, geographical and urban histories have joined the throng. And, as a layman looking on, it seems to me that history has been enormously enriched by these new areas of focus, even if the definition of 'history' has become a more complex task. My question today is how history relates to cultural history, and more particularly to the arts, and especially to music. How does history, how can history, both illuminate the creative process and output and, most importantly, allow that process and output in return to illuminate history? Let us consider some examples.

Music in Histories

Regrettably, the connection between history and the arts, outside the purview of the artistic disciplines themselves (in other words, outside dedicated art histories, theatrical studies or music histories) has been very patchy, with a few notable exceptions that I shall come to shortly. And this patchiness applies to both small and large-scale studies. As far as music is concerned, the signs of interest in music from historians are not encouraging. Pick up any recently published *Concise History*, collection of essays or historical dictionary devoted to a particular country and you are unlikely to find much that goes beyond mere mention of composers' names, if that, and then rarely do the authors venture beyond the 1950s and rarely mention even non-classical music. **(3)** The index is more likely to have entries on literature and art **(4)**; in one extreme case that I've seen, although there are a few entries for music, most are for non-existent pages numbered higher than the index itself! **(5)** So, for example, writers on Czech history may mention Smetana and Dvorak, but they probably won't mention Janacek. Writers on Hungarian music will cite Liszt perhaps, quite possibly Bartók and Kodaly, but nobody post-war, not even major figures like Ligeti or Kurtág. And it is most unlikely that anything will be indicated that there had been musical activity of any kind before the 19th century, or at best before 1750. Certainly, the arts for such writers are peripheral, and mentioning of names, perhaps of the composers' stature, serve very little purpose and are often over-generalised to the point of making inaccurate non-sense. I yearn for just a little bit more telling detail or comment, a reference to a piece or two, and an idea of style. But these are small-scale volumes and one cannot expect miracles, either in the musical content or in information on any of the other art forms.

It hardly comes as a surprise to find that literature, being word-based, and the visual arts, being eminently photographable, fare much better in general or cultural histories. I approach titles with 'cultural history' in them with a certain amount of trepidation as far as music is concerned. For as often as not music is not included.

Eric Hobsbawm's *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, 1990) has interesting comments on sport (particularly football), and is fascinating about language, but the arts are basically ignored, an odd decision given their central role in the fermentation of nationalist movements. Moving further back in time, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann's admirable *Court, Cloister & City. The Art and Culture of Central Europe 1450-1800* (London, 1995) makes passing reference to J.S. and C.P.E. Bach, to Handel, Haydn and Mozart, but goes no further into their music let alone citing the names of less familiar composers. In other words, the reader's musical knowledge has not been stretched. Even further back, in A.G. Dickens's *The Age of Humanism and Reformation. Europe in the Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (London, 1972), there is barely any mention of the arts.

I want to make it clear that I am not in the business of berating others for limiting their authorial brief, but there are too many

examples of opportunities missed for my concerns to be regarded as mere personal gripes. The sad thing is that the information is there - in the musicological historical press and in recordings - for historians to glean valuable insights that would enliven their coverage of music in history. There are, for example, numerous well-researched musicological books on life in Renaissance Italy that tie in their subject matter very closely to the history of the period. And only very recently has the traffic begun to go the other way. Yet there was an early example in the work of Jacob Burckhardt. Writing 150 years ago in *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* (London, 1990), Burckhardt did better than most of his successors, even though his page-and-a-bit on music began 'A few words on music will not be out of place in this part of our work' and even though he confined his discussion of composers to just one, Palestrina (but note: he discusses and doesn't just cite or reference). Furthermore, Burckhardt's antennae were alert to the social dimensions of music, and he would surely have had illuminating things to say had the knowledge of Italian Renaissance music in the mid-1850s been in any way extensive. What historians can help to do now, given the musical literature and materials available to them, is to bring relevant aspects of this knowledge to a wider, non-specialist readership, many of whom will already know not just the composers' names but also their repertoire from the numerous recordings made over the last 40 years. It might be said that many national, cultural and social histories lag behind public knowledge in such fields.

New Approaches to History

However, the picture is not by any means gloomy. Certain writers have a more lateral approach than others. One of these is Simon Schama, whose *Landscape and Memory* (London, 1995) is a particular favourite of mine. I am not overly concerned, paradoxically, by the very small role that music plays in his narrative (in his section on rivers, for example, he conventionally characterises Smetana's *Ma vlast* as being 'an emblem of the autonomy of Czech history', but he does not connect Wagner to the Rhine). What is significant for me is the unorthodox, some would say undisciplined or loose methodology that Schama employs: as the cover blurb puts it, it is 'a series of almost poetic stories and impressions, which cumulatively have the effect of a great novel'. It was refreshing when I first read it ten years ago, and it is still fresh today, and it has been joined by equally imaginative and musically informed approaches, such as Orlando Figes in *Natasha's Dance. A Cultural History of Russia* (London, 2002).

In Jacques Barzun's *From Dawn to Decadence. 1500 to the Present: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life* (New York, 2000), the musical commentary is fully incorporated, and his study is further enlivened by structural devices such as what he calls 'add-ins' - quotations from creators and contemporary commentators inserted in the outside margins - as well as more developed arguments on city cultures in what he calls 'cross-sections': Madrid, Venice, London, Weimar, Paris and Chicago (no Prague, Kraków or Budapest, mind!). And there has been other revelatory work done recently on history, the city and culture (including music) by authors such as Tim Blanning, Peter Burke, David Caute and Peter Hall.

But the historian with the most innovative presentational approach to music is Norman Davies. Davies is the most significant living writer on Polish affairs, with the two-volume *God's Playground. A History of Poland* (Oxford, 1981) and his detailed study with Roger Moorhouse of Wrocław (formerly Breslau) - *Microcosm. Portrait of a Central European City* (London, 2002) being notable contributions to the literature. Davies has made the greatest public impact with *Europe. A History* (Oxford, 1996). The book aims to revise our Western European prejudices about our continent (some of the maps rotate the compass by 90 degrees, with W at the top) and he brings Eastern European and near-Eastern factors more closely into balance and focus. But *Europe. A History* does much more. It integrates cultural details in a fascinating way. Like Barzun, Davies sees the value of historical 'asides', calling them 'capsules'. Among the more than 200 capsules (ranging in variety from 'Condom' to 'Cabala' and 'Llanfair', as in Llanfair pwll - gwynyllgogerychwern - drobwllllantillio - gogogoch [St Mary's in a hollow of white hazel near to a rapid whirlpool and to St. Tysilio's Church by the red cave]) are over 15 dealing specifically with music. These include a discussion of modes ('Mousike'), notation ('Cantus'), the liturgical mass ('Missa'), the trumpet call in Kraków ('Hejnał'), the 'Angelus', ballet ('Balletto'), Lutheran church music ('Hymnus'), 'Opera', 'Flamenco', the 'Sonata', the violin ('Strad'), a Bach 'Cantata', Beethoven's Ninth Symphony ('Freude'), recording technology ('Sound'), wartime songs ('Lili' and 'Bogey'), atonality ('Tone') and Glinka and nationalism ('Susanin'). Several of these 'capsules' incorporate music notation.

What, music notation in a non-specialist history? It is a measure of Norman Davies' lateral and decisive train of thought that he has persuaded perhaps reluctant publishers to include musical examples in several of his books, as in this one of a Polish medieval chant in ancient and modern notation (illustration from *God's Playground*). In *Europe. A History* he includes examples not just in the 'capsules' but also in the body of the text: the *Emperor's Fanfare* for Napoleon, a full five-page discussion (with four musical examples) of Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, and three bars from Chopin's so-called 'Revolutionary' Study, op.10 no.12.

MUSIC Chopin Etude, op.10 no.12 (start)

Music in Polish History

This musical example brings me firmly back to the central topic of this year's Gresham lectures: how the issues arising from the consideration of 'Music in History' may be explored in Eastern European and primarily the Polish context. I shall refer solely to English-language history publications, the vast majority of them authored outside Poland.

Firstly, how has Chopin, Poland's most famous musical figure, been treated in accounts by mostly non-Polish historians? One has to look far before one finds anything that goes much beyond generalised sentiments along the lines of 'the purist and most universally accessible expression of Polish Romantic feeling' or 'revered to the present day as a sacred national icon' (2001), (6) or 'Chopin is in fact so intensely national that he may be termed the representative in music of the psychology of Poland' (1941). (7) The further one goes back, however, the more revealing the commentary. A.E. Tennant, in *Studies in Polish Life and History* (London, 1924), devotes a whole chapter and five full musical examples of patriotic songs to 'Polish National Music'. Bruce Boswell, writing in 1919 (just as Poland had regained independence after over 100 years of occupation), in his book *Poland and the Poles*, devotes a chapter to 'Art and Music'. Boswell's treatment of Chopin is thoughtful, although it is coloured by the times in which he wrote. He talks, for example, of Chopin's A major Polonaise as 'symbolical of the pomp and glory of the former Polish monarchy'.

When it comes to the 'Revolutionary' Study that we have just heard, he views it as portraying 'all the hopes of the insurrection of 1830. Its poignant notes of despair, triumph and power, end with two staccato chords of impressive weight, suggesting the sudden check of great forces that must inevitably burst forth again.'

MUSIC Chopin Etude, op.10 no.12 (conclusion)

Norman Davies wisely cautions against regarding such a programmatic reception as automatic: '[Chopin's] nationality gains overriding relevance only to those who need to harness his unique talents to their own purposes'. Indeed, in this instance, the nickname 'Revolutionary' did not come from the composer in any case.

But Boswell's purple prose, while it may seem old-fashioned, is not far removed from Schama's extrovert style. Furthermore, it links in with a mode of historical writing that is often more informative than the precise account based on close reading of documents. I am thinking of fiction. Two short examples of the historical significance of Polish music in fiction will suffice.

Music in Polish Fiction

The first and most famous instance dates from 1834, at the end of the epic ballad *Pan Tadeusz* (Mr Thaddeus), by Chopin's contemporary and fellow exile in France, Adam Mickiewicz. Schama himself quotes from this passage, as did A.E. Tennant in 1924. In the concluding stanzas of *Pan Tadeusz*, recent events in Polish history are conjured up by the master dulcimer player, Jankiel, climaxing with a reference to what became the Polish national anthem, *Dąbrowski's Mazurka*.

Then all at once from many strings there burst

A sound as though a janissaries' band

With cymbals, bells and drums made glad the land. (940)

The *Polonaise* that marked *The Third of May*

Came thundering forth!

[followed by musical recreations of negative events in recent Polish history, including the Massacre of Praga in 1794 which marked the end of the Kościuszko Insurrection]

Then suddenly he joined his hands and smote

With both the hammers: such a skilful blow,

So powerful, that from the loud strings flow (1020)

Great brazen trumpet-tones in which is given

A well-known song that mounted to the heaven,

A march of triumph: "Poland's not yet dead;

March, march Dombrowski, at our legions' head,

To Poland!"(8)

My second example is contained in James A. Michener's novel *Poland*(London, 1983), in which music is used to highlight key periods of Polish history (1646, 1793, 1895 and 1919). This is most apparent in Chapter 7, entitled 'Mazurka', where music concerts and their repertoire provide the vehicle for the (fictional) historical narrative.(9)

Future Solutions

There is surely scope for non-fictional historical studies also to take advantage of music, especially when, as in Poland's case, there are blindingly obvious connections between historical events and musical compositions or genres. But, as Arthur Marwick has pointed out in *The Nature of History*(London, 1970), there are dangers in 'any simplistic reading of cultural artefacts as a mirror of their times' or as expressing 'the spirit of the age'. One way out of this potential impasse has been explored recently by Peter Burke, with regard to visual rather than aural factors, in his book *Eyewitnessing. The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London, 2001). And while visual images, texts and oral testimonies have some pedigree as historical evidence, music, particularly that with no text or obvious function or external reference point, is lagging far behind in the panoply of what Burke characterises as 'admissible evidence'. I am convinced, however, that it is possible for music to be incorporated, notwithstanding comments made to me recently by a well-known professional historian that the lack of vocabulary and the complexity of writing about music prevents many historians from grasping at what is often the most elusive of the arts. Those of us old enough to remember Anthony Hopkins' long-running and unmissable radio series, 'Talking About Music', know that it can be done for the benefit and delight of the listeners, be they 'ordinary' or not! And, by the way, Anthony Hopkins was one of my distinguished predecessors here, being Professor of Music at Gresham in the 1960s.

Are there any immediate solutions? Firstly, on a logistical level, it is surely possible for the historical press to borrow a proven but still rare leaf out of the musical press: to include CDs with a book or, as technology already allows, to provide downloadable tracks on the internet. Secondly, is there really any valid objection to following A.E. Tennant's and Norman Davies's initiatives and including musical examples or illustrations with music notation on a more regular basis? A musical example is going to be at least if not more effective a tool of communication with the 'ordinary' reader than a pretty but indecipherable picture of medieval text or a diminutive reproduction of a large painting. And finally, but more challengingly, perhaps we need to think of publishing projects which are multi-authored, not necessarily with sole-authored chapters on particular aspects of a topic - as in the 1941 *Cambridge History of Poland* and several Polish-authored histories - but a genuine integration of research skills and knowledge. I can think of nothing more exciting than working with four or five colleagues from other disciplines to produce, for example, a rounded, rigorous and readable account of Polish history and culture, with music accorded a more prominent role. And perhaps by these and other means we can begin to redress the imbalance and mis-emphases in our current musical environment that I outlined at the beginning of today's talk. At the very least, the discussion of music would appear in contexts which the 'ordinary' reader is likely to come across. From little acorns ...

Music in Polish History - Before Chopin

One glaring hole in current and past attention to Eastern European culture and music is in the coverage of history before the age of Chopin and Mickiewicz. To read most historians, one would think that music barely existed before 1800, at least beyond the names of the familiar composers whom I mentioned earlier. Clearly this is a nonsense, although Adam Zamoyski, in his book *The Polish Way. A Thousand-Year History of the Poles and their Culture* (London, 1987) goes a little way to addressing the problem. Prior to the 1960s, and certainly during the 19th century, little was commonly known about early Baroque, Renaissance or medieval European music (Jacob Burckhardt is a beacon of light in this area). The repertoire generally languished, undiscovered and unperformed. Since the 1960s, the Early Music movement across Europe has done a fantastic job in unearthing, editing, performing and recording this vast repertoire, and there can be no excuse now for ignoring it. Yet ignored it largely remains outside its immediate musical environments. And this, as far as Poland is concerned, is where the remaining five lectures of this series seek to fill, or rather begin to fill, this yawning gap.

For today, I'd like to look at two examples, one from the 17th century, one from medieval times. I doubt whether you have heard of the name, let alone the music, of the 17th-century Polish composer Bartłomiej [Bartholomew] Pękiel. You won't find his name or those of any of his contemporaries in most history books, yet his music has been published in modern Polish editions for over forty years and CDs of his music have been available (at least in Poland) since the late 1980s. By common consent in Polish musical circles, he is one of the most significant musicians of his time. He initially served as the first Polish master of the King's music at the Royal Court in Warsaw (in the 1640s and early 1650s) and then spent the last twelve years of his life, from 1658 to c.1670, as the musical director of the chapel in the former Royal court at Wawel Castle in Kraków. Here's a passage from his so-called 'dialogue' - a relative of the cantata and oratorio - *Audite morales*.

MUSIC Pękiel *Audite morales* (first section)

Pękiel wrote *Audite morales* when in service to the Polish King in Warsaw. Written in the *stile moderno* [modern style] it bears clear affinities with Monteverdi, Gabrieli and other 17th-century composers.

Pękiel was also the composer of one of the masterpieces of Polish unaccompanied polyphony. He wrote *Missa pulcherrima* in Kraków, just before he died and more than 10 years after *Audite morales*. The contrast in style could not be greater, as Pękiel had reverted to the *stile antico* [old style] prevalent in the 16th century, as this excerpt demonstrates.

MUSIC Pękiel *Missa pulcherrima* (Kyrie)

Now, stylistic anachronism, taking the literal meaning of the word as 'out of time', is nothing new. But something striking happened in Pękiel's life and output: his music, however beautiful and expertly crafted and however comparable it may be to that of his more famous Western European contemporaries, has a stylistic enigma about it that had its roots not just in his own creativity but in specific political and cultural circumstances. Does his case not illustrate the desirability of integrating his experience within a context that is historical rather than musical so that both dimensions can be enriched? What external factors caused this reversal, and how can we understand them better through examples such as these? I shall return to such issues in subsequent lectures.

My final example takes us back virtually to the beginning of Polish music. It is the earliest surviving example of a Polish composition with a Polish text. It is called *Bogurodzica*, meaning 'Mother of God' (although most historians don't bother either to translate it or even give an excerpt of its text, both of them surely crucial to its significance). *Bogurodzica* is the most frequently mentioned piece of early Polish music, to the extent of becoming a talisman of the country's history and culture to rival Chopin's 'Revolutionary' Study or the *Dąbrowski March*. Indeed, *Bogurodzica* was one of the *Dąbrowski March*'s predecessors as Poland's national anthem, not that it sounds much like one to our ears.

MUSIC *Bogurodzica* (v.1)

Bogurodzica dziewica, Mother of God, Virgin

Bogiem sławiona Maryja, Blessed by God, Mary,

u twego syna Gospodzina With your son, our Lord,

matko zwolena, Maryja, Chosen mother, Mary,

zyszczy nam, spuści nam Intercede for us, send [him] to us

Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison.

The first major chronicler of medieval Polish history, Jan Długosz, writing in the 15th century, mentions *Bogurodzica* four times in his *Annals*. In three of his four citations the song is sung as a prelude to going into battle, most famously at the Battle of Grunwald in 1410:

On Wednesday July 9, the Polish-Lithuanian army advances a further two miles through wooded terrain into an extensive plain, where the combined forces, consisting of eighty-two squadrons of knights, are drawn up in line of battle. Władysław, with tears in his eyes, then unfurls a great standard embroidered with a white eagle with spread wings, open beak and a crown on its head, the arms of the Kingdom of Poland. He then prays aloud, a prayer heard by many and so moving that it reduces most who hear it to tears. The Grand-duke and the Mazovian princes similarly pray for victory as they unfurl their standards. The whole

army then sings the Polish anthem: *Bogu Rodzica*.

MUSIC *Bogurodzica* (v.2)

Twego dzieł Krzciciela, bożycze, For the sake of your Baptist, son of God,

usłysz głosy, napełń myśli człowiecze. Hear [our] voices, fulfil the wishes of men.

Słysz modlitwę, jaż nosimy, Hear [our] prayer, which we offer,

a dać raczy, jegoż prosimy: And grant that for which we ask:

a na świecie zbożny pobyt, On earth a worthy sojourn,

po żywocie rajski przebyt. After life to abide in paradise.

Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison.

For the remainder of the Jagiellonian dynasty - effectively until the mid-15th century - *Bogurodzica* was also used at grand ceremonies, such as the election and coronation of Polish kings, as happened, according to Długosz, in 1446:

... the Archbishop of Gniezno proclaims Duke Bolesław of Mazovia Poland's future king, unanimously elected in accordance with ecclesiastical law. The clergy then sing *Te deum laudamus*, and the populace sing *Bogu Rodzica*.

While all histories of Poland mention the Battle of Grunwald, very few associate it with *Bogurodzica* and virtually none offers any comment on the important functional, religious, national and musical dimension offered by the contribution of *Bogurodzica* to Polish history. Bucking the trend, A.E. Tennant, writing in 1924, informs us: 'It is a modal tune of great interest, rough and quaint, but impressive even today'. Adam Zamoyski comments: 'To sing the *Bogurodzica* ... requires a degree of musical education'. Given the fact that back in the 15th century it was sung, according to Długosz, by 'the whole army' or by 'the populace', this suggests a modern misunderstanding of the commonality of church chant at that time. Anyone who has heard church hymns sung in rural Polish churches will know that part of their charm is that each singer has his or her own intonational and rhythmic gloss on the melodies and that the cumulative effect, although by no means conventionally accurate, is overwhelming and empowering. So too must have been the effect of *Bogurodzica* being sung by 'ordinary' people (rather than on a pristine CD) at significant moments in Polish history.

In the case of both Pękiel and *Bogurodzica*, not to mention Chopin, I have suggested that opportunities have to date not normally been taken up by historians to bring music (and, by inference, the other arts) to bear on our understanding of, in this case, Polish history. Indeed, Norman Davies aside, one has to go back to Boswell and Tennant in 1919 and 1924 to find English-language authors who are sufficiently engaged with music and the arts to devote space and effort to their integration into the historical narrative of Poland. I am sure that such an integration will eventually reappear more frequently, across the spectrum of historical study. And I hope, in the case of the ensuing Gresham lectures, that the richness and breadth of Polish music, from *Bogurodzica* to the birth of Chopin, will invigorate the cause of placing music squarely where it belongs: in history, not on the periphery or outside it.

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Discography

Chopin Etude op.10 no.12'Revolutionary'

Pękiel, Bartłomiej *Audite morales* and *Missa pulcherrima*

anon. *Bogurodzica*

(1) Michael Scott Rohan, Review of Nicholas Kenyon's *The Faber Pocket Guide to Mozart*, in *BBC Music Magazine* (October 2005), 99.

(2) *The Piano. A History* (Oxford, 1990)

(3) Notable exceptions include Richard Stites writings on popular culture in the Soviet Union.

(4) Miklós Molnar, *A Concise History of Hungary*(Cambridge, 2001)

(5) Maria Dowling, *Czechoslovakia* (London, 2002)

(6) Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland* (Cambridge, 2001)

(7) Monica Gardner, 'Romanticism', in W.F.Reddaway and others, eds., *The Cambridge History of Poland* (Cambridge, 1941)

(8) excerpts in the translation by Watson Kirkonell (New York, 1981)

(9) An interesting third example, which illustrates the long-lasting tensions between Russia and Poland, is contained in the poem *Retribution* (1919) by the Russian writer Aleksander Blok. The following excerpt from Blok's diary illustrates the central symbolism of the mazurka in the poem. For a further discussion, see Waclaw Lednicki, *Russia, Poland and the West. Essays in Literary and Cultural History* (London, 1954).

'The whole poem must be accompanied by a definite leitmotif of retribution'; this leitmotif is the *mazurka*, ... In the first chapter [of the poem], this dance is lightly wafted from the window of some Petersburg flat ...; in the second chapter the dance booms out at a ball, mingled with the clang of the officers' spurs, like the foam of the Veuve Cliquot champagne of *fin-de-siecle* renown; ... finally, in the third chapter, the *mazurka* rages, it peals out in the snowstorm borne over nocturnal Warsaw, over the snow-blanketed Polish cloverfields. In it already is distinctly heard the voice of *Retribution*.'