

# *Open-Air* *Music in* *Warsaw*

*Between the World Wars*

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is to situate the most important open-air venues where music was performed on the map of interwar Warsaw. This includes venues in city parks, restaurant tea gardens, streets and squares where mass celebrations and demonstrations took place, as well as the courtyards of tenement houses frequented by street players and singers. In addition to live music, that coming from the radio, gramophone records, as well as megaphones installed in parks and streets has been taken into account. On the basis of press reports, taken mainly from the *Kurier Warszawski* (Warsaw's largest daily newspaper), as well as works of fiction and diaries, the repertoire of works performed in the open air has been reconstructed. The organisers and performers of concerts, open-air shows, and street marches during which music was performed have also been listed. The material is divided into contexts connected with the everyday life of Warsaw's bourgeoisie and working class (during which music, functioning independently or as part of theatrical, cabaret and film performances, functioned as entertainment) and those belonging to the official-public or ceremonial sphere (celebrations of religious and national holidays, military parades, spontaneous demonstrations of supporters of various political groups). Special emphasis has been placed on recreating the social and political context of the latter type of events, which highlight the role of interwar Warsaw as the capital of the state.

**Keywords:** open-air music, the culture of interwar Warsaw, urban folklore, military music, political demonstrations and music

The below-presented survey of venues and events that made up the soundscape of the interwar Warsaw is based on materials from that city's biggest newspaper, *Kurier Warszawski*, which was a leading and most detailed source of information on cultural life in the city. Since *Kurier* was a Christian-nationalist daily, it marginalised events organised in the separate Jewish district as well as activities of the left-wing movement – however not to such an extent as to undermine the editors' objectivity in their choice of cultural news.

## PARKS AND GARDENS

Warsaw's parks were, as in other European cities, a place of entertainment for the city's inhabitants. Each was frequented by, and accessible to, specific social groups. Under the Russian rule before WWI, the Polish population would go for walks and events to places situated in the centre of the capital: the Foksal garden, where a summer theatrical stage operated in the eighteenth century, and where parties and shows

were held; the exclusive Royal Łazienki Park, frequented by the Polish high society (Russians were unwelcome there); the nearby Agrykola Park and Saxon Garden. The bourgeoisie was also attracted to Frascati entertainment park, founded back in the eighteenth century on a terrace east of Trzech Krzyży (Three Crosses) Square, overlooking the Vistula's escarpment, and the Swiss Valley, a part of Ujazdów quarter with an amphitheatre that was made available to choirs and orchestras. Between the world wars, the Krasiński Garden catered for the Jewish (Northern) District and for the Russian population. Aleksander Kraushar, a historian of the city, describes Russian-style popular Passover parties held in that park.<sup>1</sup> The Russian high society would rest in the Ujazdowski Park, where military parades were held, among others.

Warsaw's working class spent their free time in the summer on the unguarded beaches of the Vistula's left bank. The traditional Whitsuntide church fête and fair<sup>2</sup> attracted people to the Bielany Wood where merry-go-rounds and travelling circus tents invited holiday makers. This continued until 1935, when the area was taken over by the municipal authorities, which prohibited such fair and funfair operations. Springtime picnics were held in Młociny Park, Mokotów Park, and the summer resorts on the outskirts. Warsaw's markets provided traditional venues for acrobats and sung theatricals. The best known of these markets were in the Praga District (Różycki Marketplace in Targowa Street) and in Wola District (the so-called Kercelak in Kerceli Square). Circus shows were also presented in Broni Square, a warehouse area converted in the 1930s into a bus terminal.

In the centre of left-bank Warsaw, Dynasy under the Vistula's escarpment (seat of the Cyclist Society) was a venue for popular parties. The Rotunda, erected in 1891 to house the *Panorama of the Tatra* and later adapted for a theatre, was the pride of that place. Right-bank Warsaw, which was mostly a working-class district, had two large parks: Aleksandryjski and Skaryszewski.

The names of some of the above-mentioned parks changed after 1918: Aleksandryjski to Praski, Skaryszewski – to Paderewski Park, Agrykola – to Sobieski Park. New

<sup>1</sup> Aleksander Kraushar, 'Warszawa przed powstaniem styczniowym 1863 r. (Nieco wspomnień naocznego świadka)' ['Warsaw before the 1863 January Uprising (Memories of an Eyewitness)'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 22 (23 January 1930, evening edition), 4.

<sup>2</sup> The Catholic Pentecost, fifty days after Easter.

parks were also created in line with the then modern planning concept of garden cities, implemented in 1934–39 under the tenure of Stefan Starzyński as President of Warsaw. The Traugutt Park was thus set up in the centre of the city in 1925–1929, the Żeromski Park in Żoliborz District – opened in 1932, the Sowiński Park in Wola – in 1936, the Wielkopolski Park along Filtrowa Street and the Dreszer Park along the moat in Mokotów Fort – in 1938. Of all these parks and gardens, the exclusive ones were those situated in the city centre: Saxon, Krasiński, Traugutt, Ujazdowski, Agrykola, and Łazienki – with electric lighting, entertainment venues, and guards who maintained order and made sure the visitors looked decent enough. The administrators also took care of the natural soundscape, making efforts to attract songbirds that could nest in the park greenery.

The common folk's entertainment centres were the Paderewski and Praski Parks. The latter attracted the audience with a funfair (extended and modernised in 1929), but it was also a venue for popular parties and concerts by the municipal orchestras. A similar function was fulfilled by Pole Mokotowskie (Mokotów Commons), some sports fields, as well as Dynasy. The latter, however, disappeared from Warsaw's map of entertainment venues in the 1930s when the cycling track was closed down, the plots parcelled out (in 1937), and luxury tenement houses built on them.

From 1919 onwards, municipal parks were rented out for public parties by the Technical Department of the City Council, which granted concessions for such events. Parties of this kind were most frequent in the 1920s. Later they went out of fashion, partly due to the population's impoverishment during the Great Depression, but also because the Warsaw middle class embraced a new trend – that of going out of town on family outings and summer holidays. The latter became accessible even to persons of modest means – the more so since improvements in public transport (buses and trains to the outskirts of Warsaw) made such trips possible also for those who did not own a car.

The above-mentioned 'exclusive' parks hosted restaurants and theatres: The Mineral Waters Institute and the Letni (Summer) Theatre in the Saxon Garden; an elegant café with music in the Royal Łazienki Park, where ballet productions were presented in the pseudo-Greek ruin (renovated in 1926) known as the Theatre on the Isle. In the latter, spectacles were staged by the dance companies of Piotr Zajlich, Franciszka Kutnerówna, Adolfina Paszkowska, Tacjana Wysocka, Kazimierz

Łobojko, and others. In 1928–32 the Warsaw Opera gave summer performances in this outdoor theatre, while in 1937–39 the Polska Opera Ludowa (Polish Popular Opera), headed by Stanisław Narocz-Nowicki, held Moniuszko seasons there. The last spectacle, one of *Halka*, was shown on 27 August 1939.

The sports stadium in Łazienkowska Street became a venue for mass events in the early 1930s. 1931 saw the production in that place (by the Dyrekcja Widowisk Historycznych – Historical Spectacles Management) of a monumental reconstruction of the Battle of Racławice, involving 1,500 performers (including three orchestras, choirs, and a ballet). The next attraction of this type, presented soon afterwards, was *The Cottage outside the Village* after a novel by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, whose performers included an orchestra, choirs, a ballet, hundreds of supernumeraries, and an authentic train of Gypsy wagons. In June of the following year, a spectacle was shown based on Henryk Sienkiewicz's *The Teutonic Knights*. A concert of more than a dozen Romanian military bands (750 musicians in total) was held there in early July 1934, and in 1935 – a historical show featuring major episodes from recent Polish history, culminating in the presentation of a 'live map of present-day Poland'. From 1935 onwards, the venue served as the Polish Armed Forces' main stadium.

Numerous entertainment events were held in the Swiss Valley, property of the Skating Association. An ice rink and toboggan run opened there after frost had set in. Music was played for the public using these facilities. In the summer, bands and orchestras performed on several stages; masquerades, tableaux vivants, fireworks, dancing competitions, prize draws, women's beauty contests etc. were organised. Some events had specific themes. For instance, the 1919 summer season opened with a 'Singles Evening' and ended with a great party titled 'The Valley Is on Fire'. Many events were held in the summer of 1921, when the Swiss Valley's management was taken over by Henryk Markiewicz, owner of a Concert Agency with seat at Warsaw Conservatory. In the following year, the Valley was leased to a private company, which organised daily concerts by the Warsaw Garrison Representative Orchestra under its very active leader Aleksander Sielski, formerly a conductor in Russia. 1922 saw the first jazz band performance in the Valley – by Antoni Adamus String Sextet. The Entertainment Society headed by Stanisław Ossorya-Brochocki held a cabaret season, and was responsible for the summer seasons in the Valley until 1924. These included concerts by Adamus' jazz sextet,

the Warsaw Garrison Representative Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, as well as the Stanisław Namysłowski Orchestra (successor to the legendary Karol Namysłowski Peasant Orchestra, active under the Russian rule). The 1925 summer season featured, among others, Walery Jastrzębiec's cabaret company and the Orchestra of the Thirty-Sixth Academic Infantry Legion,<sup>3</sup> while in 1926 and 1927 the main star was Sielski's orchestra, performing with popular opera and stage singers as well as Tacjana Wysocka's dance company. Since the Warsaw Garrison Representative Orchestra wound down in 1927, its place was taken over by Warsaw Philharmonic, which held its own summer season in the Valley in 1928. Daily concerts were directed by leaders regularly collaborating with the Philharmonic and by some of the orchestra members. The Philharmonic continued to hold performances in the Valley in 1929-1932. Symphonic concerts were followed by ballet spectacles and revues. 1929 saw the introduction, for the first time, of 'mechanical music' in the Valley, played back over Marconi gigantophones. The 1933 concert season in the valley was presented by Warsaw Symphony Orchestra (established by Bronisław Szulc). After a break in 1934, season organisation was taken up in 1935 by the Polish Fanfare, which was another of Sielski's orchestras, and by Lewandowski's orchestra in 1937. In the last years before the war, there were no more musical seasons in the Valley.

### MIDSUMMER NIGHT CELEBRATIONS

The Rowing Association's marina in Czerniakowska Street (Powiśle District) became a new venue for entertainment in Warsaw between the World Wars. In 1919 the Society came up with the idea of reviving the so called *wianki*, the folk midsummer festival, which had been forbidden under the Partitions and during the war since large assemblies had been unwelcome. The first midsummer celebrations in independent Poland, in June 1919, were highly spectacular for this reason. They took the form of a boat parade. The crews consisted of representatives of non-governmental organisations, guilds, schools, universities, and the army, clad in historical costumes, with presentations of tableaux vivants. Since all the crews wished to manifest their patriotism, national symbols prevailed. The central idea of this parade, titled 'Midsummer Garlands Float

to Gdańsk', was to emphasise the Polish nation's wish for the city of Gdańsk to be reunited with Poland. This idea was reflected in many ways. There were fireworks and patriotic music, including Poland's still unofficial national anthem, *Dąbrowski's Mazurka*. The boat crews included Warsaw's leading choirs, Lutnia (Lute) and Drużyna Śpiewacza (Singers' Team),<sup>4</sup> both of which prepared programmes consisting of patriotic songs and other pieces on themes related to the Vistula. The 1920 midsummer celebrations were more modest since Poland was fighting wars against Soviet Russia and Czechoslovakia, there was a government crisis, and raging poverty pushed Warsaw's workers to hold protests in the streets. The traditional parade was held, though. Military bands and choirs (Lutnia and Drużyna Śpiewacza) performed. In the late 1920s, the celebrations began to be co-organised also by Women's Rowing Association, 'Wisła' Rowing Club, and the Academic Sports Union. The main points of the programme remained the same: a boat parade on the Vistula, a fireworks display, and orchestral music. Nevertheless, since participants had to pay for the scenery and décor out of their own pockets, the parade participants' numbers were on the wane, as also was the audience's interest. 'The Warsaw crowds are not fond of fresh air. They prefer stuffy crowded halls,' commented *Kurier Warszawski* following the rather unsuccessful 1929 midsummer celebrations. In a way, this sentence also sums up the then overall situation of outdoor entertainment initiatives in Warsaw.<sup>5</sup> In 1933, the official midsummer celebrations were merged with the Sea Day (28 June). This festival, which also included events on land (an open-air church service and a military parade) thus turned into a propaganda event with an openly political agenda, complete with choral performances of hymns and patriotic songs. 1934 saw a technical innovation, since the national anthem (which traditionally opened the boat parade on the Vistula) was played over the loudspeakers. From 1938, the event was broadcast on Polish Radio. Warsaw's inhabitants missed the traditional midsummer celebrations, though. To satisfy the popular expectations, from 1937 onwards they again came to be organised by non-governmental groups, independently of the Sea Day.

<sup>3</sup> Its members were students of the State Music Conservatory; it was directed by Major Stefan Lidzki-Śledziński.

<sup>4</sup> Respectively, the Choir of Trade and Industry Personnel and the Choir of the Rowing Association.

<sup>5</sup> 'Wiadomości bieżące. Wianki na Wiśle' ['Current News: The Midsummer Celebrations on the Vistula'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 171 (24 June 1929, morning edition), 2.

### CONCERTS AND OTHER EVENTS HELD BY THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES

The tradition of municipal and military orchestras giving free concerts in Warsaw's urban space goes back to the nineteenth century. In the early period, the orchestras known for such performances were those of the municipal militia (active throughout the Prussian occupation), the Fire Brigades (est. 1906), and the State Police (founded after the dissolution of the militia). There were also others, such as those of the railway guards, city trams personnel,<sup>6</sup> and gasworks personnel. From the late 1920s onwards, free concerts by military bands and municipal orchestras were held in the city's parks, gardens, and squares. This was also a way to support orchestral musicians in financial straits. The first open-air concert series financed by the Municipal Department of Education and Culture was held in 1928, when selected brass bands gave performances in the Saxon, Skaryszewski, and Traugutt parks on Sundays and feast days. From mid-May 1929, free city-funded concerts were presented in the Saxon Garden by Aleksander Sielski's brass band. From 1935, free performances by military bands and the Orchestra of the Municipal Trams and Buses Company as well as popular dance parties with music were organised by the city council in parks and suburban meadows. As many as 190 such events were held till July 1939,<sup>7</sup> in places such as the Paderewski, Traugutt, Żeromski, Dreszer, and Sowiński parks, Wybrzeże Kościuszkowskie boulevard, the Old Town walls, Wolności Square, meadows along Elbląska Street in Powązki estate, and the fields in Siekierki. The Old Town Square was used several times in the 1930s as a summer venue, including – for a production of *Cud mniemany* (*The Supposed Miracle*) by Wojciech Bogusławski, which was part of a festival dedicated to this father of the Polish opera, as well as Jan Kiepura's concerts in 1938 and 1939.

### MUSIC IN PAVEMENT CAFÉS AND TEA GARDENS

Such summer tea gardens existed as outdoor sections of restaurants in central Warsaw already in the nineteenth

century. They catered for the lower-middle and middle urban classes, both Polish and Jewish, while Russians had their own venues. The garden of Roman Rekiert & Co.'s dairy (35, Ujazdowskie Avenue) won popularity in the nineteenth century and maintained its reputation after WWI. Performances by the more-than-one-hundred-piece Warsaw Army Headquarters Orchestra, founded during the Polish-Soviet war and headed by Aleksander Sielski, took place in that venue in 1920–21. According to Kazimierz Wilkomirski, who was a member of this orchestra, it brought together 'plenty of musicians working in the lighter music genres, as well as all kinds of botchers who (like myself) prefer to do poor work in the orchestra rather than spill (our own or the other side's) blood in the nearby front line'.<sup>8</sup> In later years, Sielski's band was transformed into the Orchestra of the Warsaw Garrison of the Polish Armed Forces, which performed, among others, under Jan Mackiewicz in the Rekiert tea garden. Other collectives that appeared there included Adam Furmański's 'popular music and symphony orchestra' and Kazimierz Bajon's artistic ensemble. The last open-air event was held in Rekiert's tea garden in 1929. Thereafter, Aleksander Sielski, who was then the head of a brass band he had set up himself, opened a Summer Concert Hall on the same spot. Cabaret spectacles had been discontinued even before, due to strong competition from permanent cabaret stages, operating, also in the summer, in those 'stuffy crowded halls' that the Warsaw public is said to have preferred.

The Rekiert tea garden competed with the garden at 3 Bagatela Street, property of the Gardening Society (est. 1884), leased after WWI to Kazimierz Dakowski. Advertised as 'Warsaw's summer salon', it attracted members of the higher and middle classes. In the summer of 1919, Aleksander Sielski, already mentioned above in connection with several other initiatives, launched in Bagatela (jointly with Maria Sobolewska, director of a Warsaw singing school) a project called Opera Buffo, including spectacles of Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor* (*The Impresario*), a piece after Offenbach, Adam's *La poupée de Nuremberg*, as well as a ballet night titled *Polish Dances* (dir. Kazimierz Łobojko). The garrison orchestra under Sielski played in the intervals. Sielski and Sobolewska continued this project in the following season (1920), with premieres of operettas by Wincenty Rapacki Jr (*Trial of Love*, *The Carbonari*), as well as medley shows including performances by the Warsaw ballet. Józef Trzeciak's ballet-extravaganza *The Old Fisherman*

<sup>6</sup> Later known as the Orchestra of the Municipal Trams and Buses Company.

<sup>7</sup> 'Wiadomości bieżące. Zabawy powszechne w Warszawie' ['Current News: Free Entertainment in Warsaw'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 204 (26 July 1939, morning edition), 6.

<sup>8</sup> Kazimierz Wilkomirski, *Wspomnienia* [Memories] (Kraków, 1971), 192.

and the *Goldfish* was staged in July. From early May 1921, Stanisław Namysłowski's orchestra gave daily concerts at Bagatela. In the summer of 1926, there were more medley shows including vocal, theatrical, and acrobatic numbers, dances, and even performing dogs and roosters. The inaugural programme, titled *Attention! We Have Come*, was produced by Max Boczkowski. The 1927 summer season at Bagatela opened with an operetta by Leo Fall (titled *Piękny sen* [Beautiful Dream] in the Polish version), whereas 1928 saw performances by Tadeusz Wołowski's ephemeral *Wesoły Ul* (Merry Beehive) theatre company, which staged variety shows: *Hey These Wives of Ours* and *Hello Bagatela!* They were superseded in 1929 by Rewia Bagatela revue theatre company, inaugurating their programme series with a variety show titled *Miss Bagatela*. The latter troupe continued to stage spectacles for the next two seasons, but already at the all-seasons theatre next door, 5 Bagatela Street.

The garden in Bagatela was also the venue for most charity events held in Warsaw in the early-to-mid-1920s. These were usually all-night shows abounding in various attractions, including ballet spectacles, fireworks displays, and contests of all kinds. These shows also featured opera and ballet artists, cabaret stars, and jazz bands. The latter included Kagan-Gold in 1922, Adamus' band in 1923, and Zygmunt Wiehler's orchestra in 1924. In later years, jazz bands would play indoors, which was related to the fact that their performances would be broadcast on the radio. In Bagatela, such parties were held no more in the 1930s until they began to be organised again in the summer of 1939. The last of them featured Polish Radio Orchestra, Dana Choir, and several opera soloists. Its aim was to collect money for the country's defence.

The tea garden of the Victoria Hotel, likewise centrally located at 26 Jasna Street, only offered performances by mandolin ensembles and the domra players' band.<sup>9</sup> The last information concerning music events held in that garden comes from the late 1920s. Several other tea gardens with music emerged in the same period. 1925 saw the first performances in the newly opened tea gardens at the Polonia Palace hotel (39 Jerozolimskie Avenue), Café Restaurant Unia (12 Moniuszki Street), the Łobzowianka Café (at the corner of Ujazdowskie Avenue and Koszykowa Street), as well as Civil Servants Club at 12 Świętokrzyska Street. A short-lived youth orchestra under Feliks Rybicki performed at that latter club, a mandolin ensemble and a band under Czesław

Żak – at the Unia Café, and the Polish Armed Forces Representative Orchestra – during the evening dances at the Łobzowianka. More musical tea gardens would open in the years that followed: at the Wróbel Restaurant (14 Mazowiecka St.), the Lij (8 Krakowskie Przedmieście St.), the Europejski Hotel (13 Krakowskie Przedmieście St.), the Bristol Hotel (42/44 Krakowskie Przedmieście St.), the Philips Radio-Garden (8 Mazowiecka St.), J. Herbst & Co. restaurant (at the corner of Nowy Świat and Warecka St.), and Café Romantique (11 Krucza St.).

### SUMMER THEATRES

Some theatres and cinema theatres held open-air performances in the summer. These included the Argus Theatre (5 Bielańska St.), which attracted the audience with strongmen's and acrobats' displays of skill, cabaret programmes, and operetta spectacles, cinema-theatres: the Wodewil (43 Nowy Świat St.) and Olimpia (114 Marszałkowska St.), as well as the small Eldorado Theatre (29 Hoża St., at the corner of Marszałkowska St.). 1923 saw a summer operetta season at the Wodewil, organised by Władysław Szczawiński and Kazimiera Niewiarowska (both artists had recently moved to Warsaw from Russia). The first work to be premiered was Hugo Hirsch's *Die Tolle Lola*, followed by Jean Gilbert's *Szczęście Mary* (probably *Annemarie*), Robert Stoltz's piece titled *Czar nocy* [*Charm of the Night*] in Polish, and Oscar Strauss' *Das Nixchen* (Pol. *Królowa fał*). In the next summer season, the same team staged Stoltz's *The Harlequin* (Pol. *Pajac*) and Walter Kollo's *Marietta*. In 1925 Niewiarowska held her own theatre season in an all-year, indoor venue, whereas the 1926 season at the Wodewil was organised by Walery Jastrzębiec-Rudnicki, a spectacle director collaborating with Warsaw's cabarets. The stage was renovated and roofed over. The season opened with Emmerich Kálmán's *Autumn Manoeuvres*. Two variety shows, titled *Weather will be Good the Day after Tomorrow* and *Wife Won't Learn about It*, were staged in the following year. Afterwards the Wodewil's outdoor programmes came to an end.

The Eldorado Theatre, already in operation before WWI, presented its outdoor summer programmes in 1926 (featuring a stage collective led by Stanisław Ossorya-Brochocki, whose inaugural show titled *Cimcirimci z bibliotkami* was followed by *Ah Those Bushes* and *Put Your Legs on the Table*) and 1927 (directed by Walery Jastrzębiec: *The Guardian of Virtue*, followed by *Women's Paradise* and *At War with Wives*). This theatre ceased its activities the autumn of 1927.

<sup>9</sup> A band made up of Russian musicians active in the 1920s Warsaw under the direction of Bazyli Zubrzycki.

Another theatre-and-cabaret venture that opened its outdoor stage in 1926 was the Olimpia, where the outdoor summer season was likewise directed by Walery Jastrzębiec. After the medley *What Impudence!* there came, among others, the vaudeville *I Wanna Be a Tomboy!* authored by well-known journalist Jadwiga Kiewnarska, and the 'topical vaudeville' titled *Susanne's Taking a Bath*; in 1927 – two other vaudevilles: *Radio Frequency 1111* and *You'll Find a Husband Here*. This short-lived stage ended its activity at the same time as the Eldorado, in the autumn of 1927. The Olimpia's troupe provided the basis for the Czerwony As (Red Ace) theatre headed first by Tadeusz Wołowski, and later – Józef Winiaszkiewicz. The latter company only gave performances till the end of the 1928/29 season. During this time it nevertheless also made its presence in the outdoor events scene by staging a remake of Alfred Hennequin / Joseph Webster's farce titled *Pan minister na inspekcji* [*The Minister's Inspection*] in Polish in the summer of 1928 and the revue *No Fig Leaf Needed* in 1929. The Olimpia's successor was the Pod Bukietem (Under the Bouquet) restaurant, opened in 1931, which had both an indoor area and a tea garden.

### STREET MUSICIANS AND THE SOUNDSCAPE OF URBAN YARDS

*Kurier Warszawski* wrote in the summer of 1923:

As Warsaw's appearance, its buildings and streets, are undergoing a transformation, so also are human types. The organ-grinders and urban band singers, whose ear-splitting voices assault peace-loving inhabitants – are gradually disappearing. Likewise on the wane are buskers playing in public squares and on pavements, whose instruments are merely a cover for their beggary.<sup>10</sup>

This press article was printed at the time of mass migrations after WWI, when a huge number of people coming from Russia or from the Eastern borderlands regained by the Polish state flocked into Warsaw, which led to a major immigration crisis. Many of those newcomers were begging in front of churches, at the entrance to post offices, department stores, restaurants, as well as in the city's main squares and traffic arteries, as the text informs us.

The era of organ grinders and urban street musicians entered its twilight, according to Marta Michalska, already in the late nineteenth century. This was caused, on the one hand, by a series of bans on such activities

imposed by the municipal police, and on the other – by the rise of the modern media, which for a large part of the population came to replace live music.<sup>11</sup> Having said this, both barrel organs and buskers' bands continued to contribute to the soundscape of Warsaw between the world wars. The number of street performers even increased during the Great Depression since many unemployed workers and craftsmen took it up as an occupation. Their activity frequently led to conflicts with caretakers and later also with the law since in 1938 the municipal authorities placed a ban on street performances.<sup>12</sup> This regulation was in fact flouted by both the musicians and their audiences. The traditional repertoire of street performers reflected the multinational structure of Warsaw's prewar population. This meant that, side by side with Polish-language songs (frequently derived from the current cabaret and cinema repertoire), organ-grinders, street singers and bands also performed the much-liked Russian romances. One of Nina Rydzewska's protagonists recalls in her novel *W-Hour* (published directly after WWII):

Your eyelids are still heavy from the sleep, when a barrel-organ tune bursts in through the window: 'Rozluka, ti moya rozluka',<sup>13</sup> echoing against the cobblestones in the yard [...] But then comes 'Otets moy bil bradyaga',<sup>14</sup> a piece I love so much [...].<sup>15</sup>

This is followed by a little medley of Polish cabaret hits: 'These are the moments one will remember even if one lived to be a thousand years old!'<sup>16</sup> and 'Oh Susanna, I so terribly love you!'.<sup>17</sup>

**11** Marta Michalska, 'Dźwięki, ludzie i nastłuchiwanie Warszawy na przełomie XIX i XX wieku. Wybrane elementy fonosfery miasta' ['The Soundscape, the People, and the Audience of Warsaw at the Turn of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Selected Aspects of the City's Soundscape'], PhD thesis (supervised by Błażej Brzostek, PhD, Habil.), University of Warsaw, 2022, 129.

**12** 'Wiadomości bieżące. Zakaz gry muzycznej na ulicach' ['Current News: Street Music Performances Banned'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 150 (2 June 1938, morning edition), 5.

**13** Разлука [Parting], a traditional Russian romance.

**14** Бродяга [A Vagrant], a Russian folksong.

**15** Nina Rydzewska, *Godzina W* [*W-Hour*], (Warszawa, 1946), 181–182.

**16** Rydzewska, *Godzina W*, 184. In Polish (original spelling): 'To są momene-ta, co się pamienne-ta, choćbyś człowieku żył-y tysiąc lat!'.<sup>17</sup>

**17** Rydzewska, *Godzina W*, 184. 'Zuzanno, ach! Zuzanno, ach! Ja kocham, kocham cię aż strach!' – a remake of a well-known American hit, popularised in Poland by Tadeusz Faliszewski.

**10** 'Grajkanie uliczni' ['Street Musicians'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 196 (17 July 1923, evening edition), 4.

The urban courtyard soundscape was complemented (in Rydzewska's recollections) by the characteristic calls of street peddlers of different nationalities: Polish, Romani, and Jewish. Though Russians were no longer part of this ethnic mix after WWI, the calls of Russian peasants and craftsmen were still fresh in Warsaw inhabitants' memories between the world wars, as evident from witness accounts. Wiktor Gomulicki, for instance, recalls the voices of Russian peasants who had settled in Warsaw's environs, cultivating and selling their crops: 'They used to win our hearts with the melodiousness and exaggerated sweetness of their speech...' <sup>18</sup> A Russian cart-driver's (*izvoshchik*) song was parodied in 1932 by Banda literary cabaret as part of a programme in which Zula Pogorzelska impersonated a street singer.

Warsaw's buskers, organ-grinders, and street bands differed from their counterparts in e.g. Vienna in that they had no trade union of their own, no management, no hierarchy regulated by competitions, and no top-down repertoire policies. The Ministry of Internal Affairs admittedly attempted to regulate the profession in the summer of 1928 by introducing a system of job licences, defining the conditions for musicians playing in tenement yards as well as repertoire censorship. This project, however, was never actually implemented. <sup>19</sup>

### 'CACOPHONY' IN URBAN YARDS

The problem of noise from tenement yards, entering urban flats through the open windows, was frequently taken up in both the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. This 'cacophony', previously largely produced by piano players, was augmented in the interwar period by the sound of radios and gramophones. In the Warsaw press, such urban yard noise was contested in both serious and humorous form. In the humoresque 'Welcome to Spring', printed in April 1934 by *Kurier Warszawski*, the silence-loving narrator's ears are attacked by the vernal outburst of yard music: barbershop singers, songs 'that were greatly popular at the end of the previous century', the sound of slide guitars, until, eventually,

there came a longer break, which was eagerly used by our neighbour to bang out Rubinstein's *Romance* on the piano. Albeit unapplauded, she repeated her performance five times.

<sup>18</sup> Wiktor Gomulicki, 'Dusza Rosji' ['The Soul of Russia'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 88 (29 March 1914), 3.

<sup>19</sup> [n.n.], 'Grajkowie i kuglarze uliczni' ['Street Musicians and Jugglers'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 225 (15 August 1928), 5.

This *Romance* must have encouraged the shoemaker who lives in the basement. This man, otherwise quiet and placid by nature, played a worn-out record of *Polish Flowers* on his gramophone. <sup>20</sup>

### THE POLISH CAPITAL'S 'DIARY IN SONG'

Satirical commentary on current political events constituted a major part of Warsaw's street-song repertoire. Such songs could be distributed as occasional prints or transmitted orally. They constituted 'the capital's diary in song'. A collection of such pieces, in circulation in the years 1919–20, was preserved thanks to its publication in the Polish-Jewish journal *Kurier Nowy*. The author of this compilation, leading Polish-Jewish journalist Jakub Appenzlak, not only wrote down the lyrics, but also mentioned some typical performers of this repertoire, which makes it possible to trace the songs' transmission from the anonymous author to the public. Prominent among those performers were news vendors and paperboys, members of the News Vendors Trade Union, which was an official body. They evidently also aspired to the role of oral street news reporters. In his introduction to this song publication, Appenzlak wrote:

As I was passing by the Teatr Wielki [Grand Theatre], the paperboy sang: *One was a pianist, / today we have a pharmacist.* <sup>21</sup> / *You are bound to see / more comedy here [in Poland] / Hey, dana.* And a group delighted to see the obituaries of 'traitors' chanted to the same tune: *We shall drive the Jews out / and live in peace. / Our [country's] trade is not for them, / It is for 'Progress.'* <sup>22</sup> *Hey, dana!* <sup>23</sup>

'Street urchins' were another social group that eagerly performed political songs. Appenzlak reports in the same feature on this subject: 'Those brave boys are marching and singing, on a sentimental note: *Roses are blooming, cherry has shed its blossom / may all the jews [sic!] be afflicted with plague!*' <sup>24</sup> When political songs dealt

<sup>20</sup> Aramis, 'Powitanie wiosny' ['Welcome to Spring'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 103 (16 April 1934, morning edition), 6.

<sup>21</sup> This refers to Leopold Skulski, who took over from pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski as Poland's Prime Minister.

<sup>22</sup> Towarzystwo Rozwój [Progress Society], founded in 1913, called for economic boycott of Jewish traders. After WWI, it opposed granting Polish Jews the status of a national minority.

<sup>23</sup> Pierrot [Jakub Appenzlak], 'Między wierszami. Najmłodsza pieśń ludowa (Trzecia seria)' ['Between the Lines. Most Recent Popular Songs (Series Three)'], *Kurier Nowy*, 11 (11 January 1920), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Pierrot, 'Między wierszami. Najmłodsza pieśń ludowa (Trzecia seria)', 2.

not just with current events but with one selected social group, they could easily become a propaganda tool or a way of exerting pressure. This was suitably illustrated by the author of *New Kurier's* feature with a song about profiteers, whom some people in Warsaw identified with rich Jews:

Street urchins sang in front of one of Warsaw's restaurants: *Wealthy men are eating / in this dear city / best wheat cakes / and sweet apple pies! / Such is the sumptuous supper / of young profiteers. / So who would care / that the [Polish] currency is falling?*<sup>25</sup>

In the later instalments of Appenzlak's report we follow the political songs as they permeate from their cradle in the strict centre of the city (where the public is knowledgeable about politics) to the suburbs and tenement yards ('They're reciting verse about Andrzej<sup>26</sup> in the suburbs'<sup>27</sup>; 'Maidservants chant to "La matchiche"<sup>28</sup>,<sup>29</sup> 'Listen to the songs sung by women shivering with cold in the queues'<sup>30</sup>).

### NATIONAL AND NATIONALIST MARCHES: THE MUSIC OF POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

One type of public music performance was associated with Warsaw's role as the state capital, the centre of both current political propaganda and of national memorial celebrations. From the earliest days after Poland regained independence in 1918, Warsaw celebrated national holidays and anniversaries with mass-scale marches, which aimed to promote patriotism, win support for the political authorities, and consolidate the society. Street demonstrations, originally spontaneous, later – organised by grassroots committees and/or the municipal authorities, followed a calendar that corresponded to

current political events and circumstances, such as the national holidays of Poland and its political allies (France and the United States). In the early years after WWI, the Corpus Christi processions and traditional midsummer celebrations were also appropriated for political purposes. These mass events were immensely spectacular, with their routes adorned by emblems and greenery, participants dressed in military uniforms or historical costumes, and crowds of flower-bearing children. All this was coupled with a rich musical setting provided by orchestras and Warsaw's leading choirs: Lutnia, Drużyna Śpiewacza, Harfa, Duda,<sup>31</sup> and Dzwon. Photographic and film footage was taken; reports on these celebrations were printed in the daily press; newsreels showed the events in major cinemas.

The history of patriotic demonstrations attended by the wide Warsaw public starts under the Prussian occupation, during WWI, when the Prussian authorities took care to fuel anti-Russian sentiments and let these animosities escalate during street events held on 3 May, on the anniversary of Poland's first constitution.<sup>32</sup>

Directly after the Regency Council (in office from 1916) had announced its Address to the Polish Nation (on 7 October 1918), crowds of Warsaw's inhabitants gathered in the streets, singing patriotic songs.<sup>33</sup> Another march took place on 14 October. 'I've bumped into another demonstration, wailing in a funereal, drawling manner: "Give us back our fatherland and freedom, oh Lord". There were plenty of rallying cries and banners such as "Long live Piłsudski" and "Long live Wilson"', wrote the novelist Maria Dąbrowska in her *Diaries*.<sup>34</sup> The march was inspired by members of the Polish First Corps in Russia,<sup>35</sup> but other soldiers also joined in, along with university and secondary school students, as well as representatives of various social organisations. The socialists held their own, separate

**25** Pierrot, 'Między wierszami. Najmłodsza pieśń ludowa (Wydanie drugie)' ['Between the Lines. Most Recent Popular Songs (Series Two)'], *Kurier Nowy*, 102 (7 December 1919), 4.

**26** Andrzej Niemojewski, conservative writer and politician well-known for his anti-Semitic views.

**27** Pierrot, 'Między wierszami. Najmłodsza pieśń ludowa (Wydanie drugie)'.

**28** 'La Matchiche', a popular French song written by Charles Clerk (1905), sung in Poland to a text translated by eminent actor Wincenty Rapacki Jr.

**29** Pierrot, 'Między wierszami. Najmłodsza pieśń ludowa' ['Between the Lines. Most Recent Popular Songs'], *Kurier Nowy*, 100 (4 December 1919), 2.

**30** Pierrot, 'Między wierszami. Najmłodsza pieśń ludowa', 2.

**31** The choir of the Rowing Association.

**32** Aleksander Kraushar, historian of Warsaw, commented on this project in his cycle 'Z notatnika' [From a Journal], discussing the situation in Warsaw during the war. *Kurier Warszawski*, 253 (13 September 1919, evening edition), 6.

**33** The Address proclaimed Poland's independence, citing the so-called Fourteen Points (of US President Woodrow Wilson), previously accepted by the Central Powers as the basis for peace negotiations.

**34** Maria Dąbrowska, *Dzienniki 1914–1932* [Diaries 1914–1932], Vol. I, ed. Tadeusz Drewnowski (Warszawa, 1988), 116.

**35** Founded in 1917 in Russia, fighting under the command of Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki.

demonstration, with performances of their hymn – *The Red Banner*.<sup>36</sup> Another demonstration, following the Regency Council's declaration of transferring military command to Józef Piłsudski,<sup>37</sup> took the form of a great national march coupled with services held at Christian churches and synagogues. Among the first societies and institutions to declare participation in this event were the Lutnia choir and the Orpheon Music Society.<sup>38</sup> On 17 November, the march set off from five churches in the city centre, including the Holy Cross Church. Music was performed during the event by Warsaw's leading musical institutions: the Teatr Wielki opera house, a fire service orchestra, and the Lutnia choir, while the demonstrators also included Warsaw Philharmonic orchestra member and students of Warsaw Conservatory. Press accounts do not list titles of the songs performed during this march. We only know that *Boże, coś Polskę* (*God, Who Hast Poland...*), which functioned as an unofficial national hymn, was sung as the procession was leaving the Holy Cross Church. Another mass demonstration was organised on 15 December 1918, at the crucial juncture directly after France's recognition of the Polish National Committee as the Polish government-in-exile, which would soon allow its representatives to join the peace negotiations. The communist party likewise intensified its presence in Warsaw in that period. Its activists and supporters frequently held rallies and marches in the streets of the Polish capital. The socialists, who set out on 29 December 1918 from Saski Square,<sup>39</sup> are known to have sung *The Red Banner* again on this occasion. Their demonstration dissolved into riots, which were crushed by the army. There were casualties.

1 January 1919 saw the arrival in Warsaw of Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Let me again quote Maria Dąbrowska's diary:

We had a curious New Year's Day yesterday. Paderewski arrived and was greeted as though he were the ruler of the Nation. I have never seen anything like this in my life: those countless crowds, swooshing onwards like the sea, with a never-ending cry of enthusiasm..."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Pol. *Czerwony sztandar* (incipit 'Our blood has long been shed by butchers') – the traditional hymn of the Polish proletariat.

<sup>37</sup> This was made possible by the abdication of German Emperor Wilhelm II, which entailed the dismantling of Prussian rule in Warsaw.

<sup>38</sup> 'Orpheon' Singers and Musicians' Society, directed by L.T. Płosajkiewicz, with seat in Mokotowska Street, which ran a youth orchestra and choir.

<sup>39</sup> In protest against the authorities' decision to intern the delegates of the Russian Red Cross who had come to Warsaw.

<sup>40</sup> Maria Dąbrowska, *Dzienniki 1914–1932*, I, 130. Entry for 2

According to *Kurier Warszawski's* detailed report, the fire service orchestra greeted Paderewski at the railway station with three anthems, namely: the Polish, British, and American ones. Around midnight the joint choirs of Lutnia, Drużyna Śpiewacza, Harfa, and Duda performed on the balcony of the Europejski Hotel (opposite the Bristol, at which Paderewski resided). Under the baton of Wacław Lachman and Władysław Otto, they sang the canon of patriotic songs: *Rota* (*The Oath*), *Czas do boju, czas* (*Time to Go to Battle*), as well as both unofficial Polish national anthems: *God, Who Hast Poland...* and *Dąbrowski's Mazurka*. Crowds spontaneously gathered in front of the Bristol Hotel on the following day, singing patriotic songs.

In 1919 the anniversary of Poland's first constitution (3 May) was already celebrated as an official national holiday. It had initially been planned by a group of private persons as 'a festival of spring and the 3 May [national] revival', thus combining a springtime party with anniversary celebrations. Only at the very last moment did the Polish Sejm (lower chamber of the Parliament) declare 3 May an official national holiday. *Kurier Warszawski* listed the following elements of the 1919 celebrations: children's march to the Traugutt Cross at Warsaw Citadel (accompanied by an orchestra playing songs), a field mass (with 'military music and children's choral singing'), planting symbolic trees, another march to 3 Maja [3 May] Street ('to the accompaniment of orchestras, including a children's ensemble'); later in the afternoon and on the following day – orchestral concerts and parties 'in sundry gardens and places'.<sup>41</sup> Marches were setting out from churches after the religious services and from the slopes of the Citadel, where a morning field mass coupled with a military parade was held in front of the garrison church.

On 14 July 1919, military bands and Lutnia choir performed during the celebrations of France's national day (Bastille Day). *Dąbrowski's Mazurka* and *La Marseillaise* were performed, among others. The military event on the fifth anniversary of Piłsudski's Polish Legions crossing the border of the (tsarist) Kingdom of Poland on 12 August featured the following programme: a field mass in Saski Square, a military parade with the participation of the Warsaw garrison orchestra, dances and parties at, among others, Agrykola and the Citadel

January 1919.

<sup>41</sup> 'Wiadomości bieżące. Obchód 3-go Maja' ['Current News: 3 May Celebrations'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 105 (15 April 1919, morning edition), 2–3.

in the afternoon. Two days later, military and municipal orchestras greeted Herbert Hoover (head of the US relief efforts in Poland) with hymns and marches. This ceremony likewise involved a field mass in Saski Square and a military parade. Children were invited to appear in copies of army uniforms.

Józef Piłsudski's name day as Chief of State was officially celebrated for the first time on 19 March 1919. The celebrations, which opened with a field mass in Saski Square, were filmed and later screened at the Filharmonia – a leading Warsaw cinema operating in the concert hall of Warsaw Philharmonic on concert-free days.

The eighty-eighth death anniversary of General Józef Sowiński, who defended Warsaw's Wola District during the November Uprising of 1830–31, was celebrated in the early autumn of 1919 with a march that set out from a little church situated on the military defence earthwork. Soon afterwards, however, the enthusiasm of patriotic event organisers wore off due to economic crisis and the unsteady political situation. The march on 18 January 1920, marking the assignment to Poland of the territories of the former Prussian Partition (by the Paris Peace Conference) was already quite small. Piłsudski's name day started that year with a military parade in Saski Square (with the singing of soldiers' songs), followed by a street pageant of military bands, whereas military and municipal orchestras gave performances in the main squares. 3 May celebrations began in 1920 with a Holy Mass in the chapel ruins at the Botanical Garden. Lutnia choir was accompanied during the Mass by the police orchestra. The soundscape of this event was complemented by the whirring of aeroplane engines. A flight of aircraft was used to drop leaflets that advertised the national loan, to the accompaniment of gun salvos. The Mass was followed by a military parade which ended in Zamkowy (Castle) Square.

1920 was also the last year in which the US national holiday was celebrated with a march, coupled with a solemn orchestral concert and choral performances in Teatralny Square. The French national day was no longer celebrated in the streets since the Bolshevik army was already heading for Warsaw and recruitment for volunteer service was in full swing. 18 July was the Volunteer Army Day (troops mobilized to defend the country from the Soviet invasion), with a Mass held in Saski Square and a march to the sound of military bands. Participants were dressed in 1831 and 1863 insurgents' costumes.

In later years the number of such marches was significantly reduced due to high costs. The US national

day celebrations therefore took the form of small-scale presentations held at the little Hoover Garden in Krakowskie Przedmieście Street. 3 May parades continued. A papal decree of 11 November 1923 transformed 3 May into a religious-national feast day under the official name of the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Polish Crown. Its soundscape (and visual context) involved church bell ringing, military parades with orchestras, gun salvos, and the whirr of aircraft engines. The said parades set out from Saski Square (known from 1928 as Józef Piłsudski Square) till 1935, and were moved afterwards to Niepodległości Avenue (on route to Mokotów Field) or to Ujazdowskie Avenue (marches to Wolności Square).<sup>42</sup> Piłsudski's lethal illness led to a cancellation of the mass celebrations in 1935. The last 3 May parade before the war was greeted with particular enthusiasm as a demonstration of Poland's military power.

Poland's Independence Day celebrations (on 11 November, launched under the rule of the Sanation movement, 1926–1935, and officially established as a national holiday in 1937) involved events held both on that day and on its eve, including church services, military parades, Sokół (Polish Gymnastic Society) parades, and colourful 'propaganda pageants' for young people. As of 1935, these events also included memorial tributes to Piłsudski. The military parade held on 11 November 1938, the twentieth anniversary of Poland regaining independence, was particularly impressive.

Military parades were also organised on Soldiers' Day, which in 1925 was set to 15 August, that is, the anniversary of the victorious Battle of Warsaw (fought against the Bolshevik army in 1920). The celebrations in the capital were rather modest, as the ceremony proper took place in the nearby villages of Ossów and Radzymiń, where the actual battle had been fought. The only larger-scale ceremony in Warsaw itself was held on the tenth anniversary of the battle. A march with music and singing proceeded from St John's Cathedral to the Swiss Valley, where a festive spectacle was presented. After the National Democrats became part of the ruling coalition in Poland, their representatives held their own alternative marches on 15 August, with the crowd loudly cheering Roman Dmowski, leader of the nationalists, as well as shouting anti-Semitic and anti-communist slogans. Endecja's demonstrations ended with collective singing of *Hymn Młodych* (*Hymn of Youth*) to words by Jan Kasprówicz, sung to the 1831 melody of *Warszawianka* (*La Varsoviennne*).

<sup>42</sup> Known previously and again at present as Plac na Rozdrożu (Square at the Crossroads).

Piłsudski's name day continued to be celebrated under the rule of the Sanation governments. On the eve of that day, marches set out from Piłsudski Square to the Marshal's residence at the Belweder. Army and police troops marched along with orchestras, which performed the hymn of the Polish Legions and of Piłsudski's supporters – *My, pierwsza Brygada* (*The March of the First Brigade*). The national anthem and patriotic songs were later performed in front of the Belweder, where the Marshal received greetings from delegates of the army and civilian organisations. The Marshal's name day was still commemorated after his death in 1935. On that day, people gathered under the street megaphones to listen to church services and speeches recorded by Polish Radio. Military and civil service delegates marches along the streets and paid homage to the deceased statesman in front of his busts or portraits.

The last weeks before the outbreak of WWII in 1939 saw the parades in the streets of Warsaw of the Twenty-First Infantry Regiment 'Children of Warsaw', which was revered by Warsaw's inhabitants as the city's direct defenders. A mass rally was held by the regimental command in Sienkiewicz fields on 30 August 1939. *Kurier Warszawski* describes the extremely solemn atmosphere of that event, enhanced by a performance of a march based on motifs from the 1831 *Warszawianka* and the patriotic song *Tysiąc walecznych* (*A Thousand Valiant Warriors*), which was dedicated to the regiment.<sup>43</sup>

### MEMORIAL SITES

From the earliest postwar years, patriotic anniversaries were celebrated at various locations related to Poland's struggle for national independence. In Warsaw these were: the slopes of the Citadel (at the Traugutt Cross, erected at the site where Romuald Traugutt, the leader of the 1863 January Uprising had been executed) and the Botanical Garden of the University of Warsaw adjacent to the Royal Łazienki Park (in the ruins of a small chapel under whose foundations, as legend has it, a copy of the 3 May Constitution had been buried). It was on that latter site that an illegal student demonstration had begun in 1891. On the initiative of the university's authorities, annual festivities were held in the Botanical Garden on 3 May (the national holiday), culminating in collective singing of *God, Who Hast Poland...* The event

was cancelled in 1935 since Piłsudski was in his death throes at that time.

The patriotic manifestation at the Warsaw Citadel was first held in 1919 on the anniversary of the outbreak of the January Uprising, under the patronage of Helena Paderewska, wife of the then prime minister. Following a Holy Mass at St John Cathedral, with performances by the Rorate Choir under Stanisław Kazuro, the participants marched to the Traugutt Cross. Patriotic songs were sung to the accompaniment of a military band. For the next several years, the ceremonies at the Citadel primarily involved the armed forces. From 2021, a military parish operated at the former Eastern Orthodox Church, now reconsecrated as St George's Church. From 1928 onwards, religious processions were held on the slopes of the Citadel, with the participation of church and lay choirs as well as the Armourers' School Non-Commissioned Officers Choir (the school operated at the Citadel).

Another patriotic memorial site was Saski (Piłsudskiego) Square, where the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was unveiled in 1925. On national holidays, official ceremonies were held there with the participation of the state authorities and the army. Amateur orchestras and choirs customarily gave brief performances in that square on their visits to Warsaw.

### RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS

The solemn Corpus Christi celebrations in Warsaw, as elsewhere, involved street processions with the Eucharist, which set out from about a dozen churches throughout the city. The official procession in the centre of the city brought together politicians, the military, university professors in traditional gowns, delegates of craftsmen's guilds, religious fraternities, schools, and non-governmental organisations. It set out from St John's Cathedral and proceeded along Świętojańska Street, across Zamkowy Square and into Krakowskie Przedmieście Street. The four altars where Gospel fragments were to be sung were erected near the former Observant (St Anne's) Church, the chapel of the WTD charity (at the former Kazanowski Palace), the figure of the Our Lady of Victory,<sup>44</sup> and the Carmelite Church. The procession and the preceding Mass were celebrated with rich musical settings, provided in the 1920s by Lutnia and the Catholic

<sup>43</sup> Andrzej Świt, 'Dzieci Warszawy' ['Children of Warsaw'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 240 (31 August 1939, evening edition), 4.

<sup>44</sup> Under the Partitions of Poland, this figure, made famous by the bloodily dispersed patriotic demonstration of 1861, was known as the figure of the Blessed Mary (Maria Hilf) of Passau.

seminarists' choir under Father Antoni Kaim (rector of St Anne's), and later by other ecclesiastical choirs. Father Eugeniusz Gruberski's *Responsories for Corpus Christi* were an obligatory part of those musical performances. There was also congregational singing of religious songs to the accompaniment of military and municipal orchestras.

The first postwar Corpus Christi ceremony took on patriotic overtones, with Józef Piłsudski himself following the priestly baldachin in the company of leading politicians. Apart from religious songs, the national anthem of Poland (*Dąbrowski's Mazurka*) was also sung. This national aspect of the Corpus Christi processions was consciously upheld by the authorities in later years. In 1922, *Kurier Warszawski* appealed to Warsaw's inhabitants to decorate their houses and send delegates from guilds and societies 'so as to demonstrate on that day that the capital is ours, Polish and Catholic'.<sup>45</sup> In the 1930s the official Corpus Christi celebrations regained their purely religious character though politicians still took part. National songs were no longer sung. In the last few years preceding WWII, the President of Poland participated in processions in Spała (where he had his residence) rather than Warsaw.

Apart from processions held on Corpus Christi and the octave of that feast, street processions were also organised in Warsaw for the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in June. From the mid-1930s processions held in early August marked the departure of mass pilgrimages to the Jasna Góra Marian sanctuary, where the Feast of the Assumption was celebrated on 15 August.

The summers of 1935–39 saw the staging of religious spectacles (*autos sacramentales*) after Calderon (*Mysteries of the Holy Mass – Los Misterios de la misa; Belshazzar's Feast – La cena del rey Baltasar; The Great Theater of the World – El Gran Teatro del Mundo; Mystery of the Cradle and Tomb*) by Misterium theatre company founded by Edward Strycki and a choir directed by Jan Maklakiewicz, in the courtyard of the Holy Cross Church.

### MEMORIAL AND FUNERAL CEREMONIES

Other public ceremonies included death anniversaries, the transfer of distinguished Poles' mortal remains, and funerals. Funerals of average citizens, with processions accompanied by brass bands, moving along the streets to cemeteries, were held in all areas of the city (including

the Jewish district). Sumptuous funerals of rich or important figures usually did not involve processions. Their participants took part in Holy Mass at the Church of St Charles Borromeo at Powązki Cemetery. The bones of distinguished persons of the Eastern Orthodox denomination were transferred on several occasions from their respective places of residence to the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Holy Mary Magdalene (of the autocephalous Polish Orthodox Church). Among others, in March 1927 a crowd including representatives of the thirty-thousand strong Russian diaspora in Warsaw and the cream of the Polish intelligentsia took part in the funeral of the Warsaw-based Russian writer and journalist Mikhail Artsybashev.

On 26 June 1927, Warsaw celebrated the transfer from France of the mortal remains of (famous Polish Romantic poet) Juliusz Słowacki. The coffin, transported up the Vistula River from Gdańsk, was greeted at the Poniatowski Bridge by a procession of politicians, representatives of schools, NGOs, etc., who accompanied it to St John's Cathedral. There it was laid in state for all those who wished to pay homage to the dead bard. On the next day, the coffin, accompanied by a solemn procession with music, was carried to a train that took it to Cracow.

The sixtieth anniversary of Stanisław Moniuszko's death in June 1932 was marked with a nationwide assembly of choral societies, held in Warsaw, as well as choral procession from the Holy Cross Church to Powązki Cemetery on 4 June. Moniuszko's songs were sung at his grave. An open party was organised in the Ujazdowski Park on the following day, combined with a concert of Moniuszko's songs performed by joint orchestras and choirs.

On the day after Piłsudski's death, 14 May 1935, thousands of Warsaw's inhabitants marched along the streets of Warsaw to the Belweder. The funeral ceremony at the capital also included transfer of the Marshal's body to St John's Cathedral, where it was laid in state in a glass-covered coffin for three days. There were more marches to the Belweder, held by delegates of various societies and organisations, by scouts, etc., as well as a final military parade at Mokotów civilian airport (in Mokotów Field by Topolowa Street, now a park), from whose vicinity the body was then transported by train to Cracow. The musical setting of this ceremony was provided by military bands. Two-day ceremonies in honour of Piłsudski were held in the years that followed. On the eve of that his death anniversary, soldiers paraded to the sound of funeral drums. The anniversary itself was celebrated with

<sup>45</sup> 'Wiadomości bieżące. Procesja Bożego Ciała w katedrze' ['Current News: Corpus Christi Procession at the Cathedral'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 158 (12 June 1922, evening edition), 3.

a spell of silence, the ringing of church bells and the sound of factory sirens, a military parade, and gun salvos.

In May 1937, the body of composer Karol Szymanowski was transported from Switzerland, where he had died, to Cracow via Warsaw. In the capital, the ceremony involved performances by young musicians from the State Music Conservatory, of which Szymanowski had been the head in 1930–31.

The solemn ceremony of the return of the relics of St Andrew Bobola, SJ, from Rome to Warsaw in June 1938, was attended by the state authorities (Polish President Ignacy Mościcki, Polish commander-in-chief Edward Rydz-Śmigły, members of the government and the Parliament) as well as crowds of Warsaw's inhabitants. The coffin with the martyr's bones was brought to the place of its permanent rest at the Jesuit Chapel in Rakowiecka Street. The procession and the Holy Mass in Zamkowy Square were accompanied by the singing of religious songs and hymns.

The transfer of the body of Wojciech Korfanty, long-time leader of the Polish national movement in Upper Silesia, from the Church of the Holiest Saviour to the railway station, whence the coffin was taken by train to this politician's home city of Katowice, was the last large-scale funeral ceremony in prewar Warsaw. It was held on 18 August 1939.

### WORKERS' AND YOUTH DEMONSTRATIONS

From 1919 onwards, 1 May was the day when factory workers, and in particular – members of the largest Polish socialist party (PPS), marked their presence in the Polish capital. Demonstrators marched from Teatralny Square to Old Town Square. Till 1921, the socialists marched on May Day along with the communists (whose party had already been made illegal in March 1919, but its activity in Warsaw continued to be tolerated till July 1920) and with members of the Bund (a secular Jewish socialist party). Marches were accompanied by the singing of songs, including *The Red Banner* (the socialists' hymn), fanfares, and drumming. In 1922, Christian workers' unions refused to march with the socialists, while Bund held its own marches in the Jewish district instead. In later years, May Day marches would turn into street disturbances as communists joined the PPS demonstrators, carrying anti-state banners. This developed into a kind of customary scheme, recurring year after year (albeit not planned by the socialists as part of their May Day celebrations),

culminating in bloody fights between the socialists and the communists, or between different followers of the Marxist doctrine, as *Kurier Warszawski* put it in 1928.<sup>46</sup>

Demonstrations were also held in the streets of Warsaw by nationalist youth organisations, whose members sang Kasprowicz's *Hymn of Youth* during marches.

### CONCLUSIONS

The interwar period was a time of busy cultural and political, music-accompanied activity in the open air, though the role of such events in the totality of Warsaw's cultural life steadily diminished with time as a result of the municipal authorities' policy of emphasising the city's role as the state's capital and building the image of a modern metropolis. The need for public manifestations of patriotism manifested itself in the early years after WWI in numerous street demonstrations, whereas the postwar enthusiasm facilitated the flourishing of public events in parks, tea gardens, and open-air theatres. The later economic crisis, as well as the popularisation of alternative leisure activities (outing to the suburbs, summer holidays) meant that interest in such open-air events gradually diminished. They also had to compete with new forms of entertainment, such as sports events, air shows, funfairs, and new media, including the gramophone and the radio, which encouraged people to spend their free time at home. It was the municipal authorities, however, that had the greatest impact on Warsaw's street soundscape, as they controlled the open-air events industry. In the 1930s, spontaneously organised concerts and parties were being systematically replaced by propaganda events. The amount of urban space available for entertainment was also significantly reduced due to modern urbanisation.

Warsaw's role as the state capital was highlighted by frequent military parades, held in the main streets and the civilian airport. Political celebrations took advantage of a new form of broadcasting via street megaphones. At marches and demonstrations, music was traditionally performed by military bands, police and municipal orchestras, as well as Warsaw's choirs, of which Harfa continued to provide public services for the longest time, that is, until 1939.

Warsaw's streets and squares were the scene for the spontaneous composition and dissemination of political

<sup>46</sup> 'Demonstracje majowe' ['May Day Demonstrations'], *Kurier Warszawski*, 123 (4 May 1928, evening edition), 2.

songs, as well as for tumultuous marches held, among others, by left-wing organisations and right-wing youth. Urban folklore, least susceptible to social change, found refuge in the tenement yards. It preserved much of its former shape, and was the only part of the interwar city soundscape that reflected the multicultural character of Warsaw.

Most widely audible (and prominently visible) were the concerts of municipal and military bands in urban squares and parks. The repertoire of these orchestras strongly evolved. Originally (as in the nineteenth century and during WWI) it was popular dance music, operetta and ballet numbers, as well as classical music hits. Polish folk music was gradually added to this repertoire (also on the radio), which reflected the authorities' cultural policy of promoting folklore as an element of national identity. Modern popular music was mostly to be heard in the numerous 1920s tea gardens, where dance music (jazz and traditional) was played, and where concerts, operettas, and cabaret (revue) programmes were performed in the evenings. The repertoire of those local tea garden stages largely consisted of fashionable Polish and foreign songs (both Western hits and Russian pieces, which were established favourites in Warsaw). This repertoire, popularised by cabarets, cinemas, and the music record industry, was subsequently taken over by the numerous street bands, which simultaneously cultivated traditional urban folklore, and by anonymous authors of political songs, who set them to the music of current hits.

Classical music fans had their own open-air venues: the Bagatela garden and the Swiss Valley, where the capital's best orchestras, including Warsaw Philharmonic, gave weekly concerts of accessible Romantic symphonic works (Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, and others), as well as operatic numbers. There were also programmes dedicated individually to the music of various nations and groups (Polish, Russian, French, Slav) and popular matinees. Classical ballets were staged at the Theatre on the Isle in the Royal Łazienki Park, where in the 1920s one could attend Warsaw Opera ballet company's productions of *Swan Lake*, *Scheherazade*, *Polovtsian Dances*, *Pan Twardowski*, and others. Under the Great Depression, the municipal opera crew, temporarily out of work, staged in that venue such popular operas as *Faust*, *La Bohème*, and others, and in the 1930s, the Polish Popular Opera (Polska Opera Ludowa) presented Moniuszko's *Halka*, *Flis* (*The Raftsmen*), and *The Haunted Manor*.

National parades and the later mass demonstrations marking national or traditional holidays (including

Midsummer and the Sea Day) confirmed Warsaw's role as the state capital. During the parades, the Polish national anthem was sung, along with commonly known patriotic songs from the time of the Polish uprisings, as well as *Rota* (*The Oath*, with words by Maria Konopnicka and music by Feliks Nowowiejski), which also functioned as an anthem. Celebrations in honour of Poland's allies (the United States and France) involved solemn performances of their respective national anthems. The various political fractions and organisations likewise had their repertoire with which they manifested their identity during street demonstrations. Thus, Piłsudski's followers marched to the sound of *My, pierwsza Brygada* (*The March of the First Brigade*), the national democrats – to that of *Hymn Młodych* (*Hymn of Youth*), the socialists – to that of *Czerwony sztandar* (*The Red Banner*). Shortly before the outbreak of WWII, the Infantry Regiment 'Children of Warsaw' also received its own hymn, compiled out of Warsaw-related patriotic songs.

Frequent religious and funeral processions along the streets of Warsaw were likewise accompanied by music. In the early years following WWI, patriotic songs were also sung on such occasions, whereas in the 1930s this repertoire was limited to religious music. The Corpus Christi processions were particularly spectacular, and involved the participation of leading Warsaw choirs, both lay and ecclesiastical, as well as municipal and military orchestras. Religious ceremonies and national anniversary celebrations usually culminated in communal performances of the hymn *Boże, coś Polskę* (*God, Who Hast Poland...*).

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