

Camerata Silesia - The Katowice City Singers' Ensemble, founded in 1990 by Anna Szostak, is a team of vocalists, who sing in a chamber cast and perform solo parts for vocal and instrumental music as well as in a choral repertoire *a cappella*.

In a short time *Camerata Silesia* has become the most instantly recognizable Polish ensemble specializing in performance of both early and contemporary music. The singers' unusual technical efficiency, along with an emission and intonation appropriate to the early music performance canon, has attracted the attention of both critics and composers. The former have been generous with praise while the latter have composed pieces specifically for *Camerata*, dedicating them to various singers and to a lady conductor, who were all specially sought out for first performances of these pieces.

The choir's discography embraces dozen CD's, which have repeatedly been awarded. Special attention attracts the latest CD's edition: *Musica Claromontana – Tenebrae* vol. 45, *Requiem* by Andrzej Siewiński and contemporary music *K. Baculewski – Choral works* and *Camerata Silesia sings Kilar*; all the four nominated to fonographic awards "Fryderyk".

Every year since 1993 the ensemble has been invited to take part in the international festival of contemporary music *Warsaw Autumn*. Its performances of Anton Webern's Cantatas with orchestra *Sinfonia Varsovia*, conducted by Ed Spanjaard (1995), and *Trois Poèmes d'Henri Michaux* by Witold Lutosławski with the *National Symphony Orchestra of Polish Radio*, conducted by Anna Szostak and Antoni Wit (1996), have been heralded as the greatest events to grace this festival. Also belonging among the choir's most important achievements is a performance of *Sinfoni* by Luciano Berio at the inaugural concert of *Warsaw Autumn* in 1999.

Camerata appeared by special invitation thanks to Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk in the renowned *Gewandhaus* (Leipzig), *Opéra Comique* (Paris) gave concerts in Taipei (Taiwan), *Mei Lanfang Theatre* (Peking Beijing), *La Monnaie* (Bruxelles), *Concertgebouw* (Amsterdam) and also appeared during a cycle of concerts at the *EXPO 2000* in Hannover.

The Ensemble has performed for the first time in Poland (December 2005) pieces by L. Berio, G. Scelsi, L. Nono during an International Festival "Days of the Italian Contemporary Music" to Cracow. For several years *Camerata* has collaborated with the famous English soprano Emma Kirkby, and recently with Barbara Schlick (at its concerts in Düsseldorf and Katowice).

Polish music very often appears in the programs of the ensemble's abroad concerts. During festival Ile-de-France (2004), *Camerata* appeared twice: the first of these concerts featured Polish renaissance and baroque music, as well as music by contemporary composers; in the second one the ensemble, together with the instrumentalists of Musicatreize from Marseille, performed *Trois Poèmes d'Henri Michaux* by Witold Lutosławski in the Saint-Louis des Invalides cathedral in Paris. Later the same composition was performed in Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels with the accompaniment of National Belgian Orchestra.

The year 2006 was rich in performances of music by K. Penderecki. *St. Lucas Passion* has resounded in Münster, Cracow and Hamburg. In 2012 the Ensemble enlarged to 40 singers took part in performances and recordings to a DVD edition of the stage version of *Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Secundum Matthaeum* by K. Penderecki, stage direction by G. Jarzyna.

July 2006 passed as a month of XII International Congress of Baroque Music in Warsaw where the Ensemble has remembered lately discovered after 358 years and reconstructed work by M. Scacchi *Missa per omnium tonorum*. Particularly important is performing – continued till now – forgotten works of old Polish music from cathedral archives from *Claromonte*, Gniezno and Gostyń.

In February and March 2005, the ensemble appeared in a premiere performance of *Parsifal* by Richard Wagner, staged in Gran Teatro La Fenice di Venezia, under the baton of Gabor Ötvös and directed by Denis Krief. In 2008 and 2009 *Camerata* is invited as festival choir by Sommerfestspiele in Bregenz (Austria) where has performed both stage- and concert productions together with soloists and Wiener Symphoniker orchestra under the well known conductors as Chris Moulds, Ulf Schirmer, Carlo Rizzi, Lothar Königs. The large programme contain pieces from *Solomon* – oratorio by G. F. Haendel through the operas *Karl the Fifth* by E. Křenek, *Tosca* by G. Puccini, *Aida* by G. Verdi, *King Roger* by K. Szymanowski. Composer's interest in writing for *Camerata Silesia* has led to premieres of compositions by Rafał Augustyn, Krzysztof Baculewski, Ryszard Gabryś, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Krzysztof Knittel, Stanisław Krupowicz, Krzysztof Penderecki, Zbigniew Preisner, Bogusław Schaefer, Witold Szalonek, Agata Zubel, and will surely be followed by others.

Lately *Camerata Silesia* realized a special project of *Responsoria in Hebdomada Majore* by Marc'Antonio Ingegneri together with one of best improvising musicians Tomasz Stańko (trumpet). The coincidence of an old choral music with improvisation in jazz style gives interesting result.

Anna Szostak, a top Polish choir conductor, is known as an exquisite interpreter of choral music presented on both the concerts and recordings. A founder of the Katowice based ensemble *Camerata Silesia*, she has led it to achieve superb performing skills that made *Camerata Silesia* be recognizable in Europe. She has shaped the performing style of the ensemble, its repertoire and the overall artistic profile. Since its foundation in 1990, *Camerata Silesia* has been perceived as an ensemble especially committed to performing early and contemporary music. The final rendering of the latter is often a result of her good relationship and collaboration with contemporary composers.

Anna Szostak is a recipient of many prestigious prizes and awards for performing and phonographic achievements.