

Bach, Poland and Polish style in his Music

Lecture by Szymon Paczkowski

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UW Madison - Rm 2441 Humanities Bldg.
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In 1736, Johann Sebastian Bach became Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Composer (*Königlich-Polnischer und Kurfürstlich-Sächsischer Hof-Compositeur*), during the era when the Elector of Saxony, Augustus III, also sat on the Polish throne. Bach's well-known and frequently-cited title raises curious questions concerning the composer's Polish connections in the 18th Century, yet the topic remains surprisingly unexplored, even by Polish researchers.



Szymon Paczkowski's latest book, *Polish Style in the Music of Johann Sebastian Bach* (Rowman & Littlefield 2016), is the first in-depth exploration of the so-called "Polish style" in Bach's music. The book explores the semantic and rhetorical functions that undergird the Polish style in Baroque music. It demonstrates how the notion of a Polish style in music was developed in German music theory, and conjectures that Bach's successful application for the title of Court Composer at the court of the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland would induce the composer to deliberately use elements of the Polish style.

Szymon Paczkowski is a professor at the Institute of Musicology, University of Warsaw. He has written two books on music in the Baroque period, *The Doctrine of Affects in Music Theory, 1600-1650* (1998) and *Polish Style in the Music of Johann Sebastian Bach* (2011), translated into English and published by Rowman & Littlefield in the series Contextual Bach Studies.

His research focuses on various aspects of the history of music culture in the 17th to 19th centuries, including the history, theory and aesthetics of music in the Baroque period and the history of opera. He is involved in intensive archival research projects on the music culture of Poland and Saxony in the 18th century (during the so-called Polish-Saxon Union under the reigns of August II and August III). He chaired the 12th Biennial Conference on Baroque Music held at the University of Warsaw in 2006 and the "Sixth Bach Dialogue Meeting," a session of the Bach Network UK at the University of Warsaw, in collaboration with the National Chopin Institute in 2013. Paczkowski is also actively involved in various outreach efforts promoting music and musicology, collaborating with Polish Public Radio, the Warsaw Philharmonic, and Poland's leading opera theatres. During 1999-2001 he was the conductor and artistic director of the University of Warsaw Choir.



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