

Strybel - Górecki from 1

songs and lullabies. His 1972 "Copernican Symphony", commissioned by New York's Kościuszko Foundation, helped introduce the Polish composer to a wider international audience. In 1979 he composed "Beatus Vir" (Blessed Man) in honor of Saint Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr.

Other works reflecting Polish themes included "Song of the Katyń Families" and "Miserere" which recalled the violence suffered by Poland's Solidarity movement at the hands of the communist regime. But he was best known internationally for his 1976 "Symphony (No. 3) of Sorrowful Songs" which included Holocaust motifs. Following its 1992 re-release in the USA, it sold more than a million copies and reached the top of America's classical music charts.

Two days before his death, the ailing Górecki was visited by another musical giant, composer Krzysztof Penderecki. The two men discussed plans for Penderecki to direct Górecki's "Beatus Vir" on their 80th birthday in 2013. The work had been commissioned by Kraków Archbishop Karol Wojtyła to mark the 900th anniversary of the Saint Stanislaus' martyrdom.

For his life-long contributions to Polish culture, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki was awarded Poland's highest distinction, the Order of the White Eagle. Since his illness made it impossible for him to attend the presentation ceremony at Warsaw's Presidential Palace, the medal was presented to him in his hospital room by Poland's First Lady, Madam Anna Komorowska. He died three weeks later. □

Jonathan Plowright from 3

in the furious *alla breve* restatement of the original theme at the final cadence. The audience erupted with applause, the intensity of which reflected the shocking, truncated conclusion of Busoni's apocalyptic vision of Chopin's original thought.

Highlights of the second half of the program included an intimate and passionate portrait of Chopin, conveyed by Plowright in a well-chosen selection of large- and small-scale works. The opening *Fantaisie* in F minor had several highly satisfying moments of grandeur and nobly surging marches after a somber and dark introduction. The two Nocturnes that followed—both dating from Chopin's early days—gave the audience a taste of the romantic daydreaming of the most refined and delicate kind. The closing *Barcarolle*—described by Plowright as one of Chopin's deeply bittersweet works—was delivered with a convincing poise in its lilting melodic fabric and a dignified magnificence in truly moving and spectacular climaxes.

The Steinway concert grand, provided gratis to the Festival by Sherman Clay Company and brought from the Bay Area, had a particularly resonant bass and very mellow treble. With a program so laden with a virtuoso repertoire, most pianists would have struggled to make the instrument shine and deliver as much variety of sound and color as was heard by the audience that night. Revealing his profoundly sensitive side, Plowright decided to treat the listeners to a simple and quiet encore of Mompou's *Secreto*, prolonging the poetic spell that began already with the opening note of his Gala Concert program. □

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Blessed Fr. Popieluszko from 1

reprisal for his patriotic monthly Homeland Mass (Msza za Ojczyznę) at Warsaw's Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church. The mass lifted the spirits of his downtrodden compatriots during the grim years of martial law (1981-1983) and afterwards but infuriated Poland's communist rulers.

A man of slight build and frail health with a somewhat boyish face, Popieluszko was no fiery orator but spoke in calm, rather monotonous, droning voice. He never mentioned the word communism nor directly criticized Poland's communist rulers by name, but Homeland Mass goes knew that Jaruzelski's Zomo riot police were being referred to when he called for prayers for "those who persecute their own countrymen for Judas silver." He spoke of fidelity to God and country, of freedom, human dignity, truth, honesty and justice – all things most Poles felt were sorely lacking in communist Poland.

Soviet-trained communist strongman General Wojciech Jaruzelski clamped Poland under martial law to crush the 16-month-old Solidarity movement, the Soviet bloc's first independent trade union. The country was cut off from the world, as all flights were grounded, phone lines were cut, public gatherings were banned, a curfew was imposed, industrial plants were militarized and some 10,000 Solidarity activists were jailed.

The murder might have never been discovered, because the victim's weighted-down body would have soon decomposed in the depths of the Włocławek dam basin, were it not for one fact. Father Jerzy was abducted while travelling along a dark country road together with his friend and driver Waldemar Chrostowski who managed to escape and tell the story.

Under public pressure and extensive international media scrutiny the regime had no choice but to hold a trial in which the three killers and their mid-level direct superior were convicted of the crime. They have long since been released following a series of amnesties, but the higher-ups who ordered the killing have never been brought to justice nor even identified.

"Was Father Jerzy a criminal, a murderer or terrorist?" the Italian prelate asked rhetorically in his homily and answered: "No, he was simply a faithful Catholic priest who was defending his dignity as a servant of Christ and the freedom of those like himself were persecuted and humiliated. But religion, human dignity and freedom were notions not in agreement with the Marxist ideology. That is why the destructive anger of the great liar, the enemy of God and oppressor of mankind was unleashed against him."

Jerzy was one of five children born to the devoutly Catholic Popieluszko family in the village of Okopy in northeastern Poland's poor Podlasie region. His older brother Józef recalls how the entire family would pray on their knees together every morning and evening. Jerzy served as an altarboy and, on days when he wasn't serving at the altar, would rise earlier and walk an extra three miles to attend mass before going to school. He was drafted into a special army unit for seminarians which subjected recruits to atheist propaganda and various forms of humiliation and harassment to turn them against the Church. He was punished for refusing to remove his religious medallion and surrender his rosary. "How easy it is to suffer, when one suffers for Christ," he wrote to the director of his seminary.

When the peaceful Solidarność revolution erupted in 1980, the late Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński assigned the soft-spoken priest to be the chaplain to Warsaw steelworkers and nurses. At St Stanislaus Church he pioneered his trademark Homeland Mass, celebrated on an outdoor balcony, which

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Wina, kwiaty, kochanie ...historia.

Niedawny noblista, Orhan Pamuk wyraził się, że książki są ważniejsze od żołnierzy i duchownych. A więc czytamy je, kupujemy i ...piszmy!. Ten ostatni postulat dość nieoczekiwanie dla samej siebie spełniła Irene Sturm pisząc obszerną powieść pt. "Na przekór losu". Autorka na stałe mieszka w USA, w Kalifornii.

Akcja książki toczy się w XVIII wieku i rozgrywa się na terenie Austrii, ale również Niemiec i w Polsce, gdzie władzę w tym czasie sprawował król August II Mocny, na przemian ze Stanisławem Leszczyńskim.

Wydarzenia toczą się spokojnym rytmem, jak to w dawnych czasach bywało. Mamy trochę mistyki, rozmów z duchami, nieco tajemniczych wydarzeń, a nawet dla urozmaicenia garść wierszy wplecionych do poszczególnych rozdziałów.

Tradycyjna stylistyka narracji może nowoczesnego czytelnika bulwersować, ale pasuje do opisywanej epoki. Pisarka prowadzi nas do podwiedeńskiej wsi Poldskirchen i zapoznaje z mieszkańcami wieśniaczych chałup, bogatych i biednych chłopów, ale również do okazalego zamku. Poznajemy mentalność, moralność, zainteresowania hrabiowskiej rodziny.

Zarówno ci spod strzechy, jak i ci z zamkowych pokoi czekają na prawdziwe kochanie, na miłość. Lubią wino i kwiaty. Wcale nie chcą tworzyć historii. Więcej interesuje ich winobranie. Nieświadomie potwierdzają swoim życiem, że w winie prawda - in vino veritas. Glorifikacja domu, jego chwała sływa na bohaterów książki. Aż zazdrość bierze, że nie dane nam było żyć w tych bezpowrotnie przeszłych czasach.

Budowanie domu, dbałość o niego, to budowanie życia. Nie można mówić, że życie człowieka to ruina. Stan zdrowia, widok budowli istniejącej to stan przejściowy, trwała jest śmierć. Irene Sturm przeczy w swojej powieści takim filozofom. Główna bohaterka "Na przekór losu", Gera, wielokrotnie rozmawia z dawno zmarłą matką i ta daje jej rady, wskazówki, a więc żyje, nie jest ruiną.

Bohaterowie historycznej sagi Irene Sturm są Austriakami, ale gdzieś u drugiej połowie powieści pojawia się Polska i nadwiślańskie pobożne powiedzenie „Gość w dom, Bóg w dom”. Na kanwie tej sentencji pisarka snuje optymistyczną opowieść o miłości, a także odwieczną walkę dobrego ze złem. Ma to ---- bardzo sentymentalny charakter, pełen wiary w dobroć ludzką i wpływ tych, którzy na zawsze już odeszli.

Zgryźliwi powiedzą, że to odrodzona z popiołów zapomniana Helena Mniszkówna. Ale to nieliczni.

Większość musi uchylić kapelusza na dowód szacunku, że pisarka miała odwagę zmierzyć się z trudnym zadaniem, jakim jest bez wątpienia tworzenie w dzisiejszych czasach powieści historycznej. Teraz wszyscy w szalonym tempie pędzą w przyszłość, nie oglądając się na miniony czas.

Z ufnością i nadzieją czytamy ostatnie zdanie powieściowe:

„ - Światło, chylę głowę przed Tobą, bo ty jesteś Początek i Koniec, Pan nad Panami, który wszystko może” - powiedziała Gera.

- Miła jest mi ta pokora - usłyszała.

- Podążam do Ciebie - wyszeptła i zaczęła iść powoli w kierunku „Światła”.

- Ale czy ja dobrze widzę? To moja matka, wyszła mi naprzeciw, tak jak obiecała - powiedziała radośnie Gera i przyspieszyła kroku

Książka Irene Sturm „Na przekór losu” została wydana w Wydawnictwie „Norbertinum” Jeśli ktoś byłby zainteresowany tą książką to proszę dzwonić pod nr. tel. 310- 266-8904.

Emil Biela

regularly attracted up to 20,000 faithful who filled the entire street in front of the church and spilled over into an adjoining park.

In addition to his compatriots Lech Wałęsa and Pope John Paul II, Father Jerzy made a significant contribution to the collapse of the Evil Empire, as US President Reagan called the USSR. By 1984, the Jaruzelski junta had used threats, intimidation and blackmail to force the Polish nation into submission and offered incentives to those ready to play ball with the authorities. Ordinary people had to think about feeding their families and many began succumbing to what the country's communist rulers called "normalization". It was Popieluszko's brutal murder that convinced a majority of Poles that the totalitarian regime had no future and re-ignited their quest for freedom.

The beatification ceremony was followed by a massive four-hour procession bearing the martyr's relics which wended its way across the sun-drenched city to the Church of Divine Providence in the south Warsaw suburb of Wilanów, a distance of 7.5 miles. There they were enshrined in a basilica still under construction which is due to become a National Religious Sanctuary.

ACPC - YLC from 5

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