

KRAKOW 97

Observed by COLIN COOPER

THE Czeslaw Drozdiewicz Memorial Guitar Competition changed its format this year. The new tape elimination round produced entries from a wider field than before, many competitors no doubt feeling that it would be worth travelling to this Polish city for a semifinal but not for a first round. While I am no great lover of the tape cassette (too much depends on the skill of the engineer), there was at least a semifinal of eleven players to be heard in the flesh and thus produce a final worthy of the name.

In fact, the semifinal was unusually good, and choosing a small handful of finalists meant that much talent had to be put aside. The jury was almost entirely Polish this year, which may have made a small difference, but the result was international enough: the First Prize shared between France (Sébastien Vachez) and Poland (Michał Nagy), the 2nd prize going to Italy (Gabriele Natilla). The warm and graceful playing of Vachez won him many new admirers who had not heard his successful recital in Tychy 1996. A powerful *Nocturnal* from Nagy showed what an advance this young player has made in a short time. If you can take one of the most difficult works in the modern repertoire and make it into something like this, you must be on the road to somewhere. His crescendo of *agitato* was remarkable. Natilla's style, bright and forward yet capable of thoughtfulness, compelled attention by its compressed musical tension. Gratifyingly, two players from Britain turned up. I hope this is the beginning of a new trend. Blairism in action? Hardly; for the new Labour government was only a few days old. Nevertheless, a welcome departure from the norm.

This was the jury: Ryszard Balauszko (president), Colin Cooper, Zbigniew Dubiella, Alina Gruszka, Jerzy Nalepka, Adam Zalas, Piotr Zaleski.

In the concerts, the Katona Duo distinguished themselves in Handel and, particularly, Brouwer's *Per suonare a due*. Much has been written about their brilliance and wit in this work, and I need say no more. José María Gallardo del Rey came with his group, 'La Maestranza', in a Spanish programme which the audience found greatly appealing: flute, clarinet, viola, cello, doublebass and voice, with of course the guitar of its spiritual and actual leader. There are possibilities here for some very interesting composition and arrangement, and I compliment the initiative of José María Gallardo del Rey in forming the ensemble. Great things may come out of it.

In the same evening the young Polish prizewinner Piotr Tomaszewski played. A pupil of Ryszard Balauszko, he is one of Poland's young guitar tigers, a name to watch.

Costas Cotsiolis wove a powerful spell in Domenico's *Koyubaba*, then created a new suite with a long string of Brouwer pieces — no more oddly assorted than the Baroque's jigs, courantes and

sarabandes. The great Jorge Cardoso played in his inimitable way, partnered by Krzysztof Pelech in his *Suita Indiana*, a concerto, despite its name, for two guitars and orchestra. It



Adam Zalas.



Maria Jaglarz.

only remained for Pelech to perform *Fantasia de la Danza* by the other great Jorge, Morel (the Kraków National Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Stanisław Welanyk), and another good festival was over.

The concerts were introduced, as usual, by the ever-glamorous Lidia Jazgar, and the organisation was in the super-efficient hands of Adam Zalas (Artistic Director), Maria Jaglarz (Administration), Iwona Gajewska, Bożena Bienkowska, Elabe Jurrú, and the other talented people at the Cultural Institute, whose work I admire more and more with every festival.

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„Rodriguez” dla Sebastiena Vacheza

Final święta gitary

Jury krakowskiego Międzynarodowego Konkursu Gitarowego pod przewodnictwem Ryszarda Balauski, wykładowcy warszawskiej Akademii Muzycznej, I miejsce i Grand Prix przyznało rewelacyjnemu francuskiemu gitarzyście. Sebastien Vachez otrzymał wspaniałą gitarę koncertową „Manuela Rodrigueza” – model E, wartości 3400 zł, ufundowaną przez gdyńską firmę „Interton”, nagrodę pieniężną (3 tys. zł) i statuetkę Grand Prix Festiwalu.

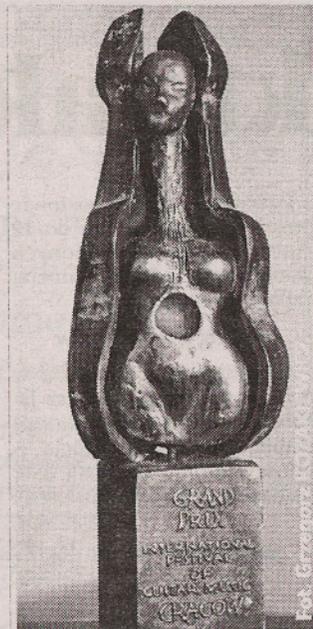
Sebastien Vachez nie jest nowicjuszem, gra na gitarze od 1982 r., studiował w Conservatory w Troyes i Conservatory Maurice Ravel, pobierał także lekcje mistrzowskie u ta-

kich wielkich sław jak: Roland Dyens, Roberto Aussel czy Pablo Marqez. Obecnie sam uczy, komponuje i koncertuje.

Drugie I miejsce „wygrał” Polak Michał Nagy. Studiował w AM w Warszawie u prof. Marcina Zalewskiego i w Konserwatorium Wiedeńskim, uczestniczył w lekcjach mistrzowskich. Otrzymał nagrodę pieniężną i



Laureaci Michał Nagy i Sebastian Vachez tuż przed koncertem w Filharmonii



gitarę koncertową ufundowaną przez krakowską firmę „Interton”. Sebastien Vachez i Michał Nagy zostali zaproszeni do udziału w kolejnym MFMG w Krakowie za dwa lata.

II miejsce przypadło Włoszce Gabriele Natilla. Wyróżnieni zostali: Denis Asimowitch z Białorusi i Michał Pindakiewicz.

Trzydniowym konkursowym przesłuchaniem odbywającym się w sali „Florianki” towarzyszyły koncerty mistrzów w Sali Hołdu Pruckiego w Sukiennicach.

(E. Kozłowski)