

Full Biography

ANDRZEJ KRZANOWSKI 1951–1990

Polish composer, accordionist and pedagogue, winner of numerous awards and scholarships from Witold Lutosławski and the Scottish Arts Council, representative of the *Stalowowolska Generation* and *New Romanticism* in music. Critics dubbed him the Chopin of the accordion. He composed more than 100 works of which the majority are accordion compositions.

Born 9 April 1951 in Bielsko-Biała, he passed away on 1 October 1990 in Pszczyna and was buried in Czechowice-Dziedzice – a town where he lived and worked, seeing as it frequently inspired his music, being the starting and ending place of his artistic journey.

He began being taught the accordion by a private tutor at age of eight, although he did not start his regular musical schooling until age of 16 at the 1st Degree Music School in Oświęcim, then two years later at the 2nd Degree Mieczysław Karłowicz State Music School in Katowice: in a composition class taught by Henryk Mikołaj Górecki and through accordion lessons delivered by Joachim Pichura. He graduated with a distinguished diploma in composing in 1975 and took up a teaching post at the 1st and 2nd Degree Music School in Katowice, the Upper State Music School in Wrocław, and his old school in Katowice, where he taught for the rest of his life. He also taught at musical courses and workshops, including the International Holiday New Music Courses in Darmstadt (1984, 1986), the International Summer Academy Courses titled *Time of Music* in Viitasaari, Finland (1987), the Musica'83 International Contemporary Music Festival in Strasbourg and the IV International Accordion School in Mutzig, France (1988).

His first steps as a composer were taken alone when he was a boy of schooling age. He broke with traditional musical notation, form and sound, his experiments emerging through avant-garde fascinations with works mainly heard over the radio. Following unsuccessful entry exam attempts in 1969 to attend the Faculty of Musical Education at the Upper State Music School in Katowice, Krzanowski destroyed almost all his manuscripts and decided to continue his education at the 2nd Degree Mieczysław Karłowicz State Music School in Katowice

Preludium, which years later would open the *Księgi / Volumes* series for the accordion was created at this time. His playing came to public attention during the Young Musicians For a Young City of Stalowa Wola Festival (1976–1980) and the Musical Meetings festival in Baranów Sandomierski (1976–1981), where he premiered his *Programme I*, *Programme II* and *Programme IV*, alongside the likes of Eugeniusz Knapik and Aleksander Lasoń – a trio of composers who stood in opposition to the avant-garde movements of the 1950s and 1960s, composing as part of the “new romanticism” movement, later dubbed the *Stalowowolskie Generation* and *Silesian Wave '51*.

Krzanowski's legacy contains a varied selection of works – in his youthful *Programmes* marked by an impressionistic, or even surreal musical aura, Krzanowski combined all sorts of art genres (poetry, music, visual arts), a vision most fully realised in his meta-opera titled *Audycja / Programme V*. He also quoted musical elements from the likes of Jan Sebastian Bach, Karol Szymanowski and Isaac Albéniz, as well as an unusual instrumentation (cassette tape, siren, whistle, flexaton).

The next stage of his creative development involved the production of chamber pieces (string quartets, *Three pieces for the oboe and trumpet*, *Winds Carry Echoes Across the Meadow* for accordion and harpsichord, *Con Vigore* for eight performers, *II Symfonia* et.al.) and symphonic works (*Stadium I*, *Canti di Vratislavia*, *Symfonia I* et.al.).

His works for the accordion represent a separate collection – solo and chamber pieces, collected by the PWM Edition (Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne) in six volumes. These include titles such as *Studium III, Toccata, Kanon, Oda, Chorał, Katedra, Alkagran czyli jedno miejsce na prawym brzegu Wisły / Alkagran being a single spot on the right banks of the Vistula*. It was thanks to daring and innovative use of techniques in these works, unknown at the time in accordion playing, that Krzanowski found ways of ensuring this instrument would be taken seriously by the musical community, securing its enduring place in the world of contemporary musical composition and performance.

Andrzej Krzanowski won numerous national and international composition competitions, including II prize at the XIX Competition staged by the Association of Young Polish Composers in 1976, I and III prizes at the Artur Malawski Composition Competition in Krakow (1976, 1980), twice III prize at the Carl Maria von Weber International Composition Competition in Dresden (1978, 1979), I prize at the Composition Competition staged by the Central Music Editors of Polish Radio & Television in Warsaw (1979), distinction at the Gaudeamus International Composition Competition in Holland (1981), distinctions at the Composition Competition in Stalowa Wola (1978), I and II prizes at the international composition competition in Digne-les-Bains (1981, 1987), I prize at the composition competition in Kamien Pomorski (1985). He was the winner of numerous awards and scholarships from Witold Lutosławski and the Scottish Arts Council, while his works created for children and young adults were in 1985 given an award by The Prime Minister.

Andrzej Krzanowski, as a live performing accordionist, staged mainly his own compositions and original music of the 20th century. He performed in many countries, including France, Austria, Italy, Holland and Germany. He recorded for radio and television.

He was the head of the Polish Composers Association in Katowice (1987–1990), and a juror at composing and accordion competitions.

He is associated with the *Alkagran* Fall Music Festival in Czechowice-Dziedzice, which includes the international Accordion Competition, the Music Society in Katowice, the Chamber Hall of the State School in Mława. A street was named after him in Czechowice-Dziedzice, along with a composition competition for high school students. The following have dedicated their works to him: Krzysztof Baculewski, Marcin Bortnowski, Wiesław Cienciąła, Jean-Baptiste Devillers, Julian Gembalski, Marian Gordiejuk, Grażyna Krzanowska, Aleksander Lasoń, Bogdan Precz, Bronisław Kazimierz Przybylski, Grażyna Pstrokońska-Nawratil and Piotr Radko.