

# THE FREEMASON MUSIC COLLECTION IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OF POZNAŃ



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I would like to present a special part of the Masonic Collection of the Poznan University Library - the section of music publications.

Our vast collection encompasses about 80.000 books, pamphlets and periodicals. The part of the collection that has already undergone full library preparation includes 67,000 volumes. The process of modernisation of the Masonic Collection in the University of Poznan started in year 2000, by cataloguing the volumes in the Horizon Programme. Among the precious volumes, there are hundreds of music scores and texts rewritten and printed. Generally, the texts are in German and most of them have not been processed yet.

On the occasion of the AMMLA Congress in 2014, having the Masonic Book Collection of the University Library as reference basis, our colleague, the musicologist Andrzej Jazdon selected a series of texts in German, English, and French as well as several scores for a grand concert of Masonic music which was interpreted exquisitely by the music group *Nemrod*, from Poznan, specializing in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century hunting music (five instruments and five amazing voices). As a consequence of that fascinating concert, there arose the interest for collecting Polish texts and scores which would contribute to the revival of this type of music. As a result, we managed to acquire the books we have been seeking for a long time:

One of them it was *Frank-massonia mezczyzn i kobiet symboliczna*. It is a translation in Polish of the book *Religious Ceremonies and Customs* edited in Paris in 1809 (original title *Ceremonies et coutumes religieuses*). The book tells us about the rituals during the initiation processes, about different ceremonies and banquets both in the male and the female lodges but also regarding the importance of music at lodge meetings.

The text is highly important for the Polish Masonic historians and the edition was actually out of print at the very time of its publication in 1820-1830. The second reprint is a collection of lyrics from Polish lodges songs accomplished with the help of the National Library in Warsaw and of the Jagiellonian Library in Krakow. The title of the book is *Piesnik wolnomularski*. Edited in 1818 by Tadeusz Wolanski. This is an example of significant European culture.

This publication is extremely interesting regarding the importance of music in the meetings of the lodges because it represents a basic resource for the knowledge. The text was also out of print at the very time of its publication in 1818. It was unavailable even in auctions.

The University Library in Poznan commissioned the University Library in Warsaw to scan this volume. During the preparation of the reprint, the copy proved to have missing pages and we extended our research. Thanks to our colleagues at the Jagiellonian University Library in Krakow, where another copy was deposited, we managed to receive a scan of those pages. This way, the Department for Digitalisation in our library succeeded in completing and printing this precious volume.

This anthology of poems was conceived and published by brother I. Paprocki. The lyrics belong to Tadeusz Wolanski, Br. Adamczewski, Br. Pekalski, Br. Dmuszewski and to other authors who remained anonymous.

The themes of the anthology are:

*Banquet Song*  
*The Journey of the Brothers who Have the Degree of Fellows of the Craft*  
*Encouragement for Virtue*  
*Our Newly Initiated Brother*  
*To the Sisters*



*Mourning Song**Hope**Ode to Joy*

*To the Leader of the Polish Army, Brother Poniatowski.*

Starting from the eighteenth century, Polish music publications appeared at the lodge meetings. Poems, hymns and symbolic cantatas have circulated around in the enclosed group. They wrote from the desire of their hearts or by the order of the brothers.

Some of the themes alluded to the political events of the period heyday of liberalism, to the time of the Congress of Vienna or the fall of Napoleon and the liquidation of the Duchy of Warsaw.

Starting from 1821 Tsar Alexander I dissolved the Masonic Movement in Russia and in its dependent countries. With the edict issued on 25 September 1821 by Józef Zajaczek, Prince-Steward of the Kingdom of Warsaw, Masonic activities were suspended.

The masons began to destroy the documents by themselves meaning that the poetic and artistic literature was gone as well. In Poland, after the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century there is still 1/5 of the poetic literature missing. Roughly estimated that's around 300 poem titles.

The scores for those songs were published separately in other books.

The researcher of Masonic Literature, Małahowski – Lempicki listed more than 80 - names of Polish musician artists . The most active mason composer was Józef Antoni Franciszek Elsner (1769 – 1854) (member sand Master in Halle der Beständigkeit), - the creator of about 400 musical compositions. Among them we mention two lost operas:

*Die seltenen Brüder oder Die vier Zauberkugeln*, opera in 2 acts (1795);

<http://culture.pl/pl/tworca/jozef-elsner>

*Iskahar, król Guaxary*, melodrama in 3 acts (1796) – libretto by Wojciech Bogusławski

<http://culture.pl/pl/tworca/jozef-elsner>

Józef Elsner brought up many musicians famous in the XIX century, including Fryderyk Chopin. Another great composer was Karol Kurpinski. He made his debut in 1810 with the Cantata in honor of Napoleon, and also dedicated to him a symphony connected with the battle of Borodino.

Elzbieta Wichrowska signalled the appearance of the first musical texts in the article: Polish Freemasonry Poetry in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Between 1811-1821 several anthologies of Masonic Polish songs were published. The first volume entitled Masonic song- books gathered 24 Polish songs, 3 French ones and 3 German ones. The last anthology Masonic book-cantatas had 166 pages.

Nowaday, in Poland, on the occasion of the 250th birthday of Mozart, a new masonic musical group was born: Mozart's Group of Basset Horn. It consists of musicians and pedagogues of the Philharmonic and the Academy of Music in Gdansk, Katowice and Cracow. Three of them played on basset horn (clarinets d'amour). In Poland we have only five copies of this unique instrument.

Directors everywhere compete with each other staging *The Magic Flute*.

After the very unique presentation of *Zauberflotte* in Beyreuth, by Anna Klinge, on Hands and feet, the Mozart's masterpiece is represented now in the Poznan Opera, in a unique inscenisation too.

Director Sjaron Minailo created in highly visual Site-Specific production style, that break the boundaries of the traditional opera space and experience. The version of this stage is the fourth from 1968.

Nota bene, our library resources were used for the previous representation of *The Magic Flute*.

In the spirit of this important anniversary, the 300th celebration of Freemasonry, I would like to invite the researchers and the musicians interested in History of masonic music, to visit us and to find brilliant musical masterpieces among the Masonic Music Collection in Poznan.

