

Transcription of the interview with Anu Tali

MARTYNA MATWIEJUK: Ladies and Gentlemen, today, a very special guest with me, Estonian conductor Anu Tali, who is going to conduct today's concert at the Warsaw Philharmonic. Good afternoon, how do you feel before this Estonian-Croatian-Polish evening?

ANU TALI: Good afternoon to everyone. I feel very pleased to be here. It's my first time in Warsaw. My mom lived here for a short time when she did science – she's a professor of Mathematics. It's a place I've heard a lot about and it's a very important cultural Mecca. I'm very happy to bring some Estonian music here as well as Polish and a piece by a female composer Dora Pejačević, whom I've only now discovered.

MARTYNA MATWIEJUK: Today's programme consists of masterpieces by Ludomir Rogowski, Arvo Pärt and Dora Pejačević. Which works of these composers do you consider most challenging tonight?

ANU TALI: I think any new score is challenging because you need to find what the composer was underlining. I think the biggest work is of course the massive symphonic score by Dora Pejačević, and it's amazing that this score, written at the beginning of the 20th century, has been lying there so long. The lady lived only 38 years, so its premiere in 1918, first time only two middle movements in Vienna, by the Tonkünstler-Orchester, and I think the whole piece was performed in Dresden, it was her dream. She was clearly a very talented woman, aristocrat. Of course, during her lifetime she couldn't write her full name, because she was a woman. There were only initials in the programme. It's very interesting. It's a very good score. It's a massive Wagnerian/Tchaikovsky orchestration that is a very interesting and beautiful music. Rogowski is also new for me and I understood that even not so often performed in Poland, it's more often performed in other countries, as he lived abroad quite a bit. At the end of his life he discovered Dubrovnik, and this became his home. And these pictures about Dubrovnik, I googled up everything to understand how he must have seen all the surrounding streets, the flowers, and I hope to do justice to his piece. And of course, Arvo Pärt, it is my music, my home, and I'm so pleased to live during his time, because he's absolutely incredible. Everybody knows him. It's such a pleasure to be Estonian during his time.

MARTYNA MATWIEJUK: As you said, Dora Pejačević wrote her Symphony around 1918, Impressions... by Ludomir Rogowski were written in the 1950s, whereas Arvo Pärt's work dates back to late 1970s. Do you think there's something these works have in common?

ANU TALI: I think we people have a lot in common, wherever you go, we, people, especially musicians, we have the same desire to kind of do universal language. Maybe Arvo Pärt's music is the most specific for the listener today and maybe for the orchestra. The others are kind of closer to the idiom of Polish music or Croatian music. Arvo Pärt is very specific as such and the only composer who writes this way. Maybe it's quite different. And maybe it's the most metaphysical in this sense. It's not purely musical, for me. Although he says that it should be enough if one note is played beautifully.

♪ [ARVO PÄRT "FRATRES"]

MARTYNA MATWIEJUK: This year's edition of the Eufonie Festival is focused on Romanticism of the Central and Eastern Europe, but the programme is of course

wider, not only strict Romanticism. I think for us, the Europeans, Romanticism is very deeply inside us. What do you think we owe most to this era in music?

ANU TALI: I think Romanticism is close to us because it does good to our aching soul. I think especially in the Slavic region, there's language background. I think it's very natural to understand this music, and the composers' music and the melodic lines also go from the language point of view, often, and from nature. It's understandable because the Romantic music gave us the beauty of phrasing and orchestration and lush emotions, so it's maybe simply easy to comprehend for the audience.

MARTYNA MATWIEJUK: **So it's like a medicine for an aching soul. Today you're performing with the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. I think it's incredible that music is such a universal language. You can communicate with artists from anywhere in the world through notes. I'd say it's a kind of a code. But if there's a code, there also should be a key. Do you have your key to get along with any orchestra?**

ANU TALI: There's one thing I've learnt through my life and work, it's been many years now. People recognize when you mean well and when you have something to say. If you come to work, you always have to bear in mind that people have their own luggage, their own problems, joys. Respect them. They don't always need to read your wishes from your lips. I've had incredible time with the Radio Orchestra here, I'm so pleased. I actually recognized some people, e.g. the concertmaster, we met in Germany like 8 years ago, so it's good to come back to people with whom you have actually been on stage together and have a new possibility to make something. It's been a really good time here.

MARTYNA MATWIEJUK: **Do you have a recipe to stay relaxed and focused when the curtain goes up and when the silence falls? After all, this is you who have to start the concert.**

ANU TALI: I don't know if relaxed is the word, maybe it's not. I think the most overwhelming moment is before you go on. But when you already go on, you know that this is your audience, they mean well, they came for you. That feeling, that the audience came there to hear you, actually saved me when I was really young, maybe 15 years old. Maybe they feel it too, so it's always a good atmosphere for me and it's been very helpful. I'm very grateful for people on and off stage to kind of lift me up. Music, when we perform, needs an echoing board. We perform, but the listener kind of lifts it up and feeds it back to us, so we feel them.

MARTYNA MATWIEJUK: **I'm sure today's evening is going to be magical. Anu Tali was my guest today, thank you so much for this conversation and I wish you a pleasant stay in Warsaw.**

ANU TALI: Thank you so very much, I'm looking forward to it.

♪ [ARVO PÄRT "FRATRES"]