

Wasył Wytwycky

Composer and musicologist Wasył Wytwycky was born into a family of teachers on 16 October 1905 in the Galician city of Kolomyia, where he completed middle school. His family cultivated a love for music, and his exposure to the choral concertos of Dmytro Bortniansky, Artem Vedel, Maksym Berezovsky and Mykola Lysenko sparked his interest specifically in Ukrainian music, which had already been stimulated by Ukrainian folk songs.

The First World War separated Wytwycky's family of three brothers and six sisters. When the front reached Kolomyia, his parents took the family across the Carpathians into Hungary and then to Prague, which was then home to a large Ukrainian community. It established its own school, and Wytwycky's father became its director. Wytwycky's stay in Prague was central to the development his worldview. His family was acquainted with Ukrainian physicist and inventor Ivan Puluj, a professor at the Technical University in Prague, an early researcher of cathode- and X-rays, co-translator with Panteleimon Kulish of the Bible into Ukrainian and a civic leader who corresponded with Lysenko, among others.

After the war the family returned to Kolomyia, where Wytwycky continued his education. He sang in the school choir, which performed large-scale works by Stanyslav Liudkevych, such as the "Chorus of Underground Blacksmiths" based on the poetry of Vasyl Pachovsky, and a portion of his *Kavkaz* (The Caucasus) based on the poem of the same name by Taras Shevchenko.

Gradually music came to dominate his life. At private recitals he played the violin in string ensembles. This, perhaps, influenced his first compositions, notably a trio for violin, cello and piano, the manuscript of which, sadly, was lost. However, during one autumn his musical and academic studies came to an abrupt halt. Following a surprise police search, Wytwycky was arrested and accused of activities against the Polish state. Given the absence of convincing evidence, he was released conditionally. However, a second arrest on identical charges soon followed. His attorney, the writer Andrii Chaikovsky, mounted a successful defense and saved Wytwycky from imprisonment.

Wytwycky graduated from the gymnasium, but was uncertain of where to go next. The Polish authorities had closed the Ukrainian departments of Lviv University, which prompted the Ukrainian community to establish the Lviv (Underground) Ukrainian University with faculties of philosophy, law and medicine in 1920. By the 1922-23 academic year it had 15,000 students. Wytwycky enrolled in the faculty of philosophy, but in 1925 the university was forced to close, owing to the persecution of its faculty and students.

That autumn Wytwycky moved to Krakow, where he enrolled in the faculty of music of the Jagiellonian University. There he studied with the musicologist Józef Reiss, author of a widely used textbook on music history, and music historian Zdzisław Jachimecki, who supervised Wytwycky's analysis of the piano works of Vasyl Barvinsky. Wytwycky's dissertation covered the development of song in the works of 19th-century western Ukrainian composers. Wytwycky also attended lectures on Ukrainian language and literature by linguist Ivan Zilynsky and writer Bohdan Lepky, himself a composer of popular Ukrainian songs.

Wytwycky was especially drawn to choral music. He sang with and later conducted a large mixed choir. Its concerts were dedicated primarily to jubilees, particularly those of Shevchenko, Lysenko and Mykola Leontovych.

In the summer of 1929, Wytwycky embarked on a teaching career when a position opened at the Music Institute in Przemyśl, a city which had been a musical center since the 18th century. The local Ukrainian cathedral choir performed choral concertos by Bortniansky regularly, and it was there that Ivan Lavrivsky and Mykhailo Verbytsky established what came to be known as the "Przemyśl School" of composition. Wytwycky worked at the Music Institute until 1937, first as an instructor of music theory and later as its director. During this period, he established friendships with Barvinsky and Liudkevych.

Wytwycky completed his doctorate at the Jagiellonian University in 1932. Although he received many prestigious offers of employment, he chose the Ukrainian Publishing Institute in Lviv, where he began working actively as a musicologist. He joined the editorial board of the *Ukrain's'ka muzyka* magazine, organized concerts in Lviv, lectured at the Lysenko Music Institute and was an active member of the Union of Professional Ukrainian Musicians, headed by

Nestor Nyzhankivsky, Barvinsky and Liudkevych. The Union was established to promote professional training and performance. In 1935 Wytwycky published a programmatic article “Za ukrains'ku muzychnu kul'turu” (On Ukrainian musical culture) in the Lviv daily *Dilo*.

At the time Galicia and Bukovyna were home to many Ukrainian choral ensembles, but they lacked professional conductors. This spurred the development of methodological materials and practical handbooks for chorus masters and conductors, namely a *Dyrygents'kyi poradnyk* (Conductor’s guide) written by Filiaret Kolessa, Zenowij Lysko and Wytwycky, who also served as its editor. Published in 1938, it became a popular handbook among Ukrainian choral conductors and choristers.

As a musicologist, Wytwycky published more than 250 articles on an exceptionally wide range of topics. He analyzed musical phenomena in juxtaposition with other art forms and in the context of historical events. In the late 1930s he became interested in the interactions of central European cultures and wrote a number of articles that remain relevant today: the Ukrainian influences in Chopin’s music, Ferenc Liszt, Béla Bartók and Ukrainian music, Lysenko’s influence on music in Galicia, Lysenko’s civic activism and others. In particular he studied the work of composers Liudkevych, Barvinsky, Porfyrii Bazhansky, Sydir Vorobkevych, Viktor Matiuk, Denys Sichynsky and Michael Hayvoronsky.

Beginning in 1939 Wytwycky worked on music radio programs in Lviv, covering Ukrainian musical events. In 1940-41 Wytwycky worked for the Folklore Institute of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. However, this work ended in the summer of 1941, when Nazi Germany invaded Lviv. Nevertheless, he continued to write, teach and lead the music department of the Ukrainian Publishing House in Lviv.

For the 100th anniversary of Lysenko’s birth in 1942, Wytwycky published a piece on relations between Lysenko and Franko. Together with Barvinsky, who was then rector of the Lviv Conservatory, and others, Liudkevych helped organize an exhibit of Lysenko’s documents and manuscripts in Lviv; it had been initiated by Lysko, who was forced to withdraw owing to his health. The exhibit included Lysenko’s scores and manuscripts, his correspondence with Oleksandr Barvinsky, Anatol Vakhnianyn, Osyp Shukhevych, Ostap Nyzhankivsky, Kolessa,

Franko and Puluĵ, as well as books, photographs, portraits and other personal effects, including the red silk shroud that covered Lysenko's casket during his funeral in 1912. The centerpiece of the exhibit was a bust of Lysenko sculpted by Mykhailo Dmytrenko. Wytwycky also maintained friendly ties with Lysenko's daughter Mariana, who worked as a *répétiteur* at the Lviv Opera House.

During the Second World War, Wytwycky's opportunities to compose were limited. Nevertheless, in 1941 he composed the diptych *Song and Dance* for string orchestra, which was first performed in 1953 in Detroit and later in Toronto, where it was recorded by the orchestra of the Lysenko Music Institute, conducted by Ivan Kovaliv.

Wytwycky was particularly drawn to chamber works, and in 1942 he composed his *Piano Trio in A Major*, which was first performed by pianist Roman Sawycky, violinist Roman Kryshchalsky and cellist Petro Pshenyckha. A year later he completed his *First String Quartet*, excerpts of which were played, led by violinist Wolodymyr Cisyk, on Lviv radio.

Wytwycky worked as a music critic, reviewing performances at the Lviv Opera House, where the repertoire included classics of the Italian and French repertoire and a smattering of Ukrainian operas. The paltry representation of Ukrainian works at the theater was not so much a matter of official prohibitions, as difficulty in obtaining scores, orchestral parts, klaviers and other notes. However, when Lviv composer Bohdan Bak produced the ballet score *Puss in Boots*, Wytwycky, Vasyl Barvinsky and Stefania Turkewich-Lukianowicz promoted it actively in the hopes of it being staged, but to no avail.

Wytwycky was especially active in organizing concerts in Lviv to mark the anniversaries of Taras Shevchenko, especially rehearsals for Liudkevych's cantata *Kavkaz*. One such concert took place at the Lviv Opera House and had to be presented three times owing to public demand. According to Wytwycky, the performers were more nervous than Liudkevych, who regarded the concerts as an achievement of Lviv's musical community, rather than his own.

Ultimately the Second World War forced the Wytwycky family to emigrate, initially to Austria, where he researched the life of Andrii Rozumovsky (also known as Razumovsky), the former

ambassador of the Russian Empire to the Austrian Empire beginning in the late 18th century. Later in the United States Wytwycky published a work about the ambassador's father, Hetman Kyrylo Rozumovsky, and his patronage of music. During his period in Austria, he also composed musical arrangements, choral works and the ballet *In Dreams*.

In 1946 he was a member of the musical delegation to the convention of the Ukrainian Art Movement in Augsburg, Bavaria. Together with Nestor Horodovenko, Lysko, Sawycky and Andrey Olkhovsky he organized the first convention of the Society of Ukrainian Musicians, which took place in late April 1946 at the displaced persons camp in Karlsfeld, Bavaria. Wytwycky was elected the organization's president.

With his colleagues Wytwycky began working on an encyclopedia of Ukrainian studies, in which he was responsible for the history of Ukrainian music performance and Ukrainian music of the 18th and 19th centuries. Lysko covered Medieval music and Ukrainian folk music, while Olkhovsky wrote about music scholarship, musical education and Ukrainian music of the 20th century. At the same time Wytwycky compiled the songbook of the Plast scouting organization, which was first published in Augsburg in 1949 and has been used by generations of Ukrainian scouts since then.

After emigrating to the United States in 1949, Wytwycky settled in Detroit and was active in organizing concerts of Ukrainian music. He wrote articles for the *Entsyklopediia ukraïnoznavstva* (Encyclopedia of Ukrainian Studies, Munich-New York, 1949), the *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* (Toronto, 1984), a monograph about Hayvoronsky (New York, 1954) and the book *Z banduroiu cherez svit* (With a bandura through the world, Munich, 1965). Since it was difficult to support his family in the United States as a musician, Wytwycky completed a degree in library science. Eventually becoming director of the library where he worked, he researched its archives in search of materials about Ukrainian music. In the process he discovered a hitherto unknown work by Berezovsky, a Sonata for Violin and Cembalo. He also uncovered materials about the composer in Bologna, Florence, Vienna, Paris and London. This research resulted in a monograph about Berezovsky (Jersey City, 1974).

Wytwycky died on 31 December 1999 in Summit, New Jersey, and was buried at the Ukrainian cemetery in South Bound Brook, New Jersey.

Wytwycky's music came to be performed more widely posthumously. In 2005 the Ukrainian Music Society of Alberta presented a concert in Edmonton to mark the centenary of his birth. His music was also rediscovered in Ukraine. Notably, in 2009 violinist Bohdana Pivnenko and the Kyiv Camerata performed his Suite for Violin, Cello and Piano, Sonatina for Four-Hand Piano, String Quartet no. 1 and Diptych for String Orchestra at the Actor's Hall in Kyiv during a concert dedicated to his work.¹

¹ Kateryna Konstantynova, "Dovha doroha dodomu Vasylia Vytvyts'koho" [Wasył Wytwycky's long road home], *Dzerkalo tyzhnia*, 3 July 2009.

Bibliography

Taras Filenko, “Koryfei muzykoznavstva Vasyli Vytvyts'kyi” [Coryphaeus of musicology Wasyl Wytwycky], *Ameryka*, 31 January 1996.

Kateryna Konstantynova, “Dovha doroha dodomu Vasyli Vytvyts'koho” [Wasyl Wytwycky’s long road home], *Dzerkalo tyzhnia*, 3 July 2009.

Wasyl Wytwycky, interview by Taras Filenko, August 1991.

Wytwycky Family Archive.

List of Compositions

- Diptych (Song and Dance) for string orchestra (1941)
- Piano Trio in A (1941)
- String Quartet no. 1 (1943)
- “Viiut' prapory” (The flags wave) for two-voice choir and piano, text by Hryhorii Chuprynka (1943)
- *U sni* (In dreams), one-act ballet (1943-44)
- Ukrainian Folk Songs for four-hand piano (1943)
- “Zirvalasia khurtovyna” (A blizzard arose) for two-voice choir and piano (1945)
- “Nema tiï syly” (There is no such force) for mixed choir and piano, text by Ivan Bahrianyi (1945)
- “Pivnyk i kurochka” (The rooster and the hen), incidental music, text by Natalia Zabala (1945)
- “Husenia” (Gosling), incidental music, text by Nadiia Buryk (1945)
- “A v poli, poli” (In the field) and “Ide zvizda chudna” (A wondrous star comes), two carols arranged for mixed choir (1945)
- “Temna nichka” (Dark night) and “Oi, kum do kumy” (Godfather to godmother), folk song arrangements for male choir and piano (1953)
- Sonatina for Four-Hands Piano (1959)
- “Pisnia pro Harasyma” (Song about Harasym), folk song arrangement for mixed choir and piano (1960)
- String Quartet no. 2 (Theme and Variations) (1960)
- Suite for Violin, Cello and Piano (1965)
- Ukrainian Folk Songs for four-hand piano, vol. 2 (1972)