

The City of Poznań has always been bustling with culture and art. Host to international festivals, competitions, and cultural institutions with long-standing traditions and extensive activity, the capital city of the Wielkopolska Province incessantly inspires and attracts art and music lovers. For a century now, its cultural landscape has been even more picturesque thanks to the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music in Poznań.

Ceremoniously opened on 16th October, 1920, as the State Academy and School of Music, it was headed by Henryk Opieński. Its organizational structure and curriculum was based on those developed in the Parisian Schola Cantorum and Music Conservatory in Prague: majors included the Theory of Music, Vocal Studies, String Instruments, Wind Instruments, and Piano. The academic course involved launching the Faculties of Drama, Opera, and Church Music. For lack of primary and secondary music schools, education covered students of all age groups (two-year preliminary course, four-year secondary course, and three-year tertiary course).

The School was transforming over the decades. Renamed into the State Music Conservatory in 1922, following a directive of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, it was forced to close several classes, thus limiting the opportunity to prepare and recruit candidates for the academic course. Consequently, the Conservatory was deprived of its academic entitlements, despite opening the Teacher Training Faculty in 1923. Subsequent years witnessed a cross-country discussion on the musical education system, but no organizational or curriculum conception was developed. All decisions about the schools were left to their principals. In 1934, central authorities commenced endeavours to restore academic rights to conservatories as of 1st January, 1940, but the outbreak of World War Two postponed it for over fifteen years.

In the pre-war period, the Poznań Conservatory made autonomous changes in the school organization and curriculum, because central authorities provided no relevant decisions. Introduced in 1935, the faculty structure included the First Faculty of Special Theory and Composing, the Second Faculty of Conducting, the Third Faculty of Piano and Organ, the Fourth Faculty of Solo Vocal Studies, the Fifth Faculty of Orchestral Instruments, and the Sixth Faculty of Teacher Training. The structure has survived to the present, with some alterations over the decades. The year 1939 witnessed the opening of an opera class, which was incorporated into the Faculty of Solo Vocal Studies with the

existing class of vocal studies. It was the last transformation of the school in the interwar period.

After World War Two, in 1945, the Conservatory resumed its activity, offering education in four faculties: the First Faculty of Special Theory and Composing, the Second Faculty of Instrumental Studies, the Third Faculty of Vocal Studies, and the Fourth Faculty of Teacher Training. A year later, the First Faculty opened a Conducting Section.

Transformed into the State Higher Music School in 1947, the institution absorbed the State Higher Operatic School four years later. In 1964, the Fourth Faculty was renamed into the Faculty of Musical Education. Almost twenty years later, it added a major in Eurhythmics. The Second Faculty also expanded by opening consecutive classes: accordion (1973), guitar (1976), saxophone (2002 – after a long break) and artistic luthiery (1978), the Poznań School being the only Polish tertiary music school to offer it as a major. The faculty structure was also changed: in 1984, the Third Faculty was transformed into the Faculty of Vocal and Acting Studies, and the Fourth Faculty was first changed into the Faculty of Choral Conducting, Musical Education, and Eurhythmics (1998), and then the Faculty of Choral Conducting, Musical Education, and Church Music (2001). Eurhythmics as a major was incorporated into the First Faculty. The School also had its branch in Szczecin (1961–2010).

In 2019, the School's traditional faculty structure was expanded with institutes related to the taught fields of study.

The School was named after Ignacy Jan Paderewski by resolution of the Senate on 24th November, 1980, and a year later (13th December, 1981), by directive of the Council of State, the State Higher Music School was transformed into the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music.

Over the course of a hundred years, the seat of the Academy of Music in Poznań also changed its shape – along with the launch of new faculties and an increasing number of students, the building at the 87 Świąty Marcin street did not fulfill accommodation needs. The years 1994–1997 brought the construction of a new wing, while the whole new building, modern but alluding to the old wing, was put to use in 2000. Six years later, the extension was crowned by Aula Nova, a 500-seat concert hall which has become the new musical heart of the city.

However, Poznań Academy of Music is, first and foremost, about people – genuine music lovers, the masters and their students. Its former rectors include such outstanding artists as Zdzisław Jahnke (violinist), Zygmunt Sitowski (musicologist), Wacław Lewandowski (pianist), Edmund Maćkowiak (choirmaster), Stefan Stuligrosz (musicologist and conductor), Waldemar Andrzejewski (pianist), Stanisław Kulczyński (choirmaster), Mieczysław Koczorowski (oboiist), Stanisław Pokorski (cellist), Bogumił Nowicki (pianist), Halina Lorkowska (music theoretician). Since 2020, the Academy has been headed by Hanna Kostrzewska (music theoretician).

The Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music conferred honorary doctorates on two world-famous conductors: Jan Krenz (2000) and Stefan Stuligrosz (2002), a highly regarded violinist, Jadwiga Kaliszewska (2007), a brilliant singer, Wiesław Ochman (2010), an eminent composer, Andrzej Koszewski (2013) and Stefan Kamasa (2020), a world-renown soloist and chamber musician, the doyen of Polish viola players.

Over the last century, the Academy has boasted its teaching staff composed of indisputable musical authorities. Their devotion still translates into their students' excellent competition performances, well-deserved laurels at international events, public acclaim, and subsequent generations of dedicated teachers. High education level is confirmed by prizes awarded to our students and young teachers at prestigious music competitions held in such cultural centres as Barcelona, Cologne, Darmstadt, Hamburg, Lubeck, Milan, Moscow, Paris, Salzburg, St. Petersburg, Tokyo, Turin, and Vienna.

As part of the LLP Erasmus Programme, the Academy is actively engaged in international exchange with 120 schools from 28 countries. Thanks to the thriving collaboration, every year approximately 30 students go abroad to study or undergo traineeship, and as many foreign teachers visit us with guest lectures and workshops. Additionally, since 2009, the Academy has been cooperating with the Youhao Jilian International Culture Exchange Center in Beijing which sends about a dozen Chinese students annually to study in all our faculties.

The collaboration between the masters and students also, or rather mainly, translates into the Academy's daily life: every day we invite Poznań citizens to our concert halls to boast about the results of our efforts. Our abundant offer features both artistic and academic events, including concerts, performances, lectures, and workshops. The Academy organizes and co-organizes a number of significant international and

national competitions, such as the International Piano Competition “Halina Czerny-Stefańska in Memoriam”, the International Andrzej Koszewski Composing Competition, the Zdzisław Jahnke Violin Competition, the Jan Rakowski Viola Competition, the Prof. Stanisław Kulczyński Competition for Choir Conductors, the Adam Bronisław Ciechański Double Bass Competition, the Włodzimierz Kamiński Violin Making Competition, the Dezyderiusz Danczowski Cello Competition, the Eugenia Umińska Competition for Young Violinists, the Organ Competition “Romuald Sroczyński in Memoriam”, the National Jerzy Zgodziński Percussion Competition, and the National Harpsichord Competition “Wanda Landowska in Memoriam”. The list has recently been joined by the Stefan Stuligrosz Grand Prix for Polish Choral Singing, whose first edition in 2018 marked the centenary of Poland’s independence.

For over a hundred years, the Academy of Music in Poznań, has been one of the most significant and brightest points on the cultural map of the city. Each day of the teachers and students is filled with what has been passion, love and life for the entire academy community – music.