**The Silesian Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra**

The orchestra began its artistic activity with a concert on the 26th of May 1945 as the State Philharmonic in Katowice. Since that event, its level of performance and numerous achievements have assured it a leading position among Polish symphonic ensembles. It has also become an unchanging reason for the participation of the philharmonic’s artists in many international, renown festivals. The orchestra’s vast repertoire encompasses the classics of orchestral music, and contemporary pieces alike.

Our musicians have participated, on numerous occasions, in the international Warsaw Autumn Festival, which is more than 50 years old. Their first appearance at the La Chaise-Dieu festival was made twenty five years ago, and they have also performed at Wrocław’s Vratislavia Cantans, the great oratorio-cantata festival. The incessant invitations from the most acknowledged concert halls (both in Poland and abroad) are a living proof of the high esteem the Silesian Philharmonic enjoys.

The high class and artism of the Silesian Philharmonic Orchestra is known across Europe. In July of 2000, along with the Silesian Philharmonic Choir led by Mirosław Jacek Błaszczyk, the Orchestra performed for Pope John Paul the 2nd during the celebration of the year 2000 jubilee in Rome. Since its first tours around the former Czechoslovakia in 1958, the orchestra has given concerts in all Europe. The orchestra has also promoted Polish culture outside of its home continent, in such places as Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. The Symphonic Orchestra gave almost 550 concerts in 25 countries outside Poland.

Since its very foundation, the Silesian Philharmonic has been hosting such top artists from Leopold Stokowski, Gennady Rozdyestwiensky or Fou Ts’onga, to Krystian Zimerman, Ida Haendel, Victoria de los Angeles, or Montserrat Caballé. All these names are yet another proof of the philharmonic’s well established position and high prestige it enjoys in its country.
The Silesian Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, led by Karol Stryja, has been the first ensemble to record and publish the complete vocal-orchestral works by Karol Szymanowski (which are still availble from the Naxos label). When it comes to recordings, the Philharmonic’s musicians have been among the most prolific ensembles in Poland. Their album containing George Gershwin’s works under the baton of Jerzy Salwarowski has achieved the Gold Record Award, and the recording of Karłowicz’s complete Symphonic Poems (with the same conductor) has proved to be monumental. In November 2007, the first ever recording of Wojciech Kilar’s Magnificat was released, performed by the Silesian Symphony Orchestra and Choir under the baton of Mirosław Jacek Błaszczyk (featuring solo appearances by Izabela Kłosińska, Tomasz Krzysica, and Piotr Nowacki). Later, musicians of the Silesian Philharmonic realized premere recordings of such works as: Festive Overture, Advent Symphony no. 5 and Paschal Hymn by Wojciech Kilar and two pieces by Alexander Tansman. Previous CDs, including works by Witold Lutosławski, Bolesław Szabelski, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki and Eugeniusz Knapik, have a very good opinion.

The Silesian Philharmonic and Mirosław Jacek Błaszczyk were the first to perform Nocturne by Mikołaj Górecki dedicated to his father, performed to commemorate the fact of granting the Silesian Philharmonic with the name of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki. The world’s phonographic premiere of this piece took place in November 2012. In 2013 this album (DUX 0924) was nominated for Fryderyk 2013. In 2016 CD with the premiere performance of the Symphony No. 4 Tansman Episodes by Henry Mikołaj Górecki recorded on 15 February 2015 in Lodz (Tansman Festival 2015) was released. In 2017 a CD (DUX1368) with Symphony No. 2 Copernicus by Henryk Mikołaj Górecki performed by the Silesian Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra and Choir prepared by Jaroslaw Wolanin with Joanna Woś (soprano) and Mariusz Godlewski (baritone) under the baton of prof. Mirosław Jacek Błaszczyk was released.