**The Silesian Philharmonic Choir**

This ensemble is one of the oldest philharmonic choirs in Poland. It was established on the initiative of Karol Stryja in 1974.During the first 30 years it was conducted by professor Jan Wojtacha, a brilliant choir master. Between 2004 and 2009 the Choir was directed by Waldemar Sutryk. Since August 2009, Jarosław Wolanin has been the artistic director and choir master of the Silesian Philharmonic Choir.

Already in the third year of the Choir’s artistic activity, the singers were invited to the prestige festival Wratislavia Cantans, to perform Benjamin Britten’s War Requiem with the Silesian Philharmonic Orchestra. The Choir’s repertoire consists of masterpieces of all periods, from the Renaissance polyphony to contemporary music. Artists can be proud especially of the Polish premieres of the following works: Dream of Gerontius by Edward Elgar, Choir concerto by Alfred Schnittke and Missa pro pace by Wojciech Kilar (first performance during a mass).

Through the 40 years of the ensemble’s activity, the Choir performed in major Polish artistic centres as well as abroad: in Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Czech Republic, Switzerland and Vatican. The Choir is regularly invited to such festivals as Wratislavia Cantans, Warsaw Autumn, Haendelfestspiele in Halle, Arena di Verona, Poznań Spring, Music Festival in Łańcut, Organ Music Days in Gliwice, Krystyna Jamroz Festival in Busko-Zdrój, Polish Contemporary Music Festival in Wrocław or Old Music Festival in Cracow. We are delighted that there are new invitations, too: in 2011, the Choir performed for the first time ot the HMG Festival in Cracow (1st Henryk Mikołaj Górecki International Contemporary Music Festival) and on the Adam Didur Vocal Music Days in Sanok.

The Silesian Philharmonic Choir performed under the baton of such maestros as: Karol Stryja, Mirosław Jacek Błaszczyk, Jan Wincenty Hawel, Jan Krenz, Antoni Wit, Gabriel Chmura, Jacek Kaspszyk, Tadeusz Wojciechowski, Marek Pijarowski, Jerzy Salwarowski, Jerzy Swoboda, Krzysztof Penderecki, Michael Zilm, Massimiliano Caldi, Mykola Dyadiura, Peter Tiboris and Paul McCreesh.

The ensemble cooperates with many philharmonic orchestras in Poland and with the Narional Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice.

The Choir’s repertoire includes hundreds of vocal-instrumental works (masses, cantatas, oratorios) and hundreds of pieces a cappella. The latter kind of music plays a significant role in the Choir’s recent activity. There are more and more a cappella concerts, filled with polychoral music and first performances of the newest Polish works. These events are often conducted by the best European choir masters: among others professor Czesław Freund and professor Matthias Geissler.  
The Silesian Philharmonic Choir made many archival and CD recordings. Albums with all the vocal-instrumental works by Karol Szymanowski and with some pieces for choir by Henryk Mikołaj Górecki are espiecially important for the ensemble. The singers recorded also music by Wojciech Kilar and Zbigniew Preisner, accompanying films by Polish masters of cinematography: Agnieszka Holland and Krzysztof Kieślowski.