

((Landowska Presstext))

High Priestess of the Harpsichord.

Wanda Landowska and Early Music

Temporary exhibition of the Musikinstrumenten-Museum Berlin

November 13, 2009 to February 28, 2010

She was a woman who distinguished herself in a world dominated by men: through musicality, virtuosity and education, but above all through provocation and determination. Thus, Wanda Landowska became the lady with the harpsichord, the “Grande Dame du Clavecin” – the “High Priestess of the Harpsichord”, without whom early music would have evolved quite differently in the 20th century.

She made music history as the high priestess of the harpsichord: Wanda Landowska was born in Warsaw 130 years ago. She lived and taught in Berlin and Paris, before fleeing from the Nazis to the United States in 1940. Until her death in 1959, she was revered by many as the undisputed authority in matters of the harpsichord.

No other harpsichordist polarized in such a way, no other virtuoso was similarly significant for the acceptance of her instrument. She was already a legend in her lifetime, not least thanks to the way she strategically planned her career, in which media marketing played a novel and decisive role.

Based on her enigmatic personality, the Berlin Musikinstrumenten-Museum presents the fascinating development that early music underwent in the 20th century. The temporary exhibition lets visitors experience how the notion of the historically “correct” harpsichord changed, along with the complementary aspects of media marketing. Many documents – including several thought to have been lost – of Wanda Landowska’s path of life via Berlin and Paris to the New World shed light on the enormous impact of the famous Polish harpsichordist.

At the opening event and in a further concert, distinguished harpsichordists will play on a newly restored instrument of the famous French firm Pleyel & Cie. from the collection of the Musikinstrumenten-Museum and remind of Wanda Landowska’s favorite musical pieces. New research results will be presented and discussed at a symposium.

Exhibition opening

Thursday, November 12, 2009, 7 p.m.
with a musical program played by

Diego Ares on the Pleyel harpsichord, 1927,
from the collection of the Musikinstrumenten-Museum
Manuel de Falla, Concerto for Harpsichord

Accompanying program

Friday, November 13 to Sunday, November 15, 2009

WANDA LANDOWSKA AND EARLY MUSIC

Symposium

organized by the Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Concept and realization: Dr. Martin Elste

Further information: www.mim-berlin.de

Sunday, November 15, 2009, 11 a.m.

HOMAGE TO WANDA LANDOWSKA

Favorite Pieces of the Great Harpsichordist

Recital as part of the Landowska symposium

Ilton Wjuniski on the Pleyel harpsichord (1927) with

works by Jan von Lublin, Domenico Scarlatti, Jean-Philippe Rameau, François Couperin, and Johann Sebastian Bach (Italian Concerto)

Musikinstrumenten-Museum des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung PK

Tiergartenstraße 1, Eingang Ben-Gurion-Straße. 10785 Berlin-Tiergarten

Opening hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed on Mondays

Contact: Dr. Martin Elste. Tel. +49 (0)30-25 481-132, elste@sim.spk-berlin.de

Press contact: Bettina Rippert. Tel. +49 (0)30-25 481-129, rippert@sim.spk-berlin.de

Photos:

Publication is permitted free of charge for coverage of the temporary exhibition. Please add photo credits and send a copy.

((Captions))

1. Wanda Landowska at the Pleyel harpsichord. Silhouette by Otto Wiedemann, between 1912 and 1917
2. Harpsichord by Pleyel & Cie., Paris, 1927. MIM Cat.-No. 4885. Photo: SIM PK / Jürgen Liepe
3. Anonymous caricature of Wanda Landowska, Larry Palmer Collection (gift from Momo Aldrich)
4. Wanda Landowska at the Pleyel harpsichord in her house in Lakeville, CT, undated
5. Harpsichord by Pleyel & Cie., Paris, 1927. Signature on the nameboard. Photo: SIM PK / Jürgen Liepe