

Aleksander Nowak, born in 1979 began his music education at the age of 14. In 2006 he graduated from The Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice, Poland as a composition student of Aleksander Lasoń and in 2008 from the University of Louisville School of Music where he studied composition with Steve Rouse.

He currently teaches composition and orchestration at the Academy of Music in Katowice, where in 2010 he received a PhD.

He combines teaching with a very active career as a composer, receiving recent commissions from many renowned ensembles and institutions, writing for various instrumental and vocal-instrumental settings from solo and chamber to symphonic and stage music.

His works have been performed in Poland, other European countries, and the United States by such artists and ensembles as Urszula Kryger, Ricardo Gallen, Piotr Pławner, Eugeniusz Knapik, The London Sinfonietta, Chamber Philharmony Pardubice, Silesian Quartet, Warsaw CELLONET Group, AUKSO Orchestra and Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra.

In May 2010 his chamber opera, *Sudden Rain*, premiered with enthusiastic reviews at the National Opera in Warsaw, Poland.

Since 2008 his compositions have been published by the Polish Music Edition (PWM).

His music is characterized by fully expressive narrative, deeply involving the listener. The trials and tribulations that the sonic “heroes” of this narrative go through are as surprising as they are convincing. The thread of the story, though sometimes seemingly torn, finally falls into place in the whole distinctively catatonic action. Nowak, in this, has perfectly mastered the art of self-ironic distance. Elements of humor do not destroy the seriousness and dark colors, which dominate this music, but rather give a sense of compositional command over material. Nowak never falls into tones of the full pathos of oration. He is able to hold back and bide his time through a moment of emotional build up, after which a world of music somehow miraculously cleansed of accumulated emotion emerges. The composer does all of this in a language, which refers to a variety of styles; with each additional piece he enriches his technical "vocabulary" and melts it into a very personal idiom.

[Marcin Trzęsiok, Ruch Muzyczny 2/2010]