

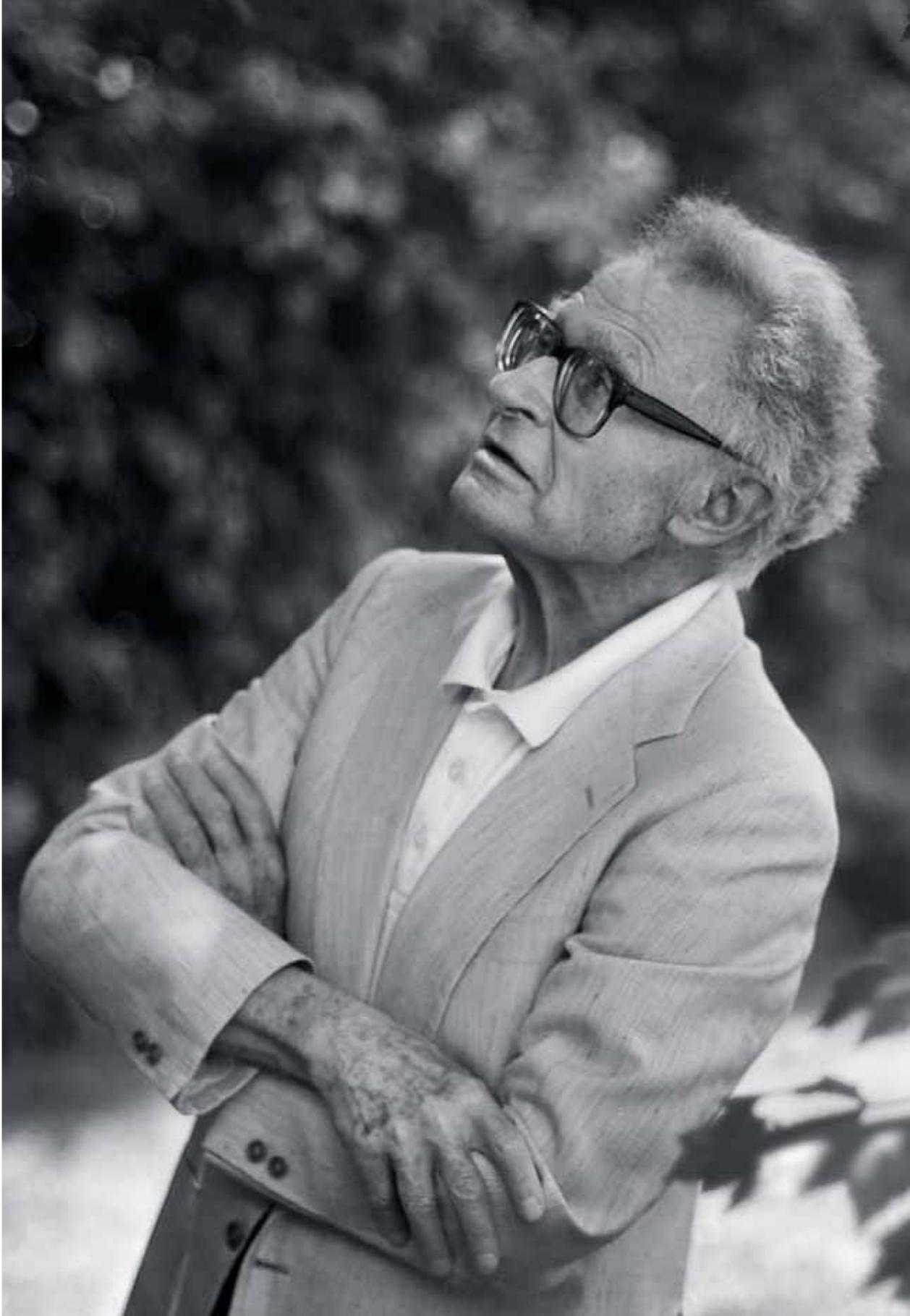
THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION | MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA



# STANISLAW SKROWACZEWSKI

2004 DISTINGUISHED ARTIST







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2004 DISTINGUISHED ARTIST

THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION



## INTRODUCTION

**S**tanislav Skrowaczewski has extraordinary staying power. Although best known here for his almost two decades as maestro of the Minnesota Orchestra, Skrowaczewski has been a conductor for nearly 70 years and a composer for nearly 75. However, his contributions to the world of music go well beyond musical scores.

Many say that he is responsible for building Minnesota's reputation as a national leader in classical music. When he arrived from Poland, there was no Orchestra Hall. The musicians played in Northrop Auditorium at the University of Minnesota, where they often had a hard time hearing their own music. Along with his dear friend Kenneth N. Dayton, Skrowaczewski is credited with leading the successful charge for a new orchestral hall in downtown Minneapolis, which opened in October 1974.

Skrowaczewski has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment not only to the Twin Cities but to the whole state, by sharing the orchestra with communities throughout Greater Minnesota. In addition, he interrupted his own international career opportunities to lead the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra when its longtime conductor departed in 1987. This book tells several stories about his special contributions to young composers and musicians. He wins their hearts and minds with his pure dedication to playing great music.

Friends, students, and associates agree that Skrowaczewski is a rare breed of perfectionist: demanding yet respectful of musicians and students; proud and exhilarated by outstanding performances but humble about his own contributions; and adventurous—almost edgy—in interpreting both the classics and works less familiar to Midwestern audiences.

Although he is one of the world's premier conductors and composers, Skrowaczewski and his family have chosen to make our state their home. His presence, persistence, and leadership during the past 45 years have greatly enhanced our artistic community. We are awed by his rigorous schedule—even today. This fall, he will once again be conducting throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. We wish him many more satisfying seasons, and thank him for the vision, energy, and artistry that have nurtured in so many of us the love of music.

**Erika L. Binger**  
**Board Chair**  
**The McKnight Foundation**

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT



**T**o me, art is a dialogue with the unknown. This dialogue encompasses all fundamental human concerns—such as the meaning of life and death, love and cruelty, sacrifice and redemption—in the constant hope to define that which cannot be known. Art thrives on metaphysical ideas, which I believe are as old as human consciousness. A great work of art, reflecting the powerful intellect and the compelling imagination of its creator, elicits from us a metaphysical shiver as it confronts us with a vision of ultimate reality.

This vision can liberate us from the mediocrity of everyday situations, thoughts, and feelings by lifting us onto a higher, more spiritual plane of being. And while doing so, it has the capacity to bemuse, delight, heal, and ennoble us. Thus art is a powerful antidote for the spiritual ills of our chaotic, violent, and troubled times.

**Stanislaw Skrowaczewski**

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The Minnesota Orchestra conductor laureate in rehearsal during the fall of 2004 for his annual "birthday" concert series. Opposite: Stan and Frederick Harris, Jr. at a bistro in Paris.

# A LIFELONG LOVE AFFAIR WITH MUSIC

BY FREDERICK HARRIS, JR.



**T**here was special warmth in the applause in Orchestra Hall when Stanislaw Skrowaczewski leapt off the podium after conducting the premiere of his Symphony [2003]. It was the eve of his 80th birthday; the audience sensed a defining moment. They reacted not only to hearing a masterful and emotional symphonic work but also to the man himself—a probing artist who had dedicated nearly 45 years to the artistic life of Minnesota while maintaining a global reputation as a major conductor and composer. That night was, in a sense, both a summing up of Skrowaczewski’s extraordinary life as a creative artist, and a glimpse into his future as he continues his journey seeking the infinite possibilities of music.

All great musicians possess innate sensitivity and extraordinary imaginations that are molded by their life experiences. From the beginning of his life, Skrowaczewski was engrossed in music. He would crawl out of his crib to sit underneath the piano when his mother, Zofia, a concert pianist, would play. The richness of sound at that proximity inspired his love of the organ and the orchestra. Barely able to stand, he figured out how to use the radio, spinning the dial until he found the music he loved: Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, composers he became intimately familiar with through his piano lessons beginning at age four.

Skrowaczewski’s father, Pawel, a gifted physician, loved music, and some of his colleagues played stringed instruments. They performed chamber music with Zofia on the weekends, and eventually Skrowaczewski learned to play the violin from one of the doctors. By age five, he got his hands on his very first score, Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. Soon after, he

began collecting scores to symphonies by Haydn, Mozart, Schumann, Wagner, and his beloved Bruckner.

Skrowaczewski's lifelong connection with Bruckner's music originated from an extraordinary incident. At age seven, while walking alone outside the city center of his birthplace, Lwów, he heard sounds coming from an open first-floor window. He stood in front of it transfixed by music he had never heard before. He arrived home in a trance-like state. His parents were frightened and took his temperature, discovering he had a high fever. He was bedridden for the next two days raving and talking nonsense. "I was in heaven—the world didn't exist for me," he recalled.

He later discovered that through the window he had heard the Adagio movement from Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. He quickly got the score and his fascination with Bruckner began. Fifty-six years later, in 1986, Skrowaczewski paid homage to this experience by referencing this Bruckner Adagio in the second movement of his Concerto for Orchestra. The movement is entitled *Anton Bruckner's Himmelfahrt* (Bruckner's Heavenly Journey). The composition, commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestral Association, received a 1999 Pulitzer Prize Nomination.



Scaling peaks in Idaho.

The same year of this intense Bruckner experience, Skrowaczewski composed his first orchestral work, a 10-minute Mozart-inspired overture. He accomplished this effort completely on his own, using scores and orchestration books he obtained as his guide. The Lwów Philharmonic performed the Overture in the Classical Style 10 years later, in 1940. Skrowaczewski's prodigious musical talent continued to flourish over the next few years. At 11, he gave his first public recital, a program of Bach and Haydn, broadcast throughout Poland. Two years later, he played and conducted Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto. By this time, he had also developed

a passion for chemistry, inspired by a cousin who was a professor of chemistry in Lwów. He loved mixing and manipulating various materials, much like composing. But when he caused an accidental explosion in his cousin's laboratory, he began to have second thoughts about pursuing this field.

Skrowaczewski's love of the natural world and outdoor activities also had a profound effect on his development. During summer vacations,

Skrowaczewski's father would take him on steep mountain trails, hiking sometimes for six or seven hours at a time. At age four he was skiing and jumping off makeshift slopes in parks in Lwów. Throughout his life, mountain climbing and skiing provided mental release from music and other cares. He continues to ski on the long slope in back of his Wayzata, Minnesota, home, often going up and down the hill 20 times without taking off his downhill skis.

Skrowaczewski's early sensitivity to nature inspired his curiosity about the metaphysical world and philosophy. The tragic death of his older sister and only sibling, Krystyna, at age 16, from scarlet fever, provoked deep discussions with his close friends about the meaning of life and God. During the summers of his high school years, Skrowaczewski spent many hours reading and discussing philosophy and poetry with his friends. Kant, Schopenhauer, and Ingarden were of particular interest to them.

Skrowaczewski was just about a month shy of his 16th birthday when Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. He spent one day and one night on the front line trying to defend his country. One of his dear friends was hit by shrapnel and died right next to him. A cousin of Skrowaczewski's was killed on the front line, and another cousin, like many Poles at that time, was deported to a prison camp in Siberia. Skrowaczewski's family was spared because the Soviets could use his father's medical skills. Germany divided up Poland with the Soviet Union, and Lwów was occupied by the Soviets until 1941. Everyday life under the Soviet occupation was dangerous, but the cultural environment was rich because of the influx of many Jewish musicians and artists who were escaping from German-occupied western Poland. During this two-year period, Lwów had four orchestras, and Skrowaczewski was exposed to outstanding live orchestral and chamber music.

In June 1941, Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, and Lwów fell under German occupation. At the time, Skrowaczewski was staying with friends in a small villa outside of Lwów near an important train line between Bucharest and Vienna. When they realized the Germans were bombing the station they began to flee, but a nearby explosion caused their house to crumble and a wall came crashing down on Skrowaczewski's hands. He suffered permanent nerve damage, ending the possibility of a career as a pianist. Because he was already considering concentrating on conducting and composing, he did not view the event as a tragedy, but rather a prophetic message from heaven.

All public musical activity in Lwów for Poles ceased during the German occupation. Skrowaczewski performed in a "string quartet in hiding" that met in isolated homes. Orchestra concerts were only open to

German citizens, but Skrowaczewski would sneak into the attic of the Lwów Conservatory, where he could observe orchestra rehearsals led by Fritz Weidlich, a well-known German conductor at the time. During this period, Skrowaczewski also attended “underground” university classes of the famed Polish philosopher and aesthetician, Roman Ingarden, who profoundly influenced his personal artistic philosophies.

Soon after the end of World War II, Skrowaczewski received formal



Two Polish conductors: Paul Kletzki and Skrowaczewski confer in 1957.

Below: Cleveland music director George Szell and Skrowaczewski had much in common. Both child prodigies suffered accidents while they were young that changed their life course from playing the piano to conducting.

degrees in composition and conducting, and during the next two years he earned his first important conducting appointment and a composition prize. A French government grant followed, allowing him to spend two years (1947–49) in Paris. There he met Nadia Boulanger, who was a strong advocate for his compositions, and Polish conductor Paul Kletzki, another major influence.

Word of Skrowaczewski’s compositions and his work as a gifted conductor was spreading across Europe. But the young maestro was worried about his parents back in Communist Poland, so he decided to head back to his

homeland. Over the next decade he held posts with all the major Polish orchestras and continued to win prizes for his compositions.

When Skrowaczewski won the coveted Rome Prize for Conductors in





Skrowaczewski wins the International Competition for Conductors in Rome in 1956.

1956, one judge in particular, George Szell, was duly impressed. This connection led to Skrowaczewski's American debut with the Cleveland Orchestra in 1958, and ultimately to his appointment as music director of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in the fall of 1960. Because he was in great demand as a conductor, his life as a

composer was put on hold. Thanks to a strike at the Metropolitan Opera in 1969 that postponed his guest conducting stint, Skrowaczewski had several weeks free. He re-entered the world of composition with a

bang, writing the first major concerto for English horn and orchestra.

Skrowaczewski's retirement from the Minnesota Orchestra in 1979 afforded him more time to compose and guest conduct all over the world. He held only one more major post after Minnesota: principal conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester, England, from 1984 to 1991. It was an artistically fruitful period for both Skrowaczewski and the orchestra, full of major tours and recordings. However, Skrowaczewski's first love in music, composing, continued to beckon. Since the mid-1990s, he has dedicated more time to composing, performing, and recording his compositions. Musicians and audience members around the world are becoming familiar with his unique compositional style.

In an age when popularity and commercialism increasingly dominate our airwaves and concert halls, Skrowaczewski remains a beacon of what it means to be a pure artist. A musician's musician who is seemingly devoid of self-promotion and self-aggrandizement, he has spent his life in the service of the arts of conducting and composing, and as a steward for the highest levels of orchestral performance. His musical life continues to represent the kind of artistic integrity that deserves to be celebrated for its own merits and as a testament for generations of musicians to come.

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Frederick Harris, Jr., Ph.D., is the director of wind ensembles at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he conducts wind and jazz ensembles, and has served as acting director of the MIT Symphony Orchestra. He also serves as a conductor for the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. He is currently writing the biography of Stanislaw Skrowaczewski.

# NOTHING BUT THE BEST

EXCERPTS ABOUT STANISLAW SKROWACZEWSKI  
FROM JUDITH KOGAN'S BOOK: *NOTHING BUT THE BEST:  
THE STRUGGLE FOR PERFECTION AT THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL*



## REHEARSALS WITH THE GUEST CONDUCTOR

**H**e seemed to be there, first and foremost, to make music. He seemed to place the music ahead of himself and ahead of the orchestra. He conducted without mannerism. At Juilliard Orchestra rehearsals, when an instrument has a solo lick in the middle of a piece, the orchestra registers approval by stamping and shuffling feet. Skrowaczewski didn't seem annoyed by the ruckus, but he ignored it, as if it wasted time. As if the point were making music, not massaging egos. . . .

And so it went. The energy never flagged, the momentum never broke. Every rehearsal was as charged as the first two. The daily rehearsals allowed for a continuity absent from the regular rehearsals. Word about the miracle in Room 309 spread. Even students who were not in the orchestra started coming to rehearsals, standing or sitting on the bridge chairs set up across the back and sides of the room. The pieces were getting to the point where they seemed to be playing themselves. Rehearsals became more and more rewarding. A horn player commented on how much Skrowaczewski seemed to enjoy himself on the podium. A violinist said that orchestra might even be fun if someone like Skrowaczewski conducted all the time. . . .

"Thank you," he said. "It's wonderful for me in my professional career to get to work with people who are so passionate about their music making. Thank you." There was silence for a split second. Then the orchestra broke

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*Nothing But the Best: The Struggle for Perfection at the Juilliard School* by Judith Kogan,  
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loose. They started clapping, whistling, stamping and hooting as they did at the end of every rehearsal, but this time they wouldn't stop. Appreciative clapping goes on for just so long. This went far beyond that. The orchestra's feeling for Skrowaczewski had gone beyond appreciation to love. . . .

The players applauded vigorously when Skrowaczewski came out to bow after each piece. He motioned for them to stand. No, they indicated, this is your performance. After *Zarathustra*, he signaled the soloists to stand. No, they indicated, this is your performance. He reached over to shake the concertmaster's hand. No, he indicated, this is your performance. He didn't act humble or embarrassed, just uninterested in his solo bows. Skrowaczewski turned to the audience and put his hand on his heart. He clasped his hands together and gave a wiggle of thanks. . . . Skrowaczewski and the concertmaster did the dance of mutual appreciation again after the Beethoven. The orchestra had never behaved this way before. There was pandemonium, onstage and off. . . .

As Skrowaczewski packed to leave the hall, the dean collared him. "What've you got on for next year?" he asked.

Skrowaczewski didn't even stop to think. "I have one week in my schedule. November four to eight."

"O.K., put a hold on it," the dean said. And they parted.

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Harpist Judith Kogan has performed with the American Opera Center, the Dale Warland Singers, and many others. She recorded Wagner's Ring Cycle with the Metropolitan Opera under James Levine. A former resident of Minneapolis, she now lives in London.



In rehearsal with the Minnesota Orchestra, fall 2004.

## MUSICAL CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

BY MARY ANN FELDMAN



**A**lthough he never wrote an opera, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski has something in common with Giuseppe Verdi. At age 76, Verdi declared himself too old to write another work for the stage. But he was unable to resist a figure from Shakespeare and in 1893, eight months to the day before his 80th birthday, his only comedy, *Falstaff*, premiered at La Scala in Milan.

Similarly, when briefly sprung from a busy freelance conducting schedule in which he has taken the name of Minnesota with him to all corners of the world, Skrowaczewski in his 80th summer worked at white heat on a powerful new score commissioned for the Minnesota Orchestra's 100th anniversary. On October 2, 2003, the eve of his 80th birthday, "Grand Stan"—as the press has bannered him—conducted the first performance of *Symphony [2003]*. His venerable achievement may be without precedent in the symphonic world, for nowadays conductor-composers like Mahler and Strauss appear to be a thing of the past. Since the death of Leonard Bernstein in 1990, Skrowaczewski's dual career represents the end of a tradition.

Skrowaczewski's powerful symphony, culminating in an autumnal finale, is full of warmth and lyrical reflection, and less sternly modernist than his earlier works. The music is fueled by the emotions of a lifetime: an underground youth during the horrific war in which the Germans devastated Poland; then the Russian Occupation, dashing all hopes of freedom.

Nevertheless, Skrowaczewski managed to build a career with his country's major orchestra. His success in Europe triggered a brilliant American debut with the Cleveland Orchestra. By 1960, at age 37, he was

named sixth music director of the (then) Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. Emerging from behind the Iron Curtain, he enjoyed a good life: new friends, the birth of sons Paul and Nicholas, citizenship, and a productive career with a major American orchestra spanning 19 years.

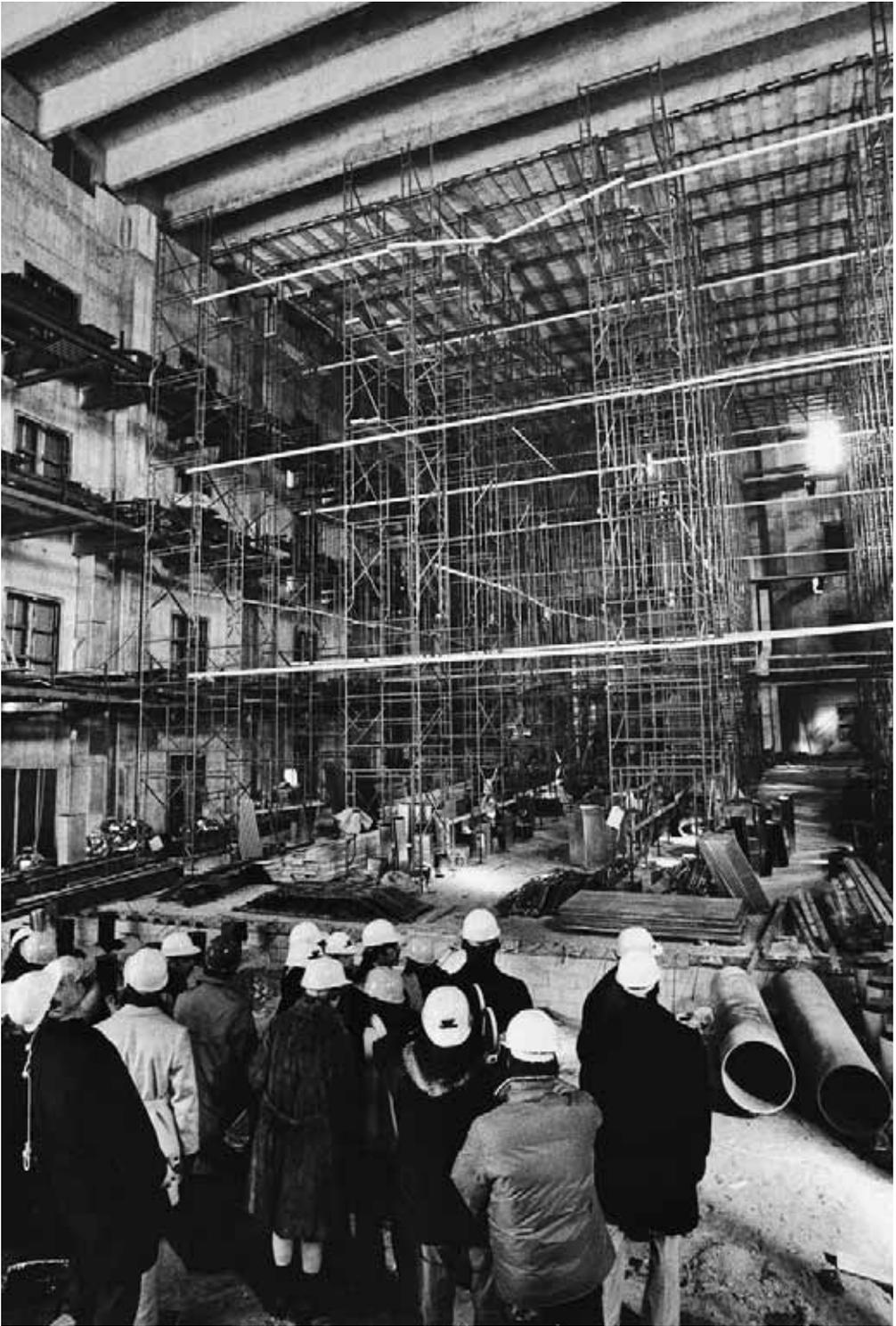
Then came 9/11, and with it, the shadow of terrorism. The uncertainties of the new millennium as well as signs of cultural decline darkened the symphony he wrote at age 79. Skrowaczewski, never an ivory tower artist, infused his concerns into the passions of the symphony.

“Skrowaczewski has always been plugged into society,” says Michael Anthony, who as Minneapolis *Star Tribune* critic has been both reviewing and interviewing him for over three decades. “He has always been forthright in our talks,” says Anthony. “What troubles him now is the society itself. His music laments that things do not seem to be going well.”

**Skrowaczewski’s departure from Poland** as a young man had been full of risk. He and his wife, the remarkable Krystyna, whom he had met on a ski slope, took nothing with them. With donated chairs, lamps, and other household paraphernalia, they settled into rented quarters near Lake of the Isles in the early ’60s, and he began his long tenure with the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. He was still a mystery to the community, for he had not yet conducted the orchestra. Then came an astonishing debut, prophetic of the expansion that would take place after the name-change to Minnesota Orchestra in the midst of his career.

Skrowaczewski led his first concert not in the big city but in the newly refurbished gymnasium of the Brainerd High School, up in fishing country. The next day he and the orchestra set out on a two-week tour of the Pacific Northwest, performing along the way in Montana towns and other small cities. His tenure began in the tradition of this renowned “Orchestra-on-Wheels,” whose appearances now total 663 different cities of the world, including such unlikely places as Baghdad, Havana, and Deadwood, South Dakota.

Government support of the arts at every level was the shining hope of Skrowaczewski’s first decade, as the National Endowment for the Arts and state arts boards came on the scene. Following the name-change of 1968, which took almost everybody including the music director by surprise, the prospect of new funding sources was an incentive to serve both the state and the region more widely. Soon Skrowaczewski and his conducting staff were appearing everywhere—on run-out series to St. Cloud and Rochester, in cities from Moorhead to Austin, and across the borders to neighboring states. He may have yearned to show off his orchestra in capitals like London and Vienna, but it was his destiny to bring great music to the



The dream of a new concert hall took shape in downtown Minneapolis during the early '70s.

heartland. Performing also in cities like Washington and New York on national tours, his bold programs featured provocative new works that built a progressive musical identity for Minnesota.

Skrowaczewski had not long been here when he launched his unrelenting crusade for a new concert hall, the first home of its own for an orchestra already well past its 50th birthday. He never gave up, as he argued the case that great acoustics, not glittering corridors, must be the priority. When Orchestra Hall opened its doors 30 years ago, a battalion of visiting music critics reported a success seldom equaled elsewhere. In the program book, the maestro told audiences that the hall “will stimulate our awareness of art and sharpen our sense of life.”

For a backstage view of the conductor, no one is more qualified to describe Skrowaczewski than Tim Eickholt, stage manager since 1965. “He never made the orchestra wait, always showing up on time or even early, dressed in what I call the northern European fashion. If he was ever ill or not feeling well, he never showed it. But he has a habit of asking, ‘How do I go?’ before he walks onstage to start a concert—even though he has taken the exact same path hundreds of times before. His manners are formal and courteous, but now he will address people by their first name. America is starting to wear off on him.”

Musicians recognize the searching nature of this man. “Nothing ever comes to rest with him,” observes Principal Oboe Basil Reeve, who first encountered the maestro (who prefers to be called Stan) while playing with the Rotterdam Philharmonic in 1971. “We met in a Paris hotel that day, and it was obvious to me from the start that he had an incredible ability to find new things in every piece of music. He has a way of living with the score. It is a changeable instrument for him, seen in a new light all the time.



Stan exudes tremendous energy on and off the podium.

He is always exploring. For a musician to play for him is to share the exploration.”

Reeve’s words bring to mind a radio interview I taped with Skrowaczewski in the late ’60s. With a score of a Mozart symphony in hand, he sighed: “I think that when I am an old man on my deathbed I will still find new things in this music.”

There is consensus

among orchestra musicians, veterans as well as newcomers, that Skrowaczewski's generation and style of conductor are virtually gone now. Principal Trumpet Manny Laureanno says, "He is all-at-once a pianist, composer, and conductor. But the orchestra is the instrument with which he is intimately acquainted, and just as he learned to express himself through the piano, so he has also learned to convey his thoughts through musicians. He knows this 'instrument' so well that one can almost swear that he has all the passages he wants to rehearse already assigned in his head, and he tackles them with great energy, creating dynamic performances."

Principal Bass Peter Lloyd first played under Skrowaczewski when he came to the Philadelphia Orchestra as guest conductor. Lloyd says: "Three words come to mind when speaking of him: humility, seriousness, integrity. When you speak to him, you are guaranteed a thoughtful response. That's his strength. He is always trying to find a way to be a vehicle for the music, not use the music as a vehicle for himself. He proceeds from the point-of-view that every great composition is greater than any possible performance of it."

From his first season, Skrowaczewski made a statement by programming American music—names like Charles Ives, Henry Brant, and Gunther Schuller. He regularly featured the latest vanguard composers, presenting electronic and even aleatory, or chance, music, taking audiences by surprise. Nor did Minnesota composers elude Skrowaczewski—the young Wayne Peterson of *Albert Lea*, for example, then earning his doctorate at the University of Minnesota. Dominick Argento, Paul Fetler,



Conducting the Minnesota Orchestra in its new hall.

and other university faculty also figured on Skrowaczewski programs, along with cutting edge music from Central Europe. He drew international praise for this orchestra with the premiere of Krzysztof Penderecki's *Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to St. Luke*, presented both in the Cathedral of St. Paul and at Carnegie Hall. Some conductors pondered how he was able to program so much new music. The times were right: orchestra-going as lifestyle still reigned, and when season-ticket holders experienced 35 or even 70 orchestral works every year, they were more tolerant of new experiences.

Not everything Skrowaczewski stood behind came to reality. Stoical in defeat, he never looked back. What mattered was making the music. Eventually he resumed composing, producing music strong in design and of emotional depth. New works have flowed across his last 25 years as conductor laureate and traveling musician—six trips to Europe and two to Japan last season alone. Even throughout the seven-year interlude as music director of the famed Hallé Orchestra in Manchester, England, Skrowaczewski maintained his Minnesota home and strong connections.

How was this international career possible from a distant point in the northern heartland of America? Because of a remarkable wife. Across a quarter-century, since 1979, Krystyna Skrowaczewski has maintained an elegant household that functions as a kind of command central for her husband's career. Outside, she cultivates her garden of organically grown vegetables that have kept her husband trim and fit. They share a love for mountains, trekking and skiing in high places of the American West and the Canadian Rockies. Inside, Krystyna runs a virtually one-woman office. She might have been a concert agent. A woman of keen intelligence and graciousness, she is also a linguist, communicating in several languages. Nothing flusters her. Concert presenters everywhere rely on her.

Over the years, the spacious symphonies of Anton Bruckner have become Skrowaczewski's iconic works, and his performances are developing a cult following. The world recognizes Skrowaczewski as the leading interpreter of Bruckner, and in 2002 *BBC Music Magazine* cited his CD set of the 11 symphonic works as one of the 10 top discs of the decade. In 1979, he was awarded the Gold Medal of the International Bruckner-Mahler Society.

Whatever may happen in the twenty-first century, Skrowaczewski is optimistic about art: "Only if our soul is dead, will art be dead."

In every Bruckner symphony the brass section fills a commanding role. Retired trumpet player Ron Hasselmann describes how Skrowaczewski would draw from the musicians every ounce they could give: “Under him, there’s no limit to how strong the brass can play in these massive climaxes.”

“Working at Stan’s side,” says Associate Principal Librarian Eric Sjostrom, “is like being at the desk when Bruckner was writing the piece.” As unofficial personal librarian, Sjostrom prepares the conductor’s own sets of parts, used by orchestras wherever he conducts. “He has lots of ideas how to clarify things for the players,” says Sjostrom, “and he trusts you to make these happen visually on the page.” Recently they have been preparing a new set of parts for the Beethoven symphonies, which Skrowaczewski will soon record with the Saarbrücken Radio Orchestra. The maestro’s old set will be deposited with the Minnesota Youth Symphonies, serving a new generation of musicians.

Asked which concert of his life he would most like to conduct once again, Skrowaczewski responds, “All of them—there is always the motivation to learn more.” His wife notes that: “At his age, he still acts like a student.”

Whatever may happen in the twenty-first century, Skrowaczewski is optimistic about art: “Even the regimes of Hitler and Stalin could not kill it. Only if our soul is dead, will art be dead.”

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Orchestra Historian Mary Ann Feldman has worked for the Minnesota Orchestra in many capacities since 1966. She is best known as the editor and author of the program notes for 33 years.

Opposite: The stairway to Skrowaczewski’s home office is lined with posters from past performances.



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Stanislaw Skrowaczewski

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Symphonie Nr. 23

STANISLAW SKROWACZEWSKI BELA BARTOK ERNST KRNER DIMITRI SCHOSTAKOWITSCH



ALAIS DE CHAMPE  
CONCERTO

PHILHARMONIE  
DE L'ARSOVIE  
1958

CONCERTO

PHILHARMONIE  
DE L'ARSOVIE

## INTERPRETER AND CREATOR

BY GEORGE STURM



I first became aware of Stanislaw Skrowaczewski in the '60s, when he was the music director of the (then) Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. At the time, I was head of the performance department of G. Schirmer/Associated Music Publishers, and one of the fringe benefits of my work was going to a lot of concerts, hearing our repertory, and interacting with performers. One day—I think it was in the Green Room of Carnegie Hall—Skrowaczewski told me about a soon-to-be-released recording of an English horn concerto featuring the fabulous English horn player of the orchestra, Tom Stacy (now with the New York Philharmonic). I asked who wrote the piece. He said, “I did.” It was my first inkling that he also composed. I asked who published it. He said, “No one.” As soon as he got back to Wayzata, he sent me a tape. I was bowled over, and asked if we could publish it. It was the beginning of an ongoing relationship that has enriched my life.

When I moved from Schirmer to European American Music, Stan came along. And when I established an office to represent his principal publisher, Boelke-Bomart, he was among the first to join me. His loyalty and friendship have been as deep as my admiration for him as a musician and a man.

It is astonishing to note that Stan, who is an internationally prominent artist who has spent a dizzying percentage of his life devoted to the *performance* of music, has somehow found the time and energy for its *creation* as well. Skrowaczewski has compiled an impressive canon of chamber compositions, many of which have been recorded. Included in his orchestral output are concertos for violin, English horn, clarinet, piano (left



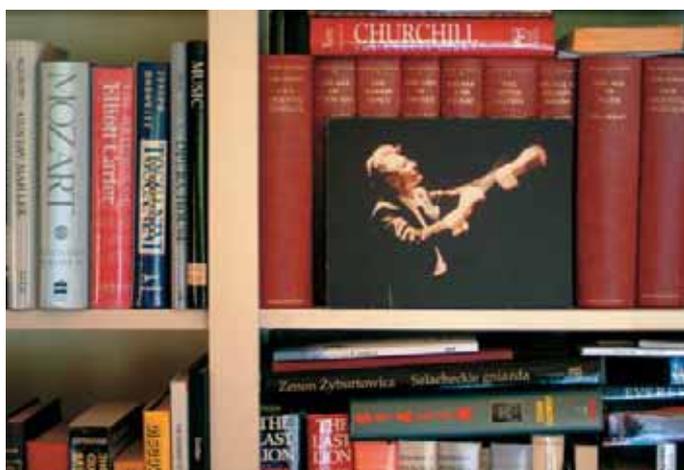
hand), and saxophone, as well as a triple concerto (violin, cello, piano), a concerto of orchestra, and several symphonic works, ranging from the early *Music at Night* to the recent *Symphony* [2003], premiered by the Minnesota Orchestra on the eve of his 80th birthday. A master of orchestral color, he has also given us a variety of transcriptions for orchestra of pieces by early composers such as Gesualdo, Rameau, and Bach, all the way to his beloved Bruckner and even a wonderful (and singable!) orchestration of “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

What has made my work with Stan so satisfying is his no-nonsense approach, his high standards of musicality coupled with his realistic pragmatism, enlivened with his thoroughly urbane sense of humor. He is his own toughest critic and has been known to withdraw his own works as readily as legitimize them, often even professing surprise at liking a recently completed composition. These qualities—especially his boundless energy funneled into the making of great music—are immediately recognized, particularly by young musicians. I have witnessed the bow-rapping, foot-stomping waves of affection that have greeted Skrowaczewski after inspiring performances of standard pieces, as well as his own works by orchestras at the Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Curtis Institute.

In spirit, if not in years, Skrowaczewski remains eternally young.

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George Sturm is the director of Music Associates of America.  
[www.musicassociatesofamerica.com](http://www.musicassociatesofamerica.com)



As a Mozart stylist, Skrowaczewski ranks with the best in the world.

*Toronto Globe and Mail*

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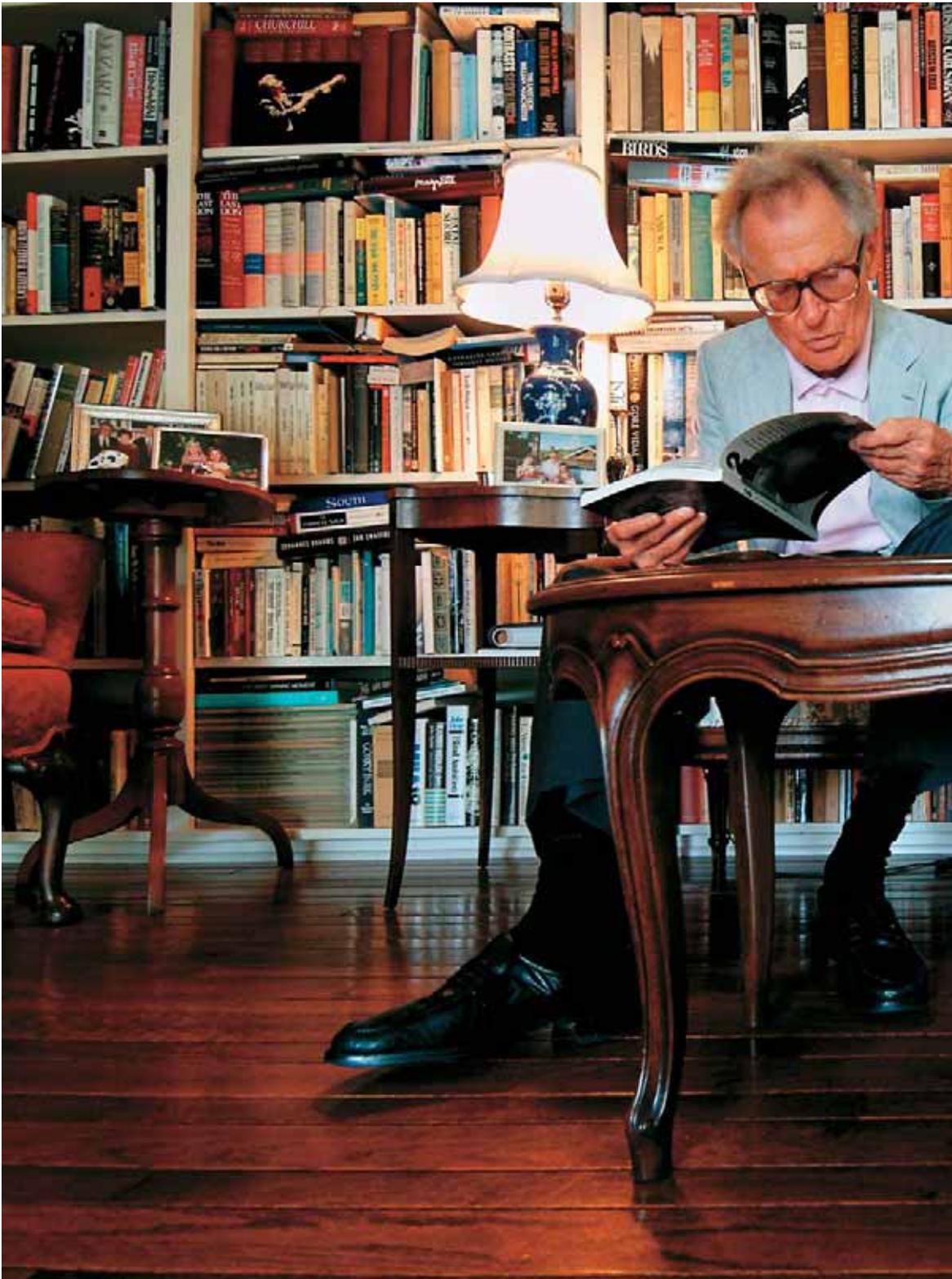
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# A MUSICIAN'S MUSICIAN

BY GEORGE TRAUTWEIN



**A**t rehearsals, Stan has a very precise, meticulous personal manner and musical method. Blessed with an excellent musical memory, he once told me that he memorized musical compositions on the basis of their form. This was an enlightening comment from someone who is also an accomplished composer. (I once had a professor who claimed that composers are the best performers, since they can grasp a musical composition as only a creator can, that is from the inside, as well as on the basis of a performing re-creator, from the outside, looking in. Stan is one of these “creative” performers.)

In addition to his memorization skills, Stan possesses a very acute “ear”—ferreting out wrong notes, faulty intonation, misprints, and poor balances at rehearsals. Two anecdotes illustrate this acuity.

We were once on tour in Los Angeles. At the time, the L.A. Philharmonic was preparing Arnold Schoenberg’s *Gurrelieder*, a mammoth cantata calling not only for a huge orchestra but also for a large chorus and vocal soloists. We attended a rehearsal. Looking over the shoulder of the assistant conductor, who was holding a score of the piece, Stan kept a running litany of all the wrong notes he heard coming from the stage. No one else mentioned them. Even more surprising, I don’t believe he had ever conducted that piece before.

The other example of his extraordinary ear concerns the first performance Stan ever heard me conduct. It was a Sunday afternoon concert in Minneapolis, somewhat grandiloquently entitled “Adventures in Music—A Festival of Marches.” We played a coronation march entitled *Orb and Sceptre* by William Walton, the twentieth-century English

composer. It was a work Stan had never heard before. After the performance, Stan told me that there was a misprint in the horns at the return of the main theme. He said, “If I had a piano here, I could play it for you.” That spelled “gifted” to me.

One last personal story. The orchestra traveled extensively, not only on its long national tours, but also on its infamous “run-outs”—one-day trips, out to a regional city in the afternoon and, after one or two concerts, back by bus or plane, often arriving well after midnight. On these trips, Stan and I customarily ate dinner together. It was on one of those early occasions that I ordered a glass of rosé to go with my meal. After listening to a five-minute lecture from Stan about the lack of character of a rosé, its pernicious effect on health, its terrible taste, etc., I ordered a wine he recommended. I have not drunk rosé since. The only wine worthy of serious consideration, according to Stan, was a robust, full-bodied red and I fancy that he was, and still is, something of a connoisseur.

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George Trautwein, Ph.D., was the associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra during the 1960s and 1970s. He is a retired professor of music at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.



During rehearsal, Stan shared a smile with Daniel Alfred Wachs, assistant conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra.

# RESPECTED WORLDWIDE, HE CALLS MINNESOTA HOME

BY RICHARD CISEK



**M**aestro Skrowaczewski's contributions to Minnesota can be characterized on at least two planes: his local commitment and his international connections.

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski's transformation of the orchestra from a single-night, single-city performer into a multiple-evening-per-week presenter in both of the Twin Cities set a new standard in this area's cultural life. This standard also included expanded programs in Rochester and St. Cloud. On the international front, a tour to Mexico and a special invitation to appear at the United Nations General Assembly celebrating Human Rights Day were among the coveted opportunities that came to the orchestra under his direction. These honors made the world sit up and take note of Minnesota's cultural commitment.

Our state's reputation as a cutting-edge setting for contemporary arts grew under Skrowaczewski's direction. He developed a five-season series of chamber concerts called "Sinfonia," which were performed in the intimacy of the Guthrie Theater, featured new and/or unusual music, and garnered five ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) awards for presenting music of our time in a major concert format.

Never satisfied with the frequent but feeble attempts to improve Northrop Auditorium's acoustics, Skrowaczewski became the primary campaigner for a new concert hall. He urged the orchestra's board, as well as other civic and political leaders, to recognize and eventually realize the decades-long dream of his predecessors and many of this area's serious music lovers. His close collaboration with acoustical consultant Cyril Harris culminated in the creation of the internationally acclaimed music

chamber within Orchestra Hall that now provides such a perfect setting for the world-renowned Minnesota Orchestra.

Though he was sharply focused on his work in Minnesota throughout his 19 years as music director here, he also developed a highly respected international reputation as guest conductor with the major musical institutions of the world. The leading orchestras of Germany, Austria, England, Italy, France, Switzerland, Japan, Australia, and his native Poland all extended frequent guest conducting invitations to him, as did the preeminent ensembles of this country: Philadelphia, New York, Cleveland, Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and too many others to mention. The Metropolitan Opera and the Vienna State Opera also were among his illustrious international credits. Within the playbills of all these cities, his association with and achievements in Minnesota were publicized.

When Skrowaczewski and his wife, Krystyna, chose to become United States citizens in the 1960s, they also made a commitment to Minnesota, where they raised their children and established a social and artistic network. Later, when he gave up his position as the orchestra's music director to extend his international conducting and composing career, Skrowaczewski continued his commitment to this community, choosing his Wayzata home as a residential base from which he would commute for his worldwide conducting engagements and to which he would regularly retreat for his ever-increasing composing commissions.

Skrowaczewski also made it a point to curtail his international opportunities to accept the specially created post of musical advisor to the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra during the interregnum period of leadership following Pinchas Zukerman's departure in the mid-1980s. He made similar adjustments in his professional schedule when the Milwaukee Symphony found itself between music directors a decade later and sought his guidance as interim music director during its conductor search. His loyalty to his home region remains strong.

Our community's artistic reputation is enormously enhanced by having someone with Skrowaczewski's credentials living here. Most creative and performing artists live an itinerant life based out of New York, Paris, London, or Switzerland, but home to the Skrowaczewskis continues to be the Twin Cities—an area from which Stan has always gotten inspirational incentive and to which he has given so much of his time, talent, and personal gratitude.

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Richard Cisek had a 32-year administrative career with the Minneapolis Symphony/Minnesota Orchestra, serving as managing director from 1964 to 1977 and president from 1978 to 1991.

# MUSICAL NOTES

ASSOCIATES REMEMBER  
SKROWACZEWSKI'S DEDICATION  
TO THE MUSIC



Rehearsing with the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester England in the mid-'80s.

His eight-year tenure with Manchester's Hallé Orchestra was notable for the high musical standards on which he insisted. It would only be fair to say that the audiences were slow at first to appreciate the qualities of this sincere, intelligent, intellectual, and dedicated artist. He did not court the public with flamboyance or dramatic gestures. His interest was in the music pure and simple and how it was played. His immediate impact on the orchestra's quality was nowhere more evident than in its playing of Mozart, which attained exceptional grace and style.

**Michael Kennedy**  
music critic for *The (London) Sunday Telegraph*

In 100 years, Stan will be remembered as an exacting conductor, who was always true to the music, a champion of new music and of Bruckner.

**Nicky B. Carpenter**  
chair of the Minnesota Orchestral  
Association from 1990 to 1995  
and a life director

Stan's thoughtfulness is something we will always treasure. He honored us with his *Passacaglia Immaginaria*, commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra in 1995; he wrote *Fanfare for Ken* for Ken's 80th birthday; and he dedicated his Symphony [2003] to Ken's memory when he conducted its first performance in October 2003. We are forever grateful for the special friendship we have shared with Krystyna and Stan. It has inspired us, added a unique dimension to our appreciation of great music, and enriched our lives in myriad ways.

**Judy Dayton**  
 Ken Dayton was a member of the Minnesota Orchestra's board for 50 years. He passed away in 2003. The author, Judy Dayton, is his widow.



Ken Dayton, Krystyna Skrowaczewski, Judy Dayton, and Stan relaxing during a Sun Valley ski vacation.

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski possesses incredible talent and an amazing ear. He is always totally prepared. He works and studies as hard as if he were a 25-year-old conductor anxious to make his mark in the world.

He is relentless in his pursuit of excellence. As his associate conductor, I was constantly asked for feedback on how things sounded "out front." Even after concerts, he wanted suggestions as to how to make repeat performances better. Once after a concert he said, "Tell me at least six things that were horrible." I replied, "I can only think of three."

What a consummate professional!  
 What an artist!

**Henry Charles Smith**  
 former associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra



With Lea Foli and Norman Carol, two concertmasters of the Minnesota Orchestra.

performed under Maestro Skrowaczewski for 10 years. He set an example of highest artistic integrity, and he continues to do so today. By virtue of his personal discipline and complete focus, he was a great inspiration. To my mind, his consistency was and is his most remarkable characteristic. We are fortunate if we have someone to admire and emulate. I have that in Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, and I am grateful to him.

**Lea Foli**  
 concertmaster for the Minnesota Orchestra from 1969 to 1988



Workers prepared to install some of the best seats in the new hall shortly before it opened in 1974.

Although Stan Skrowaczewski was a visionary leader of the Minnesota Orchestra in many different ways, perhaps his most lasting contribution was the building of Orchestra Hall. . . The new hall enormously expanded the possibilities for the orchestra, and without Stan's determination and leadership, I don't think it would have happened.

**Luella G. Goldberg**  
chair of the Minnesota  
Orchestra Board from  
1980 to 1983

Stan was the music director for 19 years. This in itself is a major accomplishment. Music director positions can bring fame and glamour, but they are difficult positions with many constituencies to please. He has and continues to have a lasting effect both as conductor and composer on present and future generations. His energy level makes the Energizer bunny look slow in comparison!

**David J. Hyslop**  
Minnesota Orchestra president from 1991 to 2003

The eminent conductor Stanislaw Skrowaczewski is one of the finest composers now writing. Any encounter with his vibrant, adventurous, gripping music stays in the mind long after.

**John Harbison**  
recipient of the MacArthur Foundation's "genius" award  
and the Pulitzer Prize for composition

I first met Stan in Paris in the late '50s, and since then we have played together with many orchestras—Minneapolis and the Hallé, of course, but also Boston, Philadelphia, and Warsaw. Whenever we are together, it is always a joy for me to make music with him, as his artistry on the podium is unequalled. This is also evident whenever he comes, as an eagerly awaited guest conductor, to work with our student orchestra at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. I am always struck by his splendid rapport with young people; they play their hearts out for him.

**Gary Graffman**  
president/director of The Curtis Institute



In 1979, pianist Gary Graffman's performing career was curtailed by an injury to his right hand. His performances are now limited to the small but brilliant repertoire of concertos written for the left hand alone—one of which was composed by Stanislaw Skrowaczewski in 2003.

Stan Skrowaczewski from a musician's standpoint: He's always thoroughly prepared for every rehearsal no matter what the piece is—old or new, etc. He knows the score cold—can't always say that about others! Also, I've never heard him address any musician in anything but a respectful manner. Never loses his composure even when provoked! He also has a subtle sense of humor, which I think many are not aware of.

**Joseph Longo**  
co-principal clarinet for the  
Minnesota Orchestra

With violinist Isaac Stern at the new Orchestra Hall during the mid-'70s.



# SKROWACZEWSKI THE RECORDING ARTIST— A LEGACY OF QUALITY

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY 1961-2004

**M**aestro Skrowaczewski has made over 60 recordings since his first sessions with the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in the spring of 1961. Almost all of his recordings have remained in print, consistently receiving international praise and recognition. The depth and breadth of his recording repertoire reflects his diverse interests and his consummate interpretive abilities. Discerning classical music aficionados worldwide continue to enjoy Maestro Skrowaczewski's older recordings as well as his recent releases. Future recording projects include the complete Beethoven symphonies with the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra, and Shostakovich Symphonies 8 and 2 with the Hallé Orchestra.

## **Bartók**

*The Miraculous Mandarin, The Wooden Prince Suites, Dance Suite, Divertimento for Strings, Concerto for Orchestra, Music for Strings, Percussion & Celeste*  
Minnesota Orchestra  
Vox Box 3015, 1976-1982

Concerto for Orchestra,  
Divertimento for Strings  
Saarbrücken Radio  
Symphony Orchestra  
Oehms Classics OC 306, 2003

## **Berlioz**

*Symphonie Fantastique*  
London Symphony Orchestra  
Chandos CHAN 8727, 1989

*Symphonie Fantastique, Love Scene from Roméo et Juliette*  
Saarbrücken Radio  
Symphony Orchestra  
Oehms Classics OC 319, 2003

## **Beethoven**

Complete Overtures &  
Incidental Music  
Minnesota Orchestra  
Vox Box 5099, 1980

Piano Concerto No. 5, *Emperor*,  
Gina Bachauer  
London Symphony Orchestra  
Mercury-Philips SR90321,  
1962

Symphony No. 5  
NHK Symphony Orchestra  
Altus ALT031, 2002

Symphony No. 3  
Yomiuri Nippon  
Symphony Orchestra  
BVCC 34055, 2002

## **Brahms**

Complete Symphonies (1-4),  
Variations on a Theme  
by Haydn, Overtures  
Hallé Orchestra  
Pickwick/Carlton/IMP Classics  
PCD 2014, 857, 2039,  
303670272, 1987-88

## **Bruckner**

Complete 11 Symphonies (00-9), Adagio from String Quintet in F Major (arr. Skrowaczewski)  
Overture in G Minor  
Saarbrücken Radio  
Symphony Orchestra  
Oehms Classics OC 207,  
1991-2001

Symphony No. 9  
Minnesota Orchestra  
Reference Recordings RR 81,  
1997

## **Chopin**

Complete Works for Piano and  
Orchestra, Alexis Weissenberg  
Orchestre de Conservatoire  
Paris  
Angel/EMI Classics SC 3723,  
1968

Piano Concerto No. 1,  
Arthur Rubinstein  
New Symphony Orchestra  
of London  
RCA/BMG Classics LSC 2575,  
1961

Piano Concertos 1 & 2,  
Ewa Kupiec  
Saarbrücken Radio  
Symphony Orchestra  
Oehms Classics OC 326, 2004

Skrowaczewski combined something of the Orchestra's sophistication with the unequivocal directness which emerges from his own uncompromising, honest interpretation.

*London Times*

### Handel

*Water Music and Royal Fireworks Music*

Minnesota Orchestra  
Vox QTV S34362, 1975

### Lutoslawski

Concerto for Orchestra

NHK Symphony Orchestra  
Altus ALT031, 2002

### Mahler

Symphony No. 4

Hallé Orchestra  
IMP Classics PCD 972, 1991

### Mendelssohn

Symphony No. 4, *Italian*

Minneapolis Symphony  
Orchestra  
Mercury-Philips 434363-2,  
1961

### Mozart

Piano Concertos No. 17 & 27,  
Walter Klien

Minnesota Orchestra  
Vox VU 9037, 1981

Symphony No. 29

NHK Symphony Orchestra  
Altus ALT029, 2002

Symphony No. 41

Yomiuri Nippon Symphony  
Orchestra  
BVCC 34055, 2002

### Ohana

*Livre des Prodiges & Chiffres de  
Clavecin*

Orchestre National De France  
& Nouvel Orchestre  
Philharmonique  
Erato STU 71548, 1983

### Penderecki

Violin Concerto, Isaac Stern

Minnesota Orchestra  
Columbia Master Works/Sony  
Classical M35150, 1978

### Prokofiev

*Romeo & Juliet, Scythian Suite,  
Suite from Love for Three Oranges*

Minnesota Orchestra  
Vox Box 3016, 1977 & 1983

### Ravel

Complete Works for Orchestra  
(in two volumes)

Minnesota Orchestra  
Vox Box 5031 & 5032, 1975

### Schubert

Symphony No. 5, 8, 9,  
Unfinished Symphony,

*Rosamunde* Incidental Music

Minneapolis Symphony  
Orchestra  
Mercury-Philips 289462954-2,  
434354-2, 1961 & 1962

### Schumann

Symphony No. 4

NHK Symphony Orchestra  
Altus ALT029, 2002

Cello Concerto, Janos Starker

London Symphony Orchestra  
Mercury-Philips 432010-2,  
1962

### Shostakovich

Symphony No. 5

Minneapolis Symphony  
Orchestra  
Mercury-Philips 434323-2,  
1961

Symphony No. 5 & No. 10

Hallé Orchestra  
IMP Classics PCD 2018 &  
2043, 1990 & 1991

Symphony No. 1 & No. 6

Hallé Orchestra  
Sanctuary Classics, ASV, HLL  
7506, 2004

### Skrowaczewski

Concerto for English Horn and  
Orchestra, Thomas Stacy

Minnesota Orchestra  
Phoenix PHCD 120,  
1972/1991

*Passacaglia Immaginararia,*

Chamber Concerto, Concerto  
for Clarinet in A and Orchestra,  
Richard Stoltzman

Saarbrücken Radio Symphony  
Orchestra  
Albany Troy 481, 2001

*Skrowaczewski's World:*

Chamber Music of Stanislaw  
Skrowaczewski, Ensemble  
Capriccio and Friends  
Innova 568, 2002

Concerto *Nicolò* for Piano

Left Hand and Orchestra  
& Concerto for Orchestra,  
Gary Graffman

Minnesota Orchestra  
Reference Recordings RR-103,  
2003

### Stravinsky

*The Rite of Spring, Petrouchka,  
Firebird Suite*

Minnesota Orchestra  
Vox Box 3016, 1977 & 1978

### Tchaikovsky

Symphony No. 5

NHK Symphony Orchestra  
Altus ALT028, 2002

### Wagner

*Tannhäuser* Overture and  
*Venusberg Music, Tristan and  
Isolde: Prelude and Love-Death*

Minnesota Orchestra  
Vox QTV-S34642, 1976

### Weber

Overtures

Hallé Orchestra  
RCA/IMP Classics PCD 1105,  
1994



## STANISLAW SKROWACZEWSKI: A CONDUCTOR/COMPOSER'S LIFE



Top: Three-year-old Stan in what his family recalled as a familiar pose. Above: Young Stan poses with his mother Zofia and sister Krystyna.

1923

Born October 3 in Lwów, Poland (now Lviv, Ukraine), to Zofia, a concert pianist, and Pawel, a laryngologist. Older sister, Krystyna, was born in 1918.

1927

At age four, begins piano lessons with Flora Listowska. Studies Bach, Haydn, and Mozart, and soon after begins composing small piano pieces, and collecting and learning full orchestral scores.

1930

At age seven, composes first orchestral work, Overture in the Classical Style, for a Mozart-size orchestral instrumentation. Begins informal violin lessons with a colleague of his father's.

1934

Gives his first public piano recital at age 11, in a Lwów radio studio. The 30-minute program of Haydn and Bach is broadcast all over Poland.

1936

At age 13, plays and conducts Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto with a professional orchestra. It is his conducting debut.

1940

Lwów Philharmonic performs Overture in the Classical Style, and songs for alto voice and orchestra, set to poems by Heine.

## 1941–45

Hands are damaged during a German bombing attack. Performs in a “string quartet in hiding” during the German occupation and attends underground classes of Polish philosopher and aesthetician Roman Ingarden.

## 1945

Receives composition and conducting diplomas from the Academy of Music in Lwów, and earns another music degree a year later from the State Higher School of Music in Kraków.

## 1946–47

Appointed conductor of the Wrocław (Breslau) Opera Orchestra. Wins second prize at the Szymanowski Competition for Overture 1947, and obtains a French government grant to study in Paris.

## 1947–49

Lives in Paris and is mentored by Nadia Boulanger in composition and Paul Kletzki in conducting. Co-founds the avant-garde group Zodiaque, wins the Paris Radio Award for *Cantiques des Cantiques*, conducts the Orchestre Radio-Symphonique in the premiere of Overture 1947, and composes *Music at Night*.

## 1949–54

Appointed conductor of the Katowice Philharmonic. Wins second prize at the Belgium International Competition for String Quartet, and the Polish National Award for compositions.

## 1954–56

Appointed conductor of the Kraków Philharmonic. Wins first prize, over 250 conductors, at the 1956 International Competition for Conductors in Rome. Marries Krystyna Jarosz.

## 1956–59

Appointed conductor of the Warsaw National Orchestra. Wins the Moscow Gold Medal for Symphonic Suite. Invited by George Szell to make his American debut with the

Cleveland Orchestra in 1958. Guest conducts other major American orchestras.

## 1960

Appointed music director of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra (later the Minnesota Orchestra). Serves in this position for 19 years; tenure matched only by Emil Oberhoffer, the first conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. Introduces 250 works to the orchestra’s repertoire, ranging from Vivaldi to Varèse.

## 1961–63

Makes professional recording debut on the Mercury Living Presence label. Receives KUXL Radio Award for Excellence, and Honorary Doctorate from Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. Symphony for Strings is performed by the Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

## 1964–69

Debut at the Vienna Staatsoper with *Fidelio*. Salzburg debut with the Vienna Philharmonic, and conducts the Minnesota Orchestra at the Human Rights Day concert at the United Nations in 1968. Birth of son, Paul, in 1968. Re-enters the world of composition with Concerto for English Horn and Orchestra in 1969.



Stanislaw and Krystyna Skrowaczewski with their young sons during the early '70s.

## 1970–77

Debut at the Metropolitan Opera with *The Magic Flute*, and birth of son, Nicholas, in 1970. Receives honorary doctorate from Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, and 1973 Conductor’s Award from Columbia University, New York. Leads the Minnesota Orchestra on its 70th anniversary tour to Mexico City in 1973. Conducts the Minnesota Orchestra at the 1974 inaugural concert of Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis. Receives the 1977 Kennedy Center’s Friedheim Award for *Ricercari Notturmi*, a saxophone concerto, and the 1977 Distinguished Service Award from the cities of Minneapolis and Philadelphia.



Receiving an honorary doctorate and award of appreciation from the University of Minnesota.

## 1979

Leaves post as music director of the Minnesota Orchestra. Becomes the first music director in the orchestra’s history to be given the title conductor laureate. Receives honorary doctorate from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, and the Minnesota Medal of Appreciation. Receives his fifth ASCAP award for his programming of contemporary music, and the Gold Medal of the Mahler-Bruckner Society for his interpretations of Bruckner symphonies.



Conducting a performance by the Hallé Orchestra in early 1984.

## 1982

Receives Medals of Appreciation from Philadelphia and Detroit, and Poland's Karol Szymanowski Medal.

## 1984–91

Serves for seven seasons as principal conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in England. Conducts the orchestra in Manchester, London, and throughout Great Britain, and leads critically acclaimed tours to the USA, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Scandinavia, and Poland, and makes eight recordings of Brahms (complete symphonies), Shostakovich, Bruckner, and Mahler. Philadelphia Orchestra commissions and premieres Concerto for Violin. Serves as musical advisor for the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra for its 1987–88 season.

## 1997–99

Receives 1997 Pulitzer Prize nomination for *Passacaglia Immaginaria*. Makes 1998 recording with Minnesota Orchestra of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony, receives a Grammy nomination, and the Golden Note Award for the best original recording.

Receives 1999 Pulitzer Prize nomination for Concerto for Orchestra. Receives Poland's coveted Commander of Polonia Restituta with White Star.

## 2001–02

First CD of all-Skrowaczewski orchestral compositions released on Albany Records, with the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra, and soloist Richard Stoltzman. Appointed principal guest conductor of the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra, and completes a 10-year recording project of the complete Bruckner symphonies with that orchestra. The 11-CD set is released on the Arte Nova label (now Oehms Classics) to enormous international critical success. The recordings receive the Cannes 2002 Award for Best Orchestral Recording of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Orchestral Work.

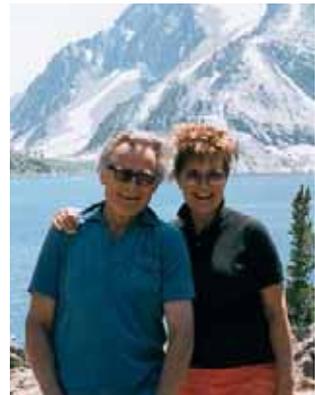
## 2003

Conducts the premiere of Concerto *Nicolò* for Piano Left Hand and Orchestra with Gary Graffman and the Curtis Symphony Orchestra. Conducts the Minnesota Orchestra in the premiere of his Symphony [2003], the night before his 80th birthday.

Oehms Classics releases recordings of Berlioz and Bartók, Reference Recordings releases a recording of Concerto *Nicolò* and Concerto for Orchestra with the Minnesota Orchestra, and Polskie Radio releases a recording of Concerto for Orchestra and Brahms' Symphony No. 4.

## 2004

Guest conducts in the USA, Sweden, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, UK, Poland, Paris, Germany, and Japan (a month touring with the NHK Orchestra). Oehms Classics releases Chopin's Piano Concertos 1&2, with Ewa Kupiec and the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra, and Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab releases a re-issue of the famed Ravel recording from 1974, as part of its Surround Series. Begins a recording project of the complete Beethoven symphonies, with the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra, and begins composing a flute concerto for that organization.



Stan and Krystyna vacation in the Sawtooth Mountains, Idaho, in the '90s.

# SKROWACZEWSKI COMPOSITIONS

## Orchestral Music

### Overture 1947

Second Prize, International Competition,  
Warsaw, 1947

### *Music at Night*, 1949, revised 1977

Timing: 17'

### Symphony for Strings, 1947-49

Timing: 22'

Arranged as string quartet: Second Prize  
(no 1st awarded), Liège International  
Competition for String Quartets, 1953

### Concerto for English Horn and Orchestra, 1969

Timing: 17'

Commissioning Body:  
Minnesota Orchestra

### *Ricercari Notturni*, 1977

Timing: 25'

Commissioning Body:  
St. Benedict College  
Kennedy Center Friedheim Award, 1977

### Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, 1981

Timing: 23'

Commissioning Body:  
Minnesota Orchestra

### Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, 1985

Timing: 20'

Commissioning Body:  
Philadelphia Orchestra

### Concerto for Orchestra, 1985, revised 1998

Timing: 32'

Commissioning Body:  
Minnesota Orchestra  
Pulitzer Prize Nomination, 1999

### Fanfare for Orchestra, 1987

Timing: 5'

Commissioning Body:  
Olympic Games

### Triple Concerto, 1991

Timing: 26'

Commissioning Body:  
Verdehr Trio

### *Gesualdo di Venosa* (6 Madrigals), 1992

Timing: 22'

Commissioning Body:  
St. Paul Chamber Orchestra

### Chamber Concerto, 1993

Timing: 24'

Commissioning Body:  
St. Paul Chamber Orchestra

### *Passacaglia Immaginaria*, 1995

Timing: 28'

Commissioning Body:  
Minnesota Orchestra  
Pulitzer Prize Nomination, 1997

### Concerto *Nicòlò* for Piano Left Hand and Orchestra, 2003

Timing: 27'

Commissioning Body:  
Dr. Herbert Axelrod for Gary Graffman

### Symphony [2003]

Timing: 35'

Commissioning Body:  
Minnesota Orchestra and the Minnesota  
Commissioning Club on the occasion  
of the Orchestra's centennial  
The work is dedicated to the memory  
of Kenneth N. Dayton.

## Chamber Music

### Trio, 1982-84

Timing: 17'

### *Fantasia per Quartto*, 1984

Timing: 12'

Commissioning Body: Private commission

### *Fantasia per Sei*, 1988

Timing: 15'

Commissioning Body: Atlanta virtuosi

### String Trio, 1991

Timing: 25'

Commissioning Body: Ensemble Capriccio

## Transcriptions and Arrangements

### J.S. Bach Toccata & Fugue in D Minor

### *Rameau Suite* from *6 Concerts en Sextuor*

Commissioning Body:  
St. Paul Chamber Orchestra

### Bruckner Adagio from String Quintet

Timing: 15'

Mr. Skrowaczewski has made the Minnesota Orchestra into one of America's great ensembles. He is a brilliant musician and has everything in the hollow of his busy hands.

**Harold Schonberg**  
*New York Times*

# CD FEATURES ALMOST 50 YEARS OF STANISLAW SKROWACZEWSKI'S COMPOSITIONS

BY FREDERICK HARRIS, JR.

The five pieces on this compilation CD span almost 50 years of Stanislaw Skrowaczewski's creative life. Their diversity and richness reflect his vast experiences as a musician, his life growing up in Poland, living through World War II, and becoming a Polish-American citizen during the 1960s. Essentially self-taught, his "teachers" were all the great composers from Bach to Beethoven, from Shostakovich to Lutoslawski.

## [ 1 ]

**Music at Night** was adapted from a ballet score, *Ugo et Parisina*, that Skrowaczewski composed at age 26 in 1949 while living in Paris. His inspiration came from a train trip to Italy when he suddenly felt compelled to visit an ancient castle in Ferrara he'd never seen before. Once inside, he felt that he had been there before; he knew the layout of the rooms. He then became ill and frightened, and ran far from the castle. The site, unbeknownst to him at that time, was where the murders of Ugo and Parisina had occurred. Later, when he arrived back in Paris, a letter from an admiring English music critic awaited him. She had found an intriguing subject for a ballet: the tragic story of Ugo and Parisina! When Skrowaczewski learned the details of the story, he was mystified and terrified by the serendipity of his experience.

From its start, the music yearns with romantic pathos. It vacillates between a neoclassical tonal language depicting love and romance, and a chromatic, 12-tone language representing the "lugubrious fate of the two lovers," as Skrowaczewski notes. The orchestration of the piece is masterful. When the famous composer, conductor, and teacher Nadia Boulanger heard excerpts of the ballet version of *Music at Night* at the 1956 International Festival for Contemporary Music in Warsaw, she told the young Skrowaczewski that of the 20 concerts she had attended, his was the best piece she had heard.

## [ 2 ]

**Concerto for English Horn and Orchestra**, written in 1969, gave the music world something it did not have: the first concerto of major proportions

composed for the English horn. The success of the Carnegie Hall premiere of the piece, with soloist Thomas Stacy, then of the Minnesota Orchestra, led to his appointment as Solo English Horn with the New York Philharmonic. The first movement of the three-movement work is included on this CD. It has qualities of otherworldliness. These qualities come from Skrowaczewski's deft exploitation of the expressive and technical possibilities of the English horn (using such techniques as multi-phonics, i.e., creating more than one tone at the same time), his economy of orchestration, and of course, the masterful artistry of Thomas Stacy.

[ 3 & 4 ]

The Twin Cities-based Ensemble Capriccio commissioned Skrowaczewski to compose **String Trio** in 1991. The 25-minute, five-movement work for violin, viola, and cello, presents a mosaic of melodic themes, craftily manipulated by the composer. The final two movements included on this CD, *Adagio amoroso* and *Furioso*, duly live up to their respective titles. The gorgeous romantic melody of the *Adagio* makes a guest appearance, now in new dress, in the *Furioso* movement, before the vigorous conclusion of the work. Employing only three instruments, Skrowaczewski remarkably attains an orchestral quality.

[ 5 & 6 ]

Longtime Minnesota Orchestra clarinetist and friend of Skrowaczewski's, Joseph Longo, premiered the **Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra** in 1981, with the composer conducting the Minnesota Orchestra. Richard Stoltzman, clarinet, and the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra perform the last two movements of the concerto heard on this recording. The *Nocturne* capitalizes on the low register of the clarinet, providing deeply felt, rhythmically free, whispered gestures. This is truly music of the night, evoking mystery, insecurity, and fragility. A clarion call strikingly announces the start of the *Presto*, the concluding movement. Skrowaczewski's imaginative orchestration, including an amplified harpsichord, and his humor and wit pervade the movement. With a wry smile and a wink of an eye, he concludes the piece with a whimpering water-gong, a clarinet mumble, and a lone pizzicato bass note.

[ 7 & 8 ]

**Concerto for Orchestra**, commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra in 1985 and revised by the composer in 1998, has been performed more in the past 20 years than any other Skrowaczewski work. Indeed, all the instruments used in this concerto have their moment in the sun. Structured in two *adagio* movements, the work begins with three distant bell chords, laying out the material for the first movement. The music steadily unfolds, displaying the virtuosity of the full orchestra through the composer's gifted

imagination. Memorable tunes sail above an undercurrent of brass and percussion activity. After a turbulent climax, the movement subsides to the contemplative world from which it sprang. The second movement, *Anton Bruckner's Himmelfahrt* (Bruckner's Heavenly Journey), is among the most spiritual tributes one composer has paid to another. The music seethes with expression. After a climax of nearly Mahlerian proportions, individual chaos from many solo instruments, and boldly augmented statements of the theme heard in the brass, the movement begins a long slope to its inward conclusion.

Unlike the works of many contemporary composers, the majority of Skrowaczewski's compositions end quietly. He possesses a kind of restraint that lifts the attentive listener to a state of contemplation. There's a special depth and quality to his music that not only entices us with its vivid colors, melodies, and harmonic language, but asks us to reflect on the meaning behind the sounds. We hope to keep listening for many years to come.

#### SELECTIONS FROM STANISLAW SKROWACZEWSKI: COMPOSER AND CONDUCTOR

*Music at Night* (1949, revised 1977)

Louisville Orchestra, John Nelson, conductor

- [1] 17:42    **Movement I: Allegro drammatico**  
**Movement II: Moderato**  
**Movement III: Allegro, misterioso**  
**Movement IV: Allegro molto**

USED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE LOUISVILLE ORCHESTRA,  
 FIRST EDITION RECORDINGS, 1977/83

Concerto for English Horn and Orchestra (1969)

Minnesota Orchestra, Thomas Stacy, English horn  
 Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, conductor

- [2] 8:30    **Movement I: Quarter note equals 100**

USED WITH PERMISSION FROM PHOENIX RECORDINGS PHCD 120, 1972/1991

String Trio (1991)

Ensemble Capriccio

- [3] 4:00    **Movement IV: Adagio amoroso**  
 [4] 3:03    **Movement V: Furioso**

USED WITH PERMISSION FROM INNOVA RECORDINGS INN CD 568, 2000

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra (1981)

Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra, Richard Stoltzman, clarinet  
 Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, conductor

- [5] 8:18    **Movement II: Nocturne**  
 [6] 4:16    **Movement III: Finale**

USED WITH PERMISSION FROM ALBANY RECORDS TROY 481, 2001

Concerto for Orchestra (1985, revised 1998)

Minnesota Orchestra, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, conductor

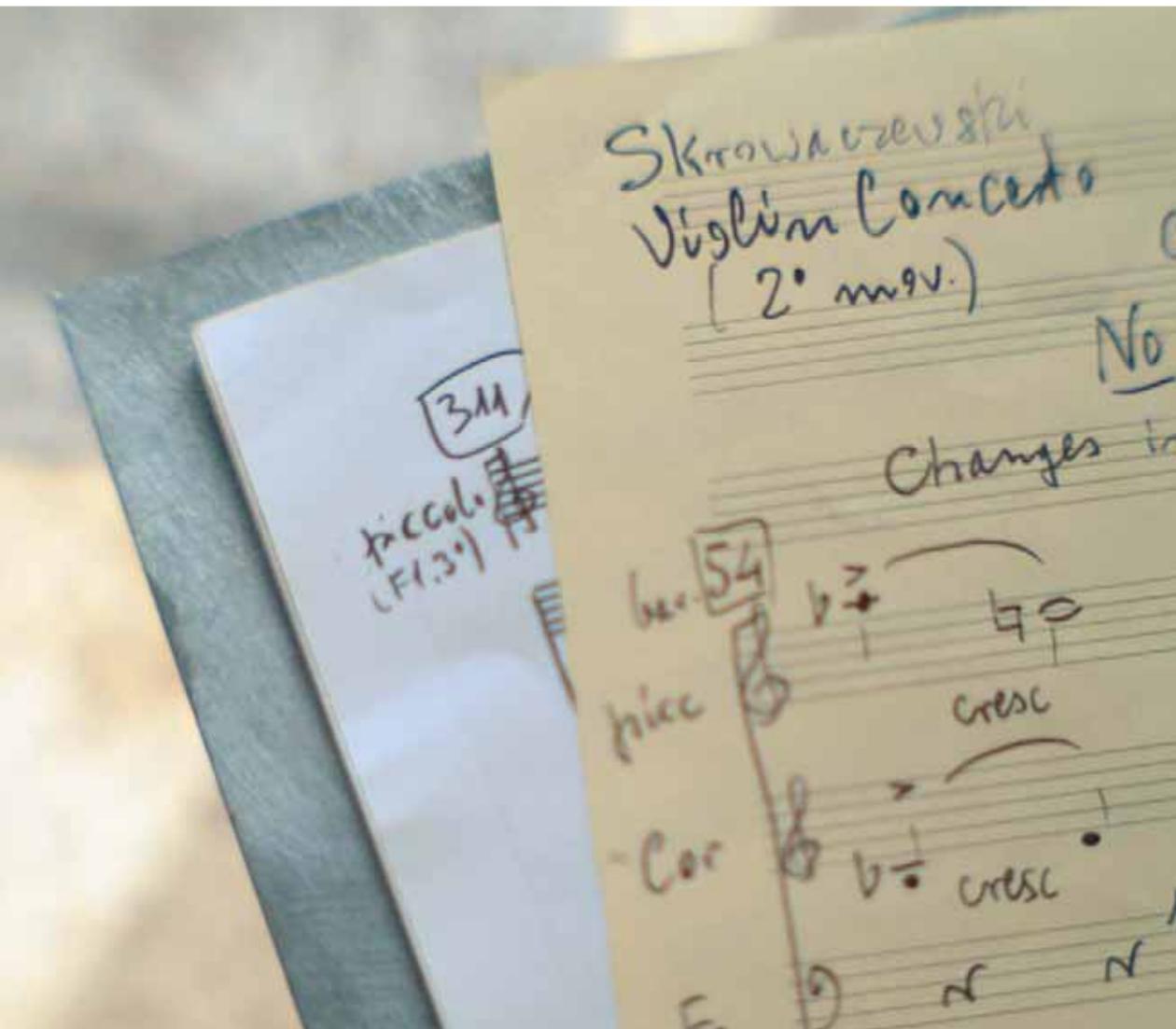
- [7] 12:24    **Adagio, Misterioso**  
 [8] 18:43    **Adagio, Anton Bruckner's Himmelfahrt**

USED WITH PERMISSION FROM REFERENCE RECORDINGS  
 RR-103, 2003

CD mastering: Patrick Keating  
 Total CD Timing 77:21

On one level I felt your Symphony [2003] spoke of a musical history—a story about the almost lost traditions of “depth” and emotional “meaning” in music that the main body of Western classical music of the past represents. On another level, it sings of your own inner struggle to give a meaningful musical message to the world, which I can only imagine has changed a lot since you first began composing and conducting, and which you do not want to see fall into the darkness of non-thinking and non-meaning. . . . A wake-up call if you will, from an artistic soul who has spent a lifetime passing on the musical flame to the few remaining “starved” spirits in need of truth.

**Randall Meyers**  
American composer, film music scholar, and astronomer



## ABOUT THE AWARD

This year marks the seventh anniversary of the McKnight Distinguished Artist Award. In creating the program, we hoped to recognize a generation of artists who had dedicated their careers to enlivening and enriching Minnesota's cultural life. We wanted to acknowledge the contributions of those artists who, though successful and even acclaimed around the world, sometimes didn't receive honors here in Minnesota for their artistic work nor for the opportunities they had created for other artists and for the public to enjoy.

Minnesota is often cited as a special place to live because of its cultural richness. Theaters, museums and galleries, dance programs, performances, music, and films enliven our storefronts and street corners, stages, and concert halls. The Distinguished Artist Award recognizes those who, individually and collectively, laid the foundations for this vitality. Although they might have pursued their work elsewhere, they chose to stay, and by staying made a difference.

The Distinguished Artist Award, which includes a \$40,000 stipend, is a Minnesota award for a Minnesota artist. One artist each year receives it. Anyone is welcome to nominate an artist. Nominations received by March 31 are considered the same year. A panel of people appointed on the basis of their knowledge of Minnesota's cultural history reviews the nominations, sometimes suggests others, and selects the Distinguished Artist.

Our thanks to panelists Linda Hoeschler, former executive director of the American Composers Forum, St. Paul; Linda Myers, executive director of The Loft Literary Center, Minneapolis; Dale Schatzlein, director of Northrop Auditorium, University of Minnesota; and Stewart Turnquist, coordinator of the Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program, Minneapolis Institute of Art. Their high standards make this award a meaningful tribute to Minnesota's most influential artists.

**Neal Cuthbert**  
Program Director, Arts  
The McKnight Foundation

MCKNIGHT  
DISTINGUISHED  
ARTISTS

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski

2004

Mike Lynch

2003

Emilie Buchwald

2002

Dale Warland

2001

Robert Bly

2000

Warren MacKenzie

1999

Dominick Argento

1998

DESIGN Barbara Koster

PHOTOGRAPHY Mark Luinenburg;  
pages 16, 17, 18, 22, 30, and 34 courtesy  
of the Minnesota Orchestra; pages 32 and  
40 courtesy of the Hallé Orchestra

EDITING Lynn Ingrid Nelson, Gayle Thorsen

PRINTING Diversified Graphics, Incorporated  
on McCoy Matte

SUBJECT EXPERT Skrowaczewski biographer  
Frederick Harris, Jr., Ph.D., provided the discography,  
biographical summary, compositions list, and  
production oversight of the enclosed CD.

The McKnight Foundation is committed  
to the protection of our environment, a  
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using paper with postconsumer waste content,  
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Additionally, we partner with printers who participate  
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The McKnight Foundation is a private philanthropic organization founded in 1953 by William L. McKnight and his wife, Maude L. McKnight. Mr. McKnight was an early leader of the 3M company. The Foundation, however, has no affiliation with 3M. In 2003, the Foundation gave about 10% of its total grants of \$75 million to the arts. The Foundation also makes grants in the areas of children and families, region and communities, the environment, research, and international programs.





Stanislaw Skrowaczewski  
1985

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski



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