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Musical life in Slutsk during the years 1733–1760 in the light of archive materials

ABSTRACT: This article represents the very first attempt at reconstructing musical life in Slutsk (Pol. *Śluck*) during the first half of the eighteenth century, and it merely outlines the issues involved. Slutsk was a typical private town – a multicultural centre inhabited by Jews, Orthodox Ruthenians, Lithuanians and Poles of the Protestant and Roman-Catholic faiths. Among the representatives of the Roman-Catholic faith, the Jesuits were the main animators of the town's cultural and educational life, alongside the court of Prince Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł. A medium-sized music boarding school attached to the Jesuit College in Slutsk existed from around 1713. Musical instruments were purchased for the school quite regularly, often in faraway Königsberg. The contacts between the boarding school and the prince's court were relatively frequent and good, and some school-leavers found jobs at the court, chiefly in the garrison or janissary band, and sporadically also in Prince Radziwiłł's music ensemble.

The court was the main centre of the town's cultural life. Among its numerous artistic ventures, stage shows seem to have been the most spectacular. For the purposes of such performances, a free-standing theatre was built in the centre of Slutsk at the turn of 1753. This building is worth mentioning because of the rarity of such projects in the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania during the 1750s. The repertoire of the Slutsk theatre was initially dominated by *commedia dell'arte* in German and the occasional *dramma per musica*, but during the second half of the 1750s, one-act ballets began to dominate. Among the instrumental works performed in Slutsk were compositions by Carl Heinrich and Johann Gottlieb Graun, Georg Christoph Wagenseil, and musicians active at the Radziwiłł court (Andreas Wappler, Joseph Kohaut and Johannes Battista Hochbrucker), as well as improvisations by Georg Noëlli. The town's artistic heyday ended with the death of Prince Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł, in 1760, and the dissolution of the Society of Jesus, a decade or so later.

KEYWORDS: Slutsk, musical culture, 1733–1760, Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł, Jesuit music boarding school, Jesuit school theatre, aristocratic theatre

The history and culture of Slutsk (Pol. *Śluck*) has seldom attracted the interest of researchers.¹ As with many other private towns in the Grand Duchy of

¹ The history of Slutsk has aroused the interest of the following researchers: Aleksander Jelski, *Wiadomość historyczna o pasiarni radziwiłłowskiej w Ślucku* [Historical information about the Radziwiłłs' woven girdles manufactory in Slutsk] (Kraków, 1894); Józefat Żyskar (ed.), *Nasze kościoły*, ii/19: *Archidiecezja mińska* [Our churches, ii/19: The archdiocese of Minsk] (Warszawa–Saint Petersburg, 1914), 1–7; Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa, 'Kazimierz

Lithuania, no monograph about Slutsk and the Principality of Slutsk has yet been published. The present attempt at reconstructing musical life in that centre during the first half of the eighteenth century is the first of its kind, and it presents merely an outline of the issues involved. No music prints or manuscripts from that period have survived, and the reconstruction of information about the musical life of Slutsk is based on indirect sources, such as letters, memoirs, business-related materials and the chronicles of Jesuit priests. The few surviving archive records are greatly dispersed. At present, they are held at the Central Archive of Historical Records in Warsaw (AGAD), the National Historical Archive of Belarus in Minsk (NGAB), the Lithuanian Central State Archive in Vilnius (LCVIA) and the Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (LMAB), as well as in Cracow, Olsztyn, Berlin, Vienna and Saint Petersburg.

The first mentions of Slutsk date back to the early twelfth century. Until the seventeenth century, the town belonged to the Olelkovich family of Lithuanian princes, which ended with the death of its last male descendant in the seventeenth century. Then the town was taken over by the Biržai line of the Radziwiłł family, whose last heiress, Ludwika Karolina Radziwiłł, transferred it, in 1687, to the Neuburg princes for almost fifty years. The town was regained for the Commonwealth and the Radziwiłł family by Anna Radziwiłł, née Sanguszko, mother of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł, who secured the rule of the town for her son in 1731 and provided him with income from the very lucrative land around Slutsk. The rule of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł during the first half of the eighteenth century was undoubtedly a heyday for Slutsk, but unfortunately it did not last long.

Krzysztof Kłokocki i jego drukarnia w Slucku' [Kazimierz Krzysztof Kłokocki and his printing press in Slutsk], *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, 12 (1967), 135–172; Buchwald-Pelcowa, 'Kłokocki Krzysztof Kazimierz', in Emanuel Rostworowski (ed.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [Polish biographical dictionary] (Kraków, 1967), xiii:64; Анатолий Петрович Грицкевич [Anatoly Petrovich Gritskevich], *Слущ, историко-экономический очерк* [Slutsk. An historical-economic outline] (Minsk, 1970); Грицкевич [Gritskevich], *Частновладельческие города Белоруссии в XVI-XVIII веках. Социально-экономическое исследование истории городов* [Private towns in Belarus during the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries. A history of the towns from a socio-economic perspective] (Minsk, 1975); Maria Kalamajska-Saeed, *Portrety i zabytki książąt Olelkowiczów w Slucku: inwentaryzacja Józefa Smolińskiego z 1904 r.* [Portraits and relics of the Olelkovich princes in Slutsk: Józef Smoliński's inventory from 1904] (Warszawa, 1996); Rafał Degiel, *Protestanci i prawosławni: patronat wyznaniowy Radziwiłłów birżańskich nad Cerkwią prawosławną w księstwie sluckim w XVII w.* [Protestants and Orthodox Christians: the confessional patronage of the Biržai Radziwiłłs over the Orthodox Church in the Principality of Slutsk during the seventeenth century] (Warsaw, 2000); also Jerzy Paszenda SJ, *Budowle jezuickie w Polsce w XVI-XVIII w.* [Jesuit buildings in Poland during the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries] (Kraków, 1999), i:339–366; Jerzy Kochanowicz SJ, *Słownik geograficzny jezuickich burs muzycznych* [Geographic dictionary of Jesuit music boarding schools] (Kraków, 2002), 213–216; Kochanowicz SJ, *Geneza, organizacja i działalność jezuickich burs muzycznych* [The origins, organisation and work of Jesuit music boarding schools] (Kraków, 2002).

At the beginning of the reign of King Stanislaus Augustus of Poland-Lithuania, Slutsk was destroyed by a mighty fire, before passing under Russian rule in 1795.²

Slutsk was a typical private town, granted Magdeburg Rights in 1441 by King Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, which were renewed in 1650, when the town was ruled by Bogusław Radziwiłł.³ The history of Slutsk is marked by prosperous periods, connected with its owners' efforts to expand and embellish the town, and periods of devastation, wrought by Turkish, Cossack, Swedish and Russian troops and numerous historical events. During the first half of the eighteenth century, it boasted a population of some 8,000 and was considered to be one of the largest towns in the Commonwealth. It was much larger than the nearby entailer's Nesvizh (Pol. Nieśwież), also owned by the Radziwiłł family, which had only 2,400 residents in the late seventeenth century.⁴ Slutsk was composed of four parts, including the Old Town, with its radial streets meeting at the foot of the Old Castle, and the grid-plan New Town, founded in the sixteenth century on the other side of the River Sluch. Beyond the town walls, there were two suburbs, Ostrów and Trojczany, inhabited chiefly by the Jews.⁵ Until the end of the eighteenth century, almost all the buildings in Slutsk were wooden, in line with the tradition of the region, which was famous for its woodcarving.⁶ Radziwiłł's three castles in Slutsk were also wooden. The Old Castle comprised the circular-plan Upper Castle and the Lower Castle, built during the fifteenth century in a bend of the River Byczek.⁷ The New Castle was built on the right bank of the River Sluch in the early sixteenth century and surrounded by brick fortifications.⁸

² Up to 1845, Slutsk belonged to Father Ludwik Wittgenstein, from whom it was acquired by the Russian government.

³ Józef Krzywicki, 'Sluck' in Bronisław Chlebowski and Władysław Walewski (eds.), *Słownik geograficzny królestwa polskiego* [Historical dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland] (Warszawa, 1889), x:837–848.

⁴ Degiel, *Protestanci i prawosławni*, 33.

⁵ A plan of the town from around 1725 is held at the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, in the album of Johann Georg Maximilian von Fürstenhoff (1686–1753), an architect, cartographer, engineer and author of many maps of Polish and Lithuanian strongholds: 'Designatio von fünffhundert Stück Vestungs Plans und Rißen' (2"Kart. Z 1809, fol. 12); cf. also Żyskar, *Nasze kościoły*, ii/19: *Archidiecezja mińska*, 1; Degiel, *Protestanci i prawosławni*, 32–33; in earlier literature, Trojczany is considered to be a replacement name for the New Town district, while the other suburb is called Sokoloczne (Sokoliszcze).

⁶ The Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity was one of the few brick buildings in Slutsk during the seventeenth century. It had to be demolished after being damaged during the siege of the town by Trubetskoy's troops, and it was subsequently painstakingly reconstructed; see Degiel, *Protestanci i prawosławni*, 106–111.

⁷ At present, the Municipal Cultural Centre is located on that site, slightly further away from the River Sluch than the castles which originally stood there.

⁸ The New Castle probably stood on what is now Komsomolska Street, which ran alongside the River Sluch towards Babruysk. Unfortunately, no vestige of the old town walls or the New Castle's fortifications has survived.

Slutsk was a multicultural town. The largest population comprised Orthodox Ruthenians and Lithuanians, followed by a sizeable Jewish community and then Poles of the Protestant and Roman-Catholic faiths. Orthodox churches were the dominant centres of religious worship in Slutsk, significantly more numerous than other Christian churches and synagogues.⁹ During the second half of the seventeenth century, there were fifteen Orthodox churches open in Slutsk and only one Roman-Catholic church and one Protestant parish.¹⁰ In the early seventeenth century, Janusz Radziwiłł turned Slutsk into a major centre of Calvinism in Lithuania. A Calvinist church, school and hospital were built in the town, which remained a Calvinist stronghold up to the early nineteenth century.

That situation changed during the first half of the eighteenth century, when the town was ruled by the Roman-Catholic line of the Radziwiłł family. By that time, there were already five Roman-Catholic churches, compared to fourteen Orthodox churches.¹¹ The larch-wood Slutsk parish church built in 1419 by Michał Bolesław ('Mikhailushka') Zygmuntowicz, of the Giediminid dynasty (c.1390–1452), was the oldest Roman-Catholic church in the town. It was consecrated between 1674 and 1677 by Bishop Mikołaj Słupski (c.1615–1691).¹² The wooden parish church survived until 1852, when it was demolished, and a small cemetery chapel was built from the resulting building materials.¹³ We know that in the first half of the eighteenth century at least two musicians were permanently connected with Slutsk parish church: the organist Ignacy Stanisław Nawrocki (1733–1748) and the cantor Jan Kasperowicz (1733–1745), who was later replaced by Michał Saponowicz (1745–1748). Most probably a small choir formed by ex-pupils of the Jesuit music boarding school in Slutsk was active at the church. Though we have no information on the subject, it is unlikely that the parish church had its own music ensemble,¹⁴

⁹ Degiel, *Protestanci i prawosławni*, 33.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 33, 138, 139.

¹¹ Józef Krzywicki ('Sluck', x:840) mentions fourteen Orthodox churches in the town in 1748; Degiel (*Protestanci i prawosławni*, 138, 139) writes of fifteen Orthodox churches there during the second half of the seventeenth century. The only known trace of musical activity relating to the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic churches in the Principality of Slutsk is a gradual (*irmoloy*) from 1761, from the defunct Basilian monastery in Cepra, Slutsk district, mentioned by Józef Smoliński in 1904; Smoliński took only three photographs of the gradual – the title page and two decorative pages with the letters M and W; there is no information about the relic's current home; see Kałamajska-Saeed, *Portrety i zabytki*, 12.

¹² Żyskar quotes 1632 as the consecration date, which seems highly unlikely when we consider the work of Mikołaj Słupski, who was promoted to archdeacon in the Vilnius chapter in 1673 and carried out inspections of almost all its churches between 1674 and 1677, drawing up protocols, inventories and reformation decrees, and consecrating a dozen or so churches and monasteries; see Bolesław Kumor, 'Mikołaj Słupski', in Henryk Markiewicz (ed.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Kraków, 2000), xxxix/1:130–131.

¹³ Żyskar, *Nasze kościoły*, ii/19: *Archidiecezja mińska*, 2–3.

¹⁴ By comparison, between 1736 and 1739, the parish church in Radziwiłł's private town of Zhovkva (Pol. Żółkiew) had four musicians: the organist Antoni Polikowski, the oboist Łukasz

given that musicians from the Jesuit boarding school and Prince Radziwiłł's court ensemble used to play there. The church was also the most frequent venue for welcoming ceremonies when the prince arrived in town and for services marking Hieronim Florian's birthday or name-day.¹⁵

The first mentions of the Slutsk Jesuits date from 1692. From 1698, they ran a grammar school in the town. Subsequently, in a small old house on Podwale Street, behind the Ostrowska Gate, they maintained a monastery school with an expanded curriculum, which a Jesuit chronicle refers to as the *Seminarium Kłokoccianum*, from the name of the founder, Hieronim Kłokocki, starosta of Rechytsa.¹⁶ Meant for the scions of impoverished gentry, the monastery school had a foundation for twelve students established by Kłokocki, who bequeathed some 40,000 zlotys to the school in 1707.¹⁷

A wooden church dedicated to the Holy Spirit was built near the monastery school. The church was rather small and served only the monastery school pupils. It was probably a single-nave church with a pair of chapels and a galleried vestibule.¹⁸ In 1738, the front of the church was repaired: the porch was covered with a new roof, and a new gallery was erected for musicians. There was no organ in the church.

Another church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, was built next to the Jesuit college in the Zarzecze district of Slutsk. This too had a gallery in the vestibule, 'for musicians and trumpeters'.¹⁹ In 1745, a pipe organ was ordered for the church from Koenigsberg, for 1,000 silver Polish zlotys; another 1,000 zlotys were paid for its transport and its erection the following year.²⁰ The instrument was built by the famous pipe-organ builder Adam Gottlob Casparini, active in Koenigsberg, who built at least two instruments in Lithuania between 1745 and 1746, including the one for the Jesuit church in Slutsk.²¹

Frey, and Jakub Dumański and Tomasz Szymoński, who acted as trumpet players and cantors. The annual spending on the parish musicians exceeded 1,000 zlotys; the musicians also used to play at the Castle in Zhovkva, where Jakub Dumański worked as Kapellmeister; see 'Inscriptus pro Choro Ecclesiae Praepositorialis Żolkevi[cen]sis in Anno 1734', held at the National Historical Archive of Belarus in Minsk (hereafter NGAB), 694, op.2, 2867, fols.1243–1270. A *Motetta* held at the National Museum in Kraków (file no. 227), may be treated as a vestige of that centre's musical production from the 1730s.

¹⁵ Apparently, in accordance with Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł's wishes, the prince's heart, stored in a silver jewel case, was placed in the vestry of the parish church after his death.

¹⁶ Paszenda, *Budowle jezuickie*, 345.

¹⁷ Kochanowicz, *Słownik geograficzny*, 213.

¹⁸ Paszenda, *Budowle jezuickie*, 339–352.

¹⁹ 'dla muzyków i trębaczy', in *ibid*, 352.

²⁰ *Ibid*; see also 'the gallery with a splendid wood-carved organ' ['chór z organy wspaniałej snycerskiej roboty'], in an inventory of the Jesuit college in Slutsk, 29 November 1773, held at the NGAB, 694, op.2, 7445, fol. 1r.

²¹ Marcin Zgliński, 'Organy na terenie Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego do około 1850 roku w świetle najnowszych badań' [Organs on the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania up to c.1850 in light of the latest research], *Muzyka*, 48 (2003), 86. Zgliński writes that the Jesuits

A music boarding school was attached to the Jesuit college from at least 1713.²² It was of medium size and had more than ten pupils. From the moment it was founded, it actively participated in the life of the town and the court and enjoyed the support of the Kłokocki family and Prince Radziwiłł.

Among the boarding school's protectors, attention should be drawn to Brother Szymon Tadeusz Drozdowski (1721–1766), who joined the order in 1743 as a musician and from 1756 was an infirmarian and assistant folk band prefect in Slutsk (1756–1761). Because of his musical abilities, during the last years of his life he was in close contact with Prince Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł. A similar role was played earlier by Brother Antoni Gębicz (1696–1768), who joined the order also as a musician in 1721. He managed boarding schools, including the ones in Slutsk (1723–26) and Nesvizh (1736–1739), for thirty years.²³

We have little information about the running of the boarding school in Slutsk. It is known that musical instruments were bought fairly regularly for the school, mainly in Koenigsberg, which was clearly a safe market in this respect, as instruments were bought there several times for the court ensemble of Prince Radziwiłł (in 1730, for example, two trumpets, two French horns, two oboes and a violin). In 1733, a house for musicians was built, and more musical instruments, including two trumpets, a violin and an oboe, were bought in Koenigsberg. In 1734, the boarding school was refurbished and a pipe organ was bought for it.²⁴

In the holdings of the NGAB in Minsk and the LMAB in Vilnius, there is an inventory of the college in Slutsk which survived the dissolution of the order (1773–1775), including a list of instruments owned by the music boarding school:

Superior violin 4, slightly damaged violin 2...6
 Basolia [a kind of cello] 1, double bass 1, viola 1...3
 French horn 7, trumpets 3...10
 Bassoons 2, slightly damaged 1 ... 3
 Trombone borrowed for the Nesvizh boarding school 1
 Anglossy [cors anglais] 2
 Slightly damaged Western concert flutes 2
 Copper kettledrums 2
 Flute 1
 Broken clavichords 2
 Mouthpieces for trumpets 4, for French horns 2...6

paid 200 silver Polish zlotys for the instrument, but the information quoted by Jerzy Paszenda (2,000 silver Polish zlotys) seems more reliable, given that the organ in Leśna, near Biała, cost Radziwiłł around 2,000 zlotys.

²² Hereafter, information on the music boarding school in Slutsk is based on Kochanowicz, *Słownik geograficzny*, 213–216.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, based on archival materials: Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Lit. 49, fols. 112–114.

- Rotary valves for trumpet 3 pairs, for French horn 2 pairs ...5 pairs
- Choir equipment
- Key for tightening double bass tuning pegs..2
- Lockable cabinet on the gallery with the Choir's papers with instruments ...1
- Intact eight-stop organ with a ninth stop from the Star ...1
- Damaged old positive organ.²⁵

The list of instruments shows that an ensemble existed at the boarding school, with more or less the following proportions: a seven- or nine-strong string section (four or six violins, one viola, one cello and one double bass), probably two flutes, two cors anglais, two bassoons, a clavichord (or possibly two), and a positive organ and organ used interchangeably. Depending on the circumstances, they also used trumpets (three-four), French horns (six-eight, especially liked by Prince Radziwiłł) and kettle drums (two). This means that the ensemble could have comprised more than ten musicians, which would correspond to the number of pupils and teachers at the boarding school. With respect to the eight-nine-stop organ, it is difficult to say if this was the organ purchased for the boarding school in 1734 or the instrument built by A. G. Casparini taken from the Holy Trinity church.

Extant information concerning the musical activities of the boarding school residents and theatrical activities at the college is very scarce, though there is no doubt that theatre-and-music shows and public music shows were given by the boarding school pupils on a regular basis.

We know that the boarding school residents were obliged to provide a daily musical setting for the services held at the two Jesuit churches in the town, where they did most of their music practice. This explains the special care taken over the good condition of the galleries for musicians in the Jesuit churches and the possession of a good pipe organ (at the Holy Trinity church). The musical setting of church or local holidays and patronage festivals was ceremonial. According to the Jesuit chronicle, in 1739, during Pentecost, an orchestra composed of many instruments played during processions that passed through the town before arriv-

²⁵ 'Skrzypców lepszych 4, skrzypców nadpsutych 2...6/ Basetla 1, kwartwiola 1, altówka 1...3/ Waltorni sztuk 7, trąb 3...10/ Fagotów 2, nadpsuty 1 ... 3/ Puzon pożyczony do Bursy nieświeskiej 1/Anglossy 2/Flatrowersów nadpsutych 2/ Kotłów miedzianych 2/ Flet 1/ Klawikordów popsutych 2/ Musztuków do trąb 4, do waltorni 2...6/ Krąglików do trąb par 3, do waltorni par 2, par ...5/ Sprzęt chórowy/ Klucz do nakręcania kolków kwart wioli..2/ Szafa na chórze z papierami do Chóru należącymi zamczysta z temiż instrumentami ...1/ Organ na 8 głosów w zupełności, z 9 głosem od Gwiazdy...1/ Pozytyw stary na nic nie zgodny', in NGAB, 694, op.2, 7445, fol. 11v; see Irena Kadulska, *Teatr jezuicki XVIII i XIX wieku w Polsce, z antologią dramatu* [Jesuit theatre of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Poland, with an anthology of plays] (Gdańsk, 1997), 43. Quoted here after Mokslų Akademijos Biblioteka, Vilnius, F 21 VBF – 1445, fol. 23, manuscript without title page. It includes the inventory from the college in Slutsk, 1773–75, 131 written pages, 4 blank pages. There is also a description of the library and the college; the Vilnius manuscript is probably a fair copy of the document held at the NGAB.

ing at the school theatre, where the young musicians gave a declamation. In the evening, occasional songs were performed.²⁶

Music was also an inseparable part of the Jesuit school celebrations at the beginning and the end of the school year (1 September and 30 July) and of prize-giving ceremonies,²⁷ in which the music ensemble and the school theatre both performed. The boarding school residents also provided the musical setting for theatre performances staged by the students of the Jesuit college. The plays were accompanied by choral singing, interludes and arias closing the acts, and they were also interspersed with dances performed by the college students. We know, for example, that in 1715 the students of the Slutsk college staged a panegyric drama in three acts, *Mars in arte conspicuus*, with an allegorical anti-prologue, prologue, chorus and epilogue, to mark the end of the academic year. The interludes placed after the first and second acts included a gladiator dance and Apollo playing the lute.²⁸ In 1757, the end of the school year was marked with the staging of a little-known *Dialog*,²⁹ for which the resources of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł's theatrical wardrobe were used. It is not clear whether stage costumes or decorations were borrowed. This is an interesting question, because if it were costumes, we know that college students most often performed in beautiful contemporary clothes, usually unsuited to their roles, which tended to be recited rather than played at the Jesuit theatre.³⁰ Decorations, on the other hand, would certainly have been useful for a school performance, since effects such as storm, tempest, earthquake, fire, lightning, envoys from heaven and dream projections were often used in Jesuit theatre.³¹ The college's request to use the resources of the aristocratic theatre in Slutsk may indicate that, as in Biała (another private town belonging to Radziwiłł), tickets for the prince's theatre performances were available to the public in Slutsk, too.³² These performances could have inspired the college authorities to give more theatrical presentations of the characters and scenes on the stage. As an expression

²⁶ Kochanowicz, *Słownik geograficzny*, 213–216, based on Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Lit. 49, fol.212.

²⁷ Kochanowicz, *Geneza*, 199–202.

²⁸ Władysław Korowaj, *Dramat staropolski od początków do powstania sceny narodowej* [Old Polish drama, from its beginnings to the creation of a national stage] (Wrocław, 1965), ii:299–301; Гурий Илларионович Барышев [Guri Illarionovich Baryshev], *Театральная культура Белоруссии XVIII века* [Theatrical culture in Belarus during the eighteenth century] (Minsk, 1992), 276.

²⁹ 'Dialogus a studiosis in theatro nostro exhiberi solitus die S. Ignatio festo [31 July – the end of the school year] absente atque ita postulante Principe Radivillo, vexillifero M.D.L., ducatus Slucensis haerede, post diem nonnisi Assumptae in coelos Virgini Mariae sacrum, in theatro illius est productus', in *Historia Domus Collegii Slucensis S.J. 1757, A.S.J.*, Lith. 51, fol.86r–86v.

³⁰ Kadulska, *Teatr jezuicki*, 44.

³¹ Kadulska, *Teatr jezuicki*, 42.

³² 'eight sheets of good quality paper for theatre tickets were given to P. Krauz' ['8 arkuszy papieru rygałowego na bilety dla ludzi do komedyhauzu dano P. Krauzowi'], in *AGAD, AR XXVI*, 411, fol. 163r, 1 October 1754, Biała.

of gratitude for his generosity (the lending of costumes or decorations), Radziwiłł was invited to the performance of the *Dialog* at the Jesuit college.³³ The prince accepted the invitation and took his elder brother, Michał Kazimierz ('Rybeńko') Radziwiłł, with him.

The Jesuit boarding school's music ensemble performed not only at the college and the Jesuit churches of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity, but also at other Roman-Catholic churches in the town. For instance, during Christmas in 1749, it played at the parish church in Slutsk, probably with the church choir: 'as an expression of gratitude to Almighty God for the grace of that holiday, a solemn service was celebrated at the parish church with the Jesuit band singing and playing both *Te Deum laudamus* and the Summa'.³⁴ It was also customary for music boarding schools to hire out their music groups for secular celebrations (this was one way of raising funds for the boarding school's running). Pupils also used to perform in the ceremonies staged to mark the prince's arrival in the town or during gala celebrations of Radziwiłł's birthday and name-day in the town. In September 1744, for example, they greeted the prince in the school's lecture theatre, reciting orations and poems and singing with the band's accompaniment.³⁵ In September 1754, a solemn mass was celebrated to mark the prince's name-day, with the musical setting provided by the boarding school's ensemble: 'on the day of Saint Hieronymus, your name-day was triumphantly celebrated with fire from cannons and guns, as was the custom in the past, to the sound of the ensemble of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers, who with almost the entire College sang the Summa and celebrated the Holy Mass, asking God for their Lord'.³⁶

³³ 'I informed His Reverence the Rector that thanks to the generosity of Your Grace they could have things from the theatre necessary for the Dialogue and, as an expression of the humblest gratitude for Your Grace's goodwill, he did not neglect a ready compensation and ordered them to wait with the Dialogue until your safe arrival' ['JMCi Księżdy Rektorowi doniosłem, że z laski JOWXMCPiD mogą mieć rzeczy z komediarni do Dialogu potrzebne, który najpokorniejsze składając podziękii woli JOWXMPiD chętnie zadość uczynić nie zaniedbał, gdyż się z Dialogiem do szczęśliwego Pańskiego przybycia strzymać rozkazał'], in AGAD, AR V, 526/III-IV, fol. 15r, 31 July 1757, Slutsk.

³⁴ 'na podziękowanie Bogu wszechmogącemu za łaskę tego święta odprawiła się solenizacja w kościele farskim z śpiewaniem i graniem kapelą jezuicką tak *Te Deum laudamus* jako i summy', in AGAD, AR V, 7127/VII, fol. 186r, 23 December 1749, Slutsk.

³⁵ Kochanowicz, *Słownik geograficzny*, 213–216.

³⁶ 'z dniem Św. Hieronima imienin Pańskich ze wszelkim tryumfem odprawił się przy daniu ognia z armat i ręcznej strzelby zwyczajem dawnym, przy rezonacji kapeli JMCi Ojców Jezuitów, którzy niemal z całym Collegium śpiewając summę odprawując Msze świętą Boga prosząc o Pana swego', in AGAD, AR V, 9687/I, fol. 91r, 30 September 1754, Slutsk; also 'Yesterday [4 May 1751, Slutsk], to mark the birthday of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł, Grand Standard-Bearer of Lithuania, at the Jesuit Fathers' church, *Te Deum laudamus* and a mass were sang, "intoned with an excellent *ex arte musica* resonance" by the court band' ['W dniu wczorajszym [4 maja, w Slucku] z okazji urodzin Hieronima Florian Radziwiłła, chorążego WKL., w kościele księżdy Jezuitów odśpiewano *Te Deum laudamus* i mszę, którą nadworna kapela "wyborną *ex arte musica*

In spite of Prince Hieronim Radziwiłł's known dislike of the Jesuits, his court's contacts with the college and the boarding school were good, and some boarding school pupils found jobs at the court. If we remember that the school's pupils came from impoverished families of the peasant, bourgeois and, sporadically, gentry estates, we can easily imagine that, on completing their education, they sought employment at the prince's court and, first of all, were admitted to Radziwiłł's garrison and janissary bands. We know that a great majority of those bands, unlike the court ensemble, were composed of local residents: peasants, townsmen and, occasionally, gentry. There is only one extant reference, dating from 1752, to a musician being admitted into the prince's service (the principal trumpeter of the Jesuit boarding school in Slutsk),³⁷ though there must have been more such cases. We do know, however, that in 1741 an oboist who escaped (a frequent occurrence at boarding schools) from the Jesuit music band in Nesvizh sought employment at the court of Hieronim Florian.³⁸ It soon came to light that the musician was an absconder, and he was sent back to Nesvizh; as a consequence, the Jesuits promised to send better musicians to the prince's court, because that anonymous oboist turned out to be 'not so excellent in his profession when he was tried'.³⁹ In 1747, on the other hand, a bass singer called Rumpfel was recruited for the court ensemble of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł from the music boarding school attached to the Jesuit College in Vilnius (St John College).⁴⁰

The court also made use of the numerous instruments gathered at the boarding school. In 1759, a clavichord was bought from the Jesuits for a small sum. Larger

rezonacją intonowała”] in Jadwiga Szwedowska, *Muzyka w czasopiśmie polskich XVIII wieku, okres saski (1730–1764)* [Music in Polish periodicals of the eighteenth century: the Saxon period (1730–1764)] (Kraków, 1971), 81.

³⁷ 'This is to report [...] that today the first trumpeter came of his own free will from the Jesuit Fathers. I announced him right away to His Reverence the Rector, and gave him the colours and the daily allowances' ['Donaszam .. że dnia dzisiejszego dobrowolnie przybył prymier trębacz od Księży Jezuitów, którego wraz oznajmiłem J. Księdzu Rektorowi, a onemu barwę dałem i lenung', in AGAD, AR V, 10030/I, fol. 71r, June 1752, Slutsk, letter of K. Morscheidt to H. F. Radziwiłł.

³⁸ The Jesuit boarding house in Nesvizh was located in Corpus Christi College from about 1615 and was similar in size to its Slutsk counterpart; it trained 10–15 pupils, see Kochanowicz, *Słownik geograficzny*, 161–165. Kochanowicz, *Geneza*, 284–285.

³⁹ ['nie bardzo doskonały w profesji swojej jak go spróbowano'.] 'The oboe player whom I had admitted, who was announced to Your Grace in my previous letter, was sought by the Jesuit Fathers from Nesvizh, because he had escaped from them, so I took away his daily allowances, gave them back to the treasury, and released him' and 'the Jesuits declared their intention to seek better musicians and send them to Slutsk' ['Hoboistę, którego był przyjął, o którym w przesłanej poczcie oznajmiłem WXMD, Księża Jezuitów z Nieświeża upominali się od których uciekł, zaczął odebrawszy lenungi do skarbu, oddałem i uwolniłem' and 'zaś Księża Jezuitów deklarowali o doskonalszych postaraci i przesłać do Słucka'], in AGAD, AR V, 7127/III, fol. 127–128r, Slutsk, 3 September 1741.

⁴⁰ AGAD, AR IV, Book 20, fol. 335r–336r, May 1747, Lipiczna, letter from H. F. Radziwiłł to the rector of St John College in Vilnius.

than Radziwiłł's clavichord at the Old Castle in Slutsk, it was beautifully varnished in blue with golden floral ornaments.⁴¹ It was probably bought for the girls of the prince's ballet troupe, who were taught clavichord in 1759 and 1760.

The prince's court was undoubtedly the main centre of cultural life during the first half of the eighteenth century.⁴² From 1733, Slutsk was the prince's main residence, though at first he was very reluctant to visit the town. This changed with time, and during the 1750s Radziwiłł spent half of every year, and sometimes even a year and a half at a time, in Slutsk. The prince's stays in the town were associated with a revival of cultural life at his castles there. A court ensemble, military and janissary bands, a vocal ensemble and a ballet troupe were all active at the prince's court. The arrival of most of those ensembles in the town would coincide with that of the prince.

Theatre performances seem to have been the most spectacular artistic ventures at the court. For the purposes of such performances, a theatre was built in Slutsk at the turn of 1753. The building was located by the River Sluch in the area adjacent to the Old Castle, next to the Observant church. This theatre is worth mention-

⁴¹ 'I made a bargain on a clavichord when I was at the Reverend Jesuits and paid five and a half red zlotys, and I am waiting to be instructed where to put it' ['Klawikord u JX Jezuitów będący stargowałem i zapłaciłem półszosta czerwonego złotego, który gdzie ma być oddany czekam ordynansu'], in AGAD, AR V, 526/ I-II, fol. 51r; 20 October 1759, Slutsk; letter from A. Benkien to H. F. Radziwiłł; 'Specification of all the treasures in Slutsk [...] concluded on 23 June 1760 / The upper brick treasury in the Old Castle in Slutsk / A small clavichord in a case / A larger clavichord varnished in blue with little golden flowers' ['Specyfikacja wszystkich universaliter w Slucku znajdujących się skarbców [...] zakończona 23 Juni 1760/ Skarbiec murowany na górze w Starym Zamku w Slucku/Klawikord mały w futerale / Klawikord większy niebiesko lakierowany z kwiateczkami złotymi'], in AGAD, AR XXVI, 500, fol. 25.

⁴² On music at the court of H. F. Radziwiłł, see Irena Bienkowska, 'Zespoły muzyczno-teatralne Białej i Slucka w korespondencji Hieronima Floriana Radziwiłła (1715–1760)' [The music-theatre ensembles of Biała and Slutsk in the correspondence of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł (1715–1760)], *Barok. Historia-Literatura-Sztuka*, 2005/1, 61–75; Bienkowska, 'Organizacja życia teatralno-muzycznego w Slucku w latach 1752–1760' [The organisation of theatrical-musical life in Slutsk 1752–1760], *Przegląd muzykologiczny*, 6 (2006), 65–85; Bienkowska, 'Wzmianki o balecie egzotycznym na dworze Hieronima Floriana Radziwiłła (1715–1760)' [References to exotic ballet at the court of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł (1715–1760)], *Barok. Historia-Literatura-Sztuka*, 2008/1, 189–203; Bienkowska, 'Mecenas i tyran. Życie muzyczne w rezydencjach Hieronima Floriana Radziwiłła (1715–1760) w świetle kontraktów służbowych zawieranych z artystami' [Patron and tyrant. Musical life at the residences of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł (1715–1760) in the light of employment contracts concluded with artists], in Urszula Augustyniak (ed.), *Śródowiska kulturotwórcze i kontakty kulturalne Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego od XV do XIX wieku* [Cultural environments and contacts in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century] (Warsaw, 2009), 55–67; Bienkowska, 'The Music Ensemble of Prince Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł (1715–1760)', in Szymon Paczkowski and Anna Ryszka-Komarnicka (eds.), *Polish Studies on Baroque Music* (Warsaw, 2009), 65–89; Bienkowska, 'Muzykalia i teatralia w zbiorach biblioteki ordynackiej w Nieświeżu XVII i I połowy XVIII wieku. Zbiory bialskie' [Music and theatre items from the library of the entail estate in Nesvizh dating from the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. The Biała collection], *Polski Rocznik Muzykologiczny*, 2010, 37–57.

ing because such ventures were very rare in Poland-Lithuania during the 1750s. Such buildings were usually located in palace gardens (e.g. the royal opera house in Warsaw and the Branickis' theatre in Białystok),⁴³ but there were no palace gardens in either the Old or the New Castle in Slutsk. The Slutsk theatre was a small, probably one-storey, wooden building with annexes on both sides used as lodgings for musicians, singers and dancers.

The very scant source information available to us today makes it impossible to fully reconstruct how the theatre in Slutsk operated, but it seems that it could have had wider influence than hitherto assumed. Performances were staged there between 1753 and 1758, during the prince's stays in the town. In 1758, the theatre was rebuilt, and it continued to operate from the autumn of 1759 till the beginning of 1760. It is not known whether tickets were issued for performances at the Slutsk theatre. The only mentions of tickets being sold for shows date back to 1754 and refer to Biała, but there seems no reason why the same solution should not have been applied in Slutsk. We may assume, therefore, that some theatre shows in Slutsk could have been open to the general public. It is not known, however, who would have received the tickets and who, apart from the prince, might have attended those shows. In addition to invited guests and the prince's close and distant relatives, the audience could have comprised the wealthy gentry (chiefly Radziwiłł's administrators with their families, as well as chemists, mechanics and other court staff who helped acquire instruments and music for the Radziwiłł court) and representatives of the Jesuit college, such as the aforementioned assistant band prefect Szymon Tadeusz Drozdowski. An interesting reference in this context comes from Radziwiłł's administrator Ludwik Schilling, who encouraged the prince to attend pantomime performances by the shadow theatre troupe by stressing that they could be understood by those who did not speak the foreign (German) language. This is slightly surprising, since all the refined guests at the prince's court would have been German speakers.⁴⁴ It might indirectly confirm that the public had access to shows at the Radziwiłł theatre. Of course, we cannot compare the accessibility (if any) of the performances at the aristocratic theatre in Slutsk with that of shows by the Jesuit theatre company staged at the local college. The audience of the latter was composed of teachers and the college's guests, including pupils' parents, local gentry and, less often, the urban population, with the average audience reaching up to several hundred.⁴⁵

⁴³ Barbara Król-Kaczorowska, *Teatr dawnej Polski, budynki, dekoracje, kostiumy* [Theatre in Old Poland: the buildings, decorations and costumes] (Warszawa, 1971), 41–42.

⁴⁴ 'Anyone who does not understand German can easily comprehend from the gestures what is being represented, as if he knew the whole comedy by heart' ['Dla tych którzy niemieckiego nie rozumieją języka, jest tak łatwo z gestów do pojęcia co się prezentuję, jakby całą komedię na pamięć wiedział'], in AGAD, AR V, 15984/VIII, fol. 65r-68r; 5 December 1756, Slutsk; letter from L. Schilling to H. F. Radziwiłł.

⁴⁵ Kadulka, *Teatr jezuicki*, 42.

The participation of local artists in the artistic life of the prince's court was not great. They played in the garrison and janissary music bands, which were less significant in artistic terms. Few artists were active in the prince's court ensemble, which was composed chiefly of foreign musicians, as were the ensembles of singers or actors. The ballet master Antonio Puttini, who came to Slutsk from Italy and created an excellent ballet troupe comprising about fifteen young people from the families of Slutsk townsmen and the local impoverished gentry, won great recognition. Interest in the troupe was so great that, after a few years, Puttini complained that too many people were interested in learning to dance.

It is most difficult to reconstruct the repertoire performed on the stages of the Slutsk theatre and at the prince's residences. As far as theatre performances are concerned, they were dominated by improvised *commedia dell'arte* shows given by actors brought from Vienna: first Karl Joseph Hellmann's troupe and later, from 1756, that of Adam Egidius Büttner. Professional actors were supported in those performances by musicians, especially singers, with Frantz Adam Wittmann (tenor), Laurentius Pomo von Weyerthal (soprano), Miss Schamuzkin and Teresa Maria Massucci to the fore. In addition to *dell'arte* comedies, usually performed in German or Italian, which the prince liked very much, operas were also staged, albeit less often. Judging by the scant material that has survived, the opera repertoire was dominated by *drammi per musica*. It is extremely difficult to establish any titles, but we do know of two operas which were certainly staged there: *Merope*, based on a libretto by Apostolo Zeno, probably to music by Radziwiłł's organist Mayer, and *Historia Tamerlana* [The story of Tamerlane], based on Michael Ducas's *Historia byzantina* (1649), to music by Radziwiłł's composer Giuseppe Torti (active 1752–1780). From 1756, when Antonio Puttini arrived at the Radziwiłł court, the theatre repertoire began to be dominated by one-act ballets to his choreography.

Instrumental music was dominated by compositions by Carl Heinrich and Johann Gottlieb Graun, Georg Christoph Wagenseil, and musicians active at the Radziwiłł court (Andreas Wappler, Joseph Kohaut and Johannes Battista Hochbrucker), as well as improvisations by Georg Noëlli.

The town's artistic heyday ended with the death of Prince Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł, in 1760, and the dissolution of the Society of Jesus, a decade or so later. By 1780, the site of the Slutsk theatre was already empty, with only the annexes left, which were used to house fire victims from Slutsk. The period of the town's cultural development during the first half of the eighteenth century was past; from a well-maintained private centre, Slutsk turned into one of the many small towns of the huge Russian Empire of the late eighteenth century, and its former splendour was gone.

