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Among Other Things: Music Collections of Noble Courts in the Eighteenth-Century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth**

Abstract:

In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, numerous noble courts maintained regular musical groups, and some estates also employed opera and dance troupes. Unfortunately, the stage clothes, musical instruments, and, above all, sheet music – the items needed for artistic groups to function – have largely not survived to the present. It is certain, however, that music was a regular part of court life. This raises the question of what place music items occupied within the household. In my paper, I examine the ways in which sheet music was obtained for the use of court orchestras, who was responsible for delivering such materials, and where they were stored. Moreover, I explore the changing importance of music collections within the hierarchy of objects in eighteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian noble households. I base my findings on archival materials from selected noble households, as well as on extant inventories and purchase records for court music among the Radziwiłł, Sanguszek, Rzewuski, Ogiński, Brzostowski, and Lubomirski families.

Keywords: Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, noble courts, music collections, eighteenth century

Słowa kluczowe: Rzeczpospolita, dwory magnackie, zbiory muzyczne, XVIII wiek

During the era of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, many magnate courts, that is, the courts of the powerful nobles known as magnates (Polish: *magnateria*), maintained regular musical ensembles, and some estates even employed opera and dance troupes. Given that music was an integral part of court life, it is reasonable to presume that the music collections of these estates were

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rich and diverse. Furthermore, it is likely that inventories or library catalogs carefully recorded the purchase and storage of these music materials. Unfortunately, due to Poland's turbulent history, it is difficult to ascertain whether this was indeed the case, as many collections belonging to noble houses have been lost over time. Today, only a few surviving documents, including inventories and purchase records from the eighteenth century, remain, along with some later records that document the main repertoire of the 1700s. These sources comprise catalogs of larger collections rather than being dedicated to music collections themselves, with the exception of the collection from Łańcut (albeit even this case poses some problems)¹. While we cannot deduce much from this small fragment of extant records,² with the support of gathered archival

¹ Cf. M. Płoski, *Marcello di Capua nadworny kompozytor księżnej Izabeli Lubomirskiej. Studium źródłoznawcze*, Musica Iagellonica, Kraków 2019, p. 193.

² Only a few inventories of music items and lists of sheet music purchases survive: 1) Warsaw–Dresden, collections from before 1728, Jakub Henryk Flemming (1667–1728), totaling over 265 titles, including about seventy works (mainly works composed by French Baroque composers), cf. Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie (Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw) (hereafter: PL-Wagad), Rękopisy Biblioteczne Radziwiłłów (Library Manuscripts of the Radziwiłł Family) 28, Ex Flem. Musicalia, fol. 71–72 and over 195 works (instrumental music, mainly by German composers), cf. PL-Wagad, Archiwum Radziwiłłów (Radziwiłł Family Archives) (hereafter: AR) X Dokumenty obcych domów (Documents of Foreign Houses), 376, Specification was an Musicalien verhanden, fol. 186–199; see also Sz. Paczkowski, *Z dziejów muzycznej biblioteki Jakuba Henryka Flemminga*, “Barok. Historia-Literatura-Sztuka” 2014, no. 1, pp. 95–109; 2) Podhorce, 1769, Stanisław Mateusz Rzewuski (1662–1728) and Wacław Piotr Rzewuski (1706–1779), totaling over 453 titles (in the inventory, half of the entries record the number of books rather than the works contained within), cf. PL-Wagad, Czołowski Collection, No. 429, Regestr Papierow muzykalnych spisany die 20 Augusti 1769 Anno w Podhorcach (now Pidhirtsi, Ukraine) (Register of musical papers written on 20 August 1769 in Podhorce), fol. 169–171, see also B. Vogel, *Do dziejów tradycji muzycznych zamku w Podhorcach*, “Polski Rocznik Muzykologiczny” 2015, pp. 99–124; 3) Nieśwież, Biała, Karol Stanisław (1669–1719) and Anna née Sanguszko (1676–1746) Radziwiłł, partially preserved collections, including ninety-eight titles, of which ten are book titles, cf. PL-Wagad, AR Rękopisy biblioteczne Radziwiłłów (Library Manuscripts of the Radziwiłł Family), 28, Ex Biała. Musicalia, fol. 73r, see also I. Bieńkowska, *Muzyka na dworze księcia Hieronima Floriana Radziwiłła*, University of Warsaw Press, Warsaw 2013, pp. 70–96; after 1745, the Radziwiłł collections absorbed the collections of J.H. Flemming; Nieśwież, Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł (1734–1790), no inventories of music items, only a surviving list of purchases from around 1778 (over 300 titles) in: PL-Wagad, AR Akta wojskowe (Military Records) (hereafter: VII), 1033, Liste der Musicalien von Ihro Hoch-Fürstlichen Durchlaucht dem Herzog von Radevill, fol. 1–3, see also I. Bieńkowska, *Nowe źródła dotyczące muzykaliów w zbiorach magnackich II połowy XVIII wieku*, “Muzyka” 2024, no. 4, pp. 105–135; 4) s.l. [Sławuta, now Slavuta, Ukraine], s.a. [second half of the eighteenth century], collections likely originating from the court of Hieronim Janusz Sanguszko (1743–1812), totaling 131 titles, in: Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie, Archiwum Sanguszków (National Archives in Kraków, Sanguszko Archive), ms. 1030, no title, fol. 161–165, see also I. Bieńkowska, *Inwentarz muzykaliów sanguszkowskich z II połowy XVIII wieku*, “Muzyka” 2017, no. 1, pp. 48–89; 5) Warsaw, Kurów, Klementowicz, Izabela (d. 1773) and Ignacy (1750–1809) Potocki, list of music purchases (over seventy titles), cf. PL-Wagad, Archiwum Gospodarcze Wilanowskie (Wilanów Economic Archive), 450, no title, fol. 4–6, also I. Bieńkowska, *Nowe źródła dotyczące muzykaliów...*, pp. 118–126; 6) Mosarz, s.a. [end of the eighteenth century], Robert Brzostowski (1748–after 1795), a total of 265 titles, cf. Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas (Lithuanian State

documentation on a few magnate estates: the Radziwiłł, Sanguszkowski, Potocki, Rzewuski, Ogiński, Brzostowski, and Lubomirski families, we can put forward the claim that the music items of noble courts were not viewed as items of exceptional value; neither were they meticulously stored. This was the case for nearly the entire eighteenth century with a slight shift of attitude in a few estates towards the turn of the century – a slight shift for the better.

What can be deduced from the extant sources about how sheet music was acquired for the court, and by whom? It was the duty of the kapellmeister of the court orchestra to provide it with a music repertoire. The violinist or harpsichordist (or organist) would usually be the one to perform that function – someone who could adapt the acquired music pieces to the size and abilities of the court orchestra. The kapellmeister would often be a composer as well (eighteenth-century court orchestras very rarely had a distinct position for the composer³), and would make his own contributions to the music repertoire, composed with the orchestra's patron in mind. Only in the biggest estates did

Historical Archives), Vilnius (hereafter: LT-Vlvia), f. 599, ap. 1, 284, Regestr papierów (Register of papers), fol. 14r–16r; see also I. Bienkowska, *Nieznany inwentarz muzykaliów końca XVIII wieku z Mosarza*, [in:] *Długi wiek XIX w muzyce*, eds. M. Sułek, E. Bogula, G. Zieziula, Instytut Sztuki PAN, Warsaw 2026 [in print]; 7) Helenów, 1801, Michał Kazimierz Ogiński (1730–1800), a total of over 920 titles (more precise estimates are impossible), cf. Biblioteka Naukowa Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie (Scientific Library of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków), 4500, Inwentarz Instrumentów y Papierów Muzycznych (Inventory of Musical Instruments and Sheet Music), fol. 36r–39r, see also A. Ciechanowiecki, *Michał Kazimierz Ogiński und sein Musenhof zu Slonim*, Böhlau Verlag, Köln–Graz, 1961; 8) Łańcut, the collection of Izabela Lubomirska (née Czartoryska, 1736–1816) and her sons-in-law from the Potocki family was subsequently expanded, but its main part was created before 1832. In total, it comprised over 2,600 titles in 1,500 volumes (dating from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century); cf. Library of the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 183173, *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque à Łańcut de Son Excellence Mons.^r le Comte Alfred Potocki*, 1832; *Supplément au Catalogue*. Muzykalija, fols. 393–413; see also K. Biegański, *Biblioteka muzyczna zamku w Łańcutu*. Katalog, Museum–Castle in Łańcut, Polish Music Publishing House, Łańcut 1968; 9) Teofilpol, 1851 (to a large extent, repertoire from the end of the eighteenth century), Teofila Strzeżysława née Sapieha Jabłonowska (1742–1816), a total of over 550 titles (more precise estimates impossible), cf. Львівська національна наукова бібліотека України імені В. Стефаника (Research Institute for Library's Art Resources in Lviv), f. 103, folder 379, Akta katalogów bibliotecznych i spisów ruchomości pałacowych z lat dawnych (1797–1853) założone w roku 1857 (Records of library catalogs and lists of palace movable property from the past years (1797–1853) established in the year 1857), fol. 116v–123r, see also A. Betlej, *Pałac w Teofilpolu w świetle inwentarzy XIX-wiecznych*, Wydawnictwo Attyka, Kraków 2016, pp. 128–140; 10) Przeworsk, s.a. [first decade of the nineteenth century], Teresa née Czartoryska Lubomirska (1785–1868), a total of 1394 titles; part of the collection transferred in the years 1802–1809 from Łańcut, which partially returned to the Łańcut collections before 1832, cf. Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich we Wrocławiu, Dział rękopisów (The National Ossolinski Institute Library, Manuscripts Division), 12352/I, *Catalogue de Musique Vocale et Instrumentale Appartante à M^{de} la P^{rin}cesse Therese Lubomirska née P^{rin}cesse Czartoryski*, fol. 1–73.

³ For example, a position for a composer was created for Giuseppe Torti in the music orchestra at the court of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł in Slutsk and Białá. However, this was done somewhat out of necessity, as the prince was primarily interested in employing Torti's wife, a talented singer (see I. Bienkowska, *Muzyka na dworze księcia...*, pp. 51–54). The same was true for the

the kapellmeister have support from an appointed court official. This held true in the estate of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł, whose *koniuszy* or equerry, Karol Wendorf, was delegated by the Prince to be in charge of artistic matters of the court (musicians, but also members of the theater troupe, painters, and decorators). It was also Wendorf who was responsible for recruiting musicians and for buying instruments for the orchestra. However, the purchase of sheet music was solely the responsibility of the kapellmeister. This mode of operation was modelled on the Dresden royal court where the position of *Ober-Musik-Director* (or, in French fashion, *Directeur des plaisirs*) existed. To the best of my knowledge, there are no other instances of employing this approach to organising artistic court affairs in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (apart from the court of Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł in Słuck (now Slutsk, Belarus) and Biała (now Biała Podlaska, Poland)).

The kapellmeister purchased sheet music per the patron's request. He would most likely buy the music from foreign booksellers as there were few such bookshops domestically. Therefore, the nobles' travels abroad (or of their court officials) proved a good opportunity to obtain items for the court – including music items. Both printed music and handwritten copies would be purchased, the latter being slightly cheaper than the former. How much, then, did one copy of sheet music cost? The prices of prints from French, German, or Italian publishing houses can be recreated on the basis of issued publishers' catalogs. The fee for a single publication⁴ depended mostly on the number of pages it had.

Let us examine the catalog of Parisian publisher Jean-Georges Sieber (1738–1822), which is found as front matter preceding the title page of the 1772 print *Recueil d'airs choisis de différens opéra et arrangés pour clavecin ou le piano forte*. This is a collection of chosen opera arias arranged for harpsichord or piano put together by popular Parisian composer Valentin Roeser (1728/1735–1780). The catalog lists prices ranging from 1 livre 4 solidi for a single operatic aria, through prints of chamber music: trios (around 7 livres) and quartets (9),

orchestra of his uncle, Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł (1734–1790), who employed the composer Jan Dawid Holland from 1783 to 1790 (also with his wife, the singer Rosa Holland).

⁴ For example, in February 1775, during his stay in Italy, Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł (1734–1790) purchased for his needs, among other items, two symphonies by the then-young Giovanni Paisiello (1740–1816) (it is unknown whether in printed or manuscript form): “6 Febr 1775. Due di Sinfonia Paisiello...9,10” for which slightly over 9 Italian livres were paid, and in April 1775, five arias were purchased for over 11 livres: “7 Aprilis [1775] for five Arias... 11,10” (“7 Aprilis [1775] za pięć Aryi...11,10”). For comparison, at the same time, a gondola ride in Venice with accompanying music also cost the prince over 9 livres (“una gondola per li musicanti per Venesia...lire 9, 12”), and he paid 22 livres “for the showing of marionettes” (“za pokazywanie marionetek”); cf. LT-Vlvia, f. 1280, ap.1, 153, Expenses during the journey of St. Radziwiłł, 1770–1775 (Wydatki podczas podróży St. Radziwiłła, 1770–1775), fol. 242r–v, 467r, 526r. Meanwhile, in the Commonwealth, in August 1770, at the request of the voivode of Mścisław, Józef Jerzy Hylzen, over 2 zloty were paid “for the Litany and the Mass sung in notes...2” (“Za Litanyę y Mszą spiewaną w notach ... 2”), LT-Vlvia, f. 1282, ap. 1, 1663, Book of expenses of the court of Józef Jerzy Hylzen in Belmont (Księga wydatków dworu Józefa Jerzego Hylzena w Belmoncie, 1770–1775), fol. 2v.

to collections of symphonies (from 6 to 12 livres), up to the most expensive, which are operatic scores (from 12 to 18 livres). Averaging the exchange rate of the livre to the złoty, a rough estimate suggests that the prices of sheet music listed in the Parisian catalog ranged from 2 złoty (for a copy of a single aria) to 270–300 złoty (for one operatic score) – about the same amount one would have to pay at that time for a medium-quality painting by a little-known artist.⁵ Purchasing several or a dozen items, depending on the repertoire, meant an expenditure averaging from several to several hundred złoty, and sometimes up to several thousand.⁶ To sum up, while it was not particularly expensive to purchase a single print (or manuscript⁷), a whole collection of sheet music gathered in a magnate's library would have held significant value.

Accordingly, the orchestra possessed not only works by foreign composers acquired by its kapellmeister, but also those composed by him (or the orchestra's composer – although this was typically the same individual, as previously noted)⁸ for the patron's use. This compositional duty could also fall to other members of the orchestra. If the contract did not explicitly specify this obligation, an artist would receive payment for each new piece, and the sheet music of that composition would then enrich the orchestra's collection. It occasionally happened that, after leaving the court, a former court composer or kapellmeister would continue to receive commissions for operas and works in

⁵ For example, in the years 1741–1742, Stanisław Poniatowski purchased 11 paintings in various formats in Paris, with an average price of 128 livres per individual work (which is slightly over 200 złoty, including the cost of the frame); cf. K. Niemira, *Honor bez egzageracji. Magnackie zakupy i świat rzeczy paryskich w XVIII wieku*, Neriton, Warsaw 2022, p. 305. By the end of the eighteenth century, paintings at Tepper's office in Warsaw were sold for prices ranging from 4 ducats (72 złoty) to 100 ducats (1,800 złoty); cf. K. Niemira, *Rynek sztuki w Warszawie czasów Stanisława Augusta*, "Almanach Warszawy" 2018, no. 12, p. 18.

⁶ These are approximate figures. No attempt was made to account for the slightly changing monetary realities in eighteenth-century Poland and France. It is assumed that one French livre was worth between approximately 1.20 PLN (according to E.T. Massalski, *Tablice porównawcze wszystkich wiadomych monet, wag i miar*, printed by Karol Kray, St. Petersburg 1834; see also Valentin Roeser, *I^{er} Recueil de duo tirés des opéras comiques avec accompagnement de clavecin ou forte piano*, 1774 (<http://gallica.bnf.fr>, access: 30.03.2026)) and 1.70 PLN (according to K. Niemira, *Honor bez egzageracji...*, p. 290).

⁷ One of the few preserved records of purchased manuscripts indicating their prices is a list compiled by P. Persichini between 1781 and 1783 for the needs of the court of Ignacy and Elżbieta Potocki, cf. I. Bieńkowska, *Nowe źródła dotyczące muzykaliów ...*, pp. 118–126.

⁸ For example, Beniamin Piszpek [Biszpek / Bišpek], a composer and kapellmeister at the court of Mateusz Ogiński in Lubawicze (Smolensk Oblast, Russia) and Mikulino (Orsha District, Mogilev Oblast, Belarus), was employed in the ensemble under a one-year contract in November 1781. His contract stipulated, among other things, that he should compose "according to the promise and agreement dances, trios, quartry (sic!), sonatas, concertos, etc., and that the composed works should be submitted to the treasury" ("wedle przyrzeczenia y umowy tańce, tria, kwadry (sic!), sonaty, koncerta ett", a skomponowane dzieła "do skarbu [...] oddawać iest powinny") See LT-VIvia, f. 1177, ap. 1, 5336, Kopia kontraktu z Piszpekem z 1781 (Copy of the contract with Piszpek from 1781), fol. 95r; f. 1177, ap.1, 5427, Kontrakty z muzykami Mateusza Ogińskiego we wsi Lubawicze (obwód smoleński) i Mikulino (powiat orszański) (Contracts with musicians of Mateusz Ogiński in the village of Lubawicze (now Lyubavichi, Smolensk Oblast, Russia) and Mikulino (Orsha District, Mogilev Oblast, Belarus)), fol. 1–23.

other genres, tailored to the patron's well-known preferences and would subsequently send the completed compositions by post. This was the case, for example, with Giovanni Antonio Ricieri, who, having left the court of Stanisław Mateusz Rzewuski at the beginning of 1727, was asked, for another year and a half until Rzewuski's death, to send various types of works (both religious and theatrical) for the needs of the court, and so he did.⁹

Two types of music materials should be distinguished among the sheet music used by the court musical group: alongside the music belonging to the orchestra (the property of the court), some belonged to individual musicians. Only a portion of the artists – the better-off ones – could afford to have their own sheet music: these were the kapellmeisters, virtuosos, and singers, particularly castrati and primadonnas. In most cases, private sheet music would only be used by the orchestra temporarily, and the musicians would take it with them after their contracts ended. As a side note, some artists “accidentally” took not only their own collections but also those belonging to the orchestra, thus stealing from the collections of the nobility. Cases of this sort are often documented in the extant sources.¹⁰

If a musician died during the term of their contract (which, unfortunately, happened quite often), their family – the widow or children – often chose to sell the deceased artist's sheet music to the orchestra, which was also commonly the case for the musician's instruments. However, if the artist was single and childless, their music items would automatically become part of the orchestra's collection.¹¹ There were also instances when collections previously owned by an artist who had completed their contract were transferred to the orchestra, most likely through a process of repurchase.¹²

⁹ In February 1727, the hetman commissioned two small stage compositions for the court, in the style of *azione teatrale*. In December 1727, the hetman ordered an opera from Ricieri, who in September 1728 provided the hetman with arrangements of *Confitebor* and a *Litany*. See I. Bienkowska, *Listy muzyków Stanisława Mateusza Rzewuskiego (1662–1728) do Giovanniego Antonia Ricieriego*, “Polski Rocznik Muzykologiczny” 2017, vol. XV, pp. 148–168, and Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Wien, VII 971, VII/97–1, letter from G.A. Ricieri to Stefan Jaroszewicz, from Bologna to Lviv, 20.IX.1728, fol. 1–2; Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica in Bologna, H. 66, diary of G.A. Ricieri, contract of G.A. Ricieri with St. M. Rzewuski, fol. 253r–283; Lo 7504, G. A. Ricieri, *L'Armadoro. Drama per musica del Ricieri, fatta per il divertimento di Sua Ecc.^{za} il Sig.^r Gran Generale della Corona di Pollonia*, libretto.

¹⁰ For example, on the occasion of Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł (1702–1762) arriving in Slutsk, the performance of Mayer's *Second Opera* (*Druga opera*) was planned for the beginning of August 1756. However, this proved impossible, as the composer took the score of the composition with him when he left his position. Based on: PL-Wagad, AR V Listy różnych osób do Radziwiłłów (Letters from Various People to the Radziwiłłs), 17123/V, 24.VI.1756 i 30. VI.1756, Slutsk, Belarus, 2 letters from K. Wendorf to H. Fl. Radziwiłł, fol. 111r–112r, 118r–119r, see I. Bienkowska, *Muzyka na dworze księcia...*, p. 437.

¹¹ For example, after the death of Michael Götz, a virtuoso harpist from Vienna employed at the court of H.Fl. Radziwiłł in Slutsk and Biała, a substantial collection of sheet music and musical instruments passed into the ownership of the ensemble. See I. Bienkowska, *Muzyka na dworze księcia...*, pp. 135, 186.

¹² The musicians employed at the court of Stanisław Mateusz Rzewuski in Podhorce: kapellmeister Giovanni Antonio Ricieri (1679–1746) and the castrato treble Stefan Jaroszewicz (active

Sheet music would also frequently be borrowed from other centers – especially expensive works such as extensive opera scores and symphonies – to create handwritten copies on site. Such exchanges occurred between neighboring noble courts. For example, Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł (1734–1790) lent Haydn's symphonies from his court in Nieśwież (now Nyasvizh, Belarus) to Antoni Tyzenhauz in Grodno (now Hrodna, Belarus), while Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł borrowed works from Fryderyk Michał Czartoryski of Wołczyn (now Vowchyn, Belarus). Music was also obtained from city councillors; for instance, Tobias Hartwig of Radziwiłł's ensemble acquired opera scores from Toruń. Additionally, sheet music was sourced from Warsaw's Public Theater; Antoni Tyzenhauz borrowed scores from its director, Franciszek Ryx (1732–1799).

In eighteenth-century source materials I have encountered to date, I have not found any records that would testify to members of noble families gifting each other music items, despite there being documented examples of presents in the form of musical instruments – keyboard instruments (such as harpsichords or spinets¹³) or transverse flutes,¹⁴ etc. It seems very likely that this discrepancy is due to the scarcity of preserved sources, and that particularly in the last decades of the 1700s, such gifts may have been exchanged. A glimmer of hope in this regard is provided by the libretto of *Opera Telemaka*, gifted in 1794 by Michał Kazimierz Ogiński to Dawid Pilchowski (1735–1803), a Jesuit and professor at the Vilnius Academy, and suffragan of the Vilnius diocese.¹⁵ The opera, with music and libretto authored by Hetman Ogiński, was performed in Słonim in 1780.

The method of registering the music items in the possession of the court was not uniform – at least five ways of creating inventories of musical collections can be identified. The first, and unfortunately the most commonly encoun-

after 1727; died 1757) likely sold off their music items, as documented by the preserved record in PL-Wagad, Czołowski Collection, no. 429, Regestr Papierow muzykalnych spisany die 20 Augusti 1769 Anno w Podhorcach (now Pidhirtsi, Ukraine) (Register of musical papers written on 20 August 1769 in Podhorce), fol. 169: "Arias from His Excellency Stefan Jaroszewicz and 98 motets, for which there is a Register of Motets, Masses, and Litanies by Ricieri, of which there are twenty-four pieces, for which there is a Register" ("Aryi od Im Pana Stefana Jaroszewicza y mottetow 98. przy których iest Regestr Motteti, msze, Litanie Ryciera których jest sztuk Dwadzieścia Cztery, przy których iest Regestr"), fol. 169–170.

¹³ Hieronim Florian Radziwiłł received a spinet as a gift in 1747 from his sister-in-law, Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłł, from Nieśwież (now Nyasvizh, Belarus): "on this occasion, I must express my gratitude for the spinet" ("przy której to okazji należy mi za szpinet winne złożyć dzięki"), cf. PL-Wagad, AR IV, Listy książąt Radziwiłłów (Letters of the Radziwiłł Princes), Ks. 20, 18.I.1747, Jeremicze, letter from H.Fl. Radziwiłł to Fr.U. Radziwiłł, fol. 249r; see also I. Bieńkowska, *Muzyka na dworze księcia...*, p. 129.

¹⁴ For example, PL-Wagad, Czołowski Collection, No. 429, Regestr Papierow muzykalnych spisany die 20 Augusti 1769 Anno w Podhorcach (now Pidhirtsi, Ukraine) (Register of musical papers written on 20 August 1769 in Podhorce), "Transverse flute from Ivory in a Saxon case which was to be gifted to His Highness Radziwiłł" ("Flotrowers z kości Słoniowej w Futerału saskiej Oprawy ktorem miał być darowany Xięciu Imci Radziwiłłowi"), fol. 171.

¹⁵ Vilniaus universiteto biblioteka (Vilnius University Library), old prints BAV 38.3.2.

tered, only very generally documents the presence of music items at the court, with such entries as: “Two small tomes, One in the Saxon binding and the other unbound, wherein are inscribed various pieces for the German Flute”¹⁶ or “Register of Musical Books in the yellow Chamber. Volumes three bound in crimson leather with Clasps silver for Fastening”.¹⁷ Such records hardly provide any information for musicologists regarding the repertoire, except perhaps a confirmation that works written for the transverse flute would be performed. We also have records that are somewhat more detailed and include the musical genre, for example, “Four Violin Concertos” or “Opera in one act, Italian”.¹⁸ There are also relatively precise entries like “Concerto a 4 Vivaldi”. Entries of this kind enable the identification of the composer and genre, but they do not provide a clear idea of which specific work is being referred to, given that Antonio Vivaldi has many concertos for four performers in his oeuvre. Comprehensive records that contain complete information about a work are very rare.¹⁹ There are, however, a few preserved inventories that include the music incipits of works.²⁰ This is the most valuable method of cataloging musi-

¹⁶ PL-Wagad, Czołowski Collection, No. 429, Register of Musical Papers..., “Xiązeczek dwie małych Iedna w Saskiey oprawie a druga nieoprawna w których są rozne sztuki na Flotrawers Pisane”, fol. 170.

¹⁷ PL-Wagad, Czołowski Collection, No. 429, Register of Musical Papers..., “Regestr Xiązek Muzykalnych w zułtym Pokoiu. Xiązek trzy we czerwona skurkę oprawnych z Klamerkami srebrnymi do Zamykania”, fol. 170; See also, for example, “Musical Papers according to Concerts, Symphonies, Sonatas, Dances, etc., and an incomplete chest” (“Papierow muzykalnych wg koncertow symfonii sonat Tancow ett ett skrzynia niepełna”) in: LT-Vlvia, f. 1177, ap. 1, 4794, Specyfikacya wszelkich sprzętów garderobianych SP JOX Mateusza Ogińskiego Starosty Mereckiego w r 1786 in Julio weryfikowana i przepisana (Specification of all wardrobe items of SP JOX Mateusz Ogiński Starost of Merecz (now Merkinė, Lithuania) in the year 1786 verified and transcribed in July), fol. 12.

¹⁸ Biblioteka Naukowa Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie (Scientific Library of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków), 4500, Inwentarz Instrumentow y Papierow Muzycznych (Inventory of Musical Instruments and Sheet Music), Helenów 1801, No. 69, fol. 36r–39r.

¹⁹ For example, the entries from the inventory of the musical collections of Teofila Strzeżysława née Sapięha Jabłonowska in Teofilpol, compiled in the first half of the nineteenth century, are exceptionally precise (for the vast majority of the inventory), such as *Six Quatuors ratuors concertants à deux violons, alto et viole e basse par Haensel* – 4. See A. Betlej, *Pałac w Teofilpolu* ..., pp. 128–140, based on Львівська національна наукова бібліотека України імені В. Стефаника (Research Institute for Library's Art Resources in Lviv), f. 103, folder 379, Akta katalogow bibliotecznych i spisow ruchomości pałacowych z lat dawnych (1797–1853) założone w roku 1857 (Records of library catalogs and lists of palace movable property from the past years (1797–1853) established in the year 1857), fol. 116v–123r.

²⁰ See the collections of the Sanguszko family, most likely those of Hieronim Janusz Sanguszko, which have survived in the form of musical incipits in: Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie, Archiwum Sanguszków (National Archives in Kraków, Sanguszko Archive), ms. 1030, fol. 161–165; the inventory of the musical collections of Robert Brzostowski in Mosarz (now Mosar, Vitebsk Oblast, Belarus), cf. LT-Vlvia, f. 599, ap. 1, 284, fol. 13v–16v: this is an exceptional situation – the list of sheet music kept at the court was recorded in two ways: through written descriptions (the repertoire is noted rather generally, but the number of volumes of dances, symphonies, etc. is recorded in detail) and in the form of musical incipits.

cal collections, as even if there is an error or incompleteness in the description of the item, the music incipit allows for the reconstruction (to a significant extent) of the full details of the composition, with the help of existing catalogs and online databases.

The entries in most purchase records or library catalogs are vague for two main reasons. First, they were not compiled by musicians but rather by court officials or librarians. Officials rarely underwent musical education, which is why they might have had difficulty describing music collections. However, they were literate and could therefore transcribe the recorded items' title pages with precision. This proves highly useful, since title pages usually carried enough information to help identify musical works, although some sheet music may not have had title pages. It is hard to say why this was so, but the perception of music as an ephemeral and insignificant art form – a common view in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – is likely to blame. This leads us to the second reason for this phenomenon. The fact that most records are obscure reflects how music items were treated at noble courts, especially since valuable items would be meticulously recorded in household inventories.

An interesting and symptomatic example of this situation is the case of the music items purchased for the court of Ignacy and Izabela Potocki in the early 1780s. The composer and harpsichord teacher employed by the countess, Pietro Persichini (Rome, 1755 – Rome, 1837), who went on to become the royal kapellmeister, compiled a record of the sheet music acquired in the years 1781–1783, including the prices of select items. This list comprises over eighty works written on three manuscript leaves and now makes possible the complete reconstruction of some of these records.²¹

Muta di ballo. La caccia Perigo quarto	4	
Muta di ballo. Armida. intutto	5	
Opera demo fonte	3	X
Burletta. Isocrate con tutti		
strumenti cavati e partizione	10	
Burletta di Don Giovanni	2	
Sonate di arpa	2	
finto pazzo per amore	5	
La passione di Samella	6	
La 5 ^a opera del Coralli	2	15
Sonate per Cembalo	2	
diversi balli	2	
in dramma in stampa	2	
Opera di Ricci in stampa	2	20
Eco narciso di Cluck	3	
concerti di Bach co tutti strumenti	2	
dei trij con tutti strumenti	3	
Indici Libbi di Sonate per cembalo		
lo e accompagnamenti	8	
in Libro con finale		X 10

Fig. 1. The list of purchased sheet music for the court of Ignacy and Elżbieta Potocki, 1781–1783, Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Wilanów Economic Archive, 450, fol. 4–6.

²¹ I. Bieńkowska, *Nowe źródła dotyczące muzykaliów...*, p. 121.

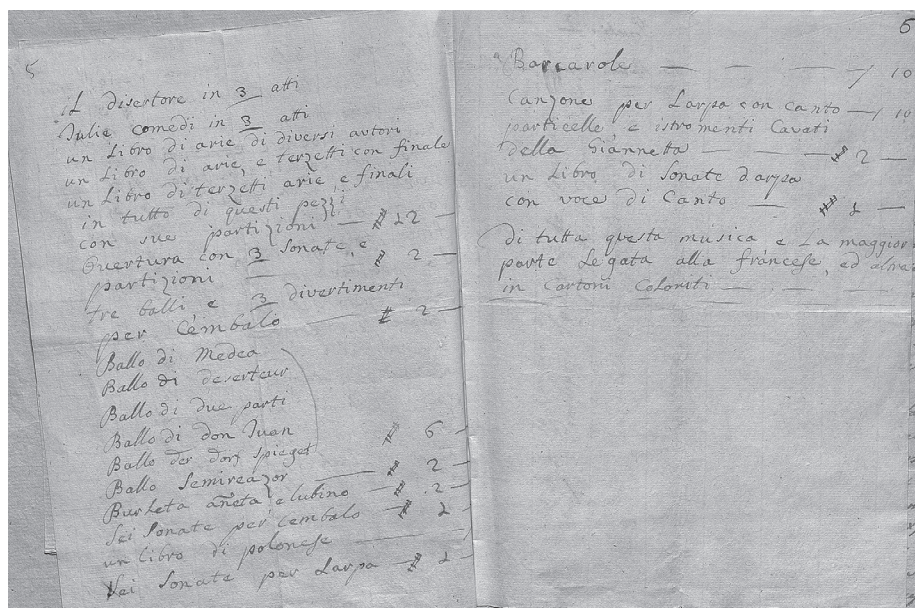


Fig. 2. The list of purchased sheet music for the court of Ignacy and Elżbieta Potocki, 1781–1783, Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Wilanów Economic Archive, 450, fol. 4–6.

Yet in 1784 an inventory of Ignacy Potocki's library collection was created, which is still preserved in the Wilanów Library, and in it the records from a few years prior were reduced to a single sentence: "Tragedies, comedies, operas Italian and French by various Authors in 4to et in 8vo,"²² providing only the number of volumes – thirty-four.

For the sake of clarity, it must be noted that sheet music was rarely stored within the library but rather, on the basis of extant estate inventories, was kept together with musical instruments and other items necessary for the orchestra musicians, such as music stands, strings, reeds, or rosin – usually locked in trunks or boxes. Moreover, such rooms also held theatrical items – trunks with stage costumes. Overall, few music items entered the library collections. Those that did were mostly books concerning music,²³ such as guides on composition, singing, and playing instruments, as well as musical

²² Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie (National Library of Poland in Warsaw), Rps akc. 2189, vol. 15, fol. 54r.

²³ For example, in the quite extensive library of the Voivode of Troki (now Trakai, Lithuania), Andrzej Ogiński (1740–1787), which contained over 1,700 volumes in 1786, the following were noted: Jacques Bonnet, *Histoire générale de la danse sacrée et profane; ses progrès et ses révolutions, depuis son origine jusqu'à présent*; and the four-volume, first history of music in French by Pierre Bonnet-Bourdelot, Jacques Bonnet, *Histoire de la Musique*, cf. LT-VIvia, f. 1177, ap. 1, 86, Catalogue des Livres à Son Excellence Monseigneur le Comte André Ogiński Castellan de Trocki, fol. 2. Additionally, the collection included: *Histoire de l'opéra Comique* and a nine-volume selection of operas and ballets: *Recueil de Opéra tragiques et de grands Ballets des Meilleurs*

treatises, collections containing dance arrangements along with monophonic musical notation, and numerous librettos of operatic works, etc. Music books would mainly enter the Polish-Lithuanian nobles' library shelves if they were beautifully published opera scores, or anthologies of popular arias and songs, usually quite substantial in size, and hardbound – in other words, beautiful and expensive items.

Data on the number of noble court orchestras functioning in the Commonwealth, as well as information about formerly held music collections, is highly inconsistent. Compared to the wealth of Polish-Lithuanian nobles and analogous circumstances in Western Europe, the uncovered collections of sheet music are very rare and few, although, as previously mentioned, we can only make assumptions based on the incomplete amount of sources that have survived to this day. This large discrepancy is also evident when we juxtapose the collections from noble courts with the music collections of ecclesiastical institutions. It is my belief that the number and abundance of music collections at the magnate courts in the eighteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were at least comparable to those of ecclesiastical centers – especially given that the residences of nobles were far more vulnerable to the destructive forces of war and other military operations than churches and monasteries. Another factor is the attitude towards sheet music, as court officials tasked with saving their master's property would consider music items as insignificant and of low value, at least compared to the more expensive elements of the household.

The dominant cultural code of the eighteenth century began to shift slowly in its final decades. Music-making became a desirable activity among the upper class, particularly for ladies of the house and their daughters. Sheet music was no longer viewed solely as something for musicians, who were often regarded at many courts as common servants. As the century progressed and music began to be used by noblemen and noblewomen – regardless of whether the scores were beautifully adorned books – the attitude towards sheet music changed. It was increasingly purchased for the personal needs of estate owners and became a valued gift, sometimes hand-made, within noble circles in the first half of the nineteenth century. Thus, while the market value of sheet music as objects did not significantly change, the perception of it at the noble courts of the Commonwealth evolved – an illuminating example is that care was taken to bind multipage musical prints (for example, in the collection of the Sanguszko family from Gumniska²⁴), allowing priceless nineteenth-century printed music to survive to this day.

Translated by Urszula Świątek

Auteurs avec fig., LT-Vlvia, f. 1177, ap. 1, 86, Catalogue des Livres à Son Excellence Monseigneur le Comte André Ogiński Castellan de Trocki, fol. 4.

²⁴ Regarding the collections of Izabela and Władysław Sanguszko, see I. Bieńkowska, "Talenta przyjemne" Izabeli Marii z Lubomirskich Sanguszkowej (1808–1890), "Muzyka" 2022, no. 1, pp. 3–20.

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