

Musical METAMORPHOSES – home mini concerts with a pinch of history – episode 4.

Welcome to the fourth episode of the podcast "Musical Metamorphoses – Mini Home Concerts with a Pinch of History." My name is Aleksandra Bobrowska, I'm a pianist, and today I'm inviting you once again to my virtual music salon, where we'll embark on another musical journey, this time a bit further afield – so let's get started without hesitation and hit the road as soon as possible! :)

Our meetings focus on various topics – the first was a kind of preview and a short sample of musical curiosities waiting for us in the next episodes, the second was a juxtaposition of two pieces with completely different aesthetics, yet connected by the common denominator of dedication to a woman; the third episode presented the story of Zygmunt Szatkowski, a musician whose tragic fate did not allow him to spread his wings as much as his talent could have allowed him to, and today – I would simply like to take you on a short musical journey, following the trail of a child's imagination and film music.

We'll begin today in Turkey. I'd like to present a short piece titled "Inci," from the collection of seven charming, short piano pieces for children from Op. 10, "The Book of Inci," composed around 1934 by Ahmed Adnan Saygun. "Inci" is the name of the main character in the cycle, a little girl whose imaginative world is depicted in subsequent installments of the cycle, titled "The Playful Kitten," "The Story," "The Great Puppet," "The Joke," "The Lullaby," and "The Dream." Inci's name literally translates to "Pearl." These pieces are a wonderful blend of influences from traditional Turkish music and Western impressionism. Saygun dedicated them to his teacher, Madame Borrel.

A moment later, after a magical visit to Turkey and the world of childhood imagination, we will briefly cross the Black Sea to Ukraine, where we will hear a fragment of Myroslav Skoryk's famous "Melody" (Melody). This moving, lyrical piece, composed for the 1982 Ukrainian film "High Pass," became its hallmark and a symbol of Ukrainian cultural identity; it is now performed worldwide as well as a symbol of Ukrainian resistance to the current Russian military aggression. Skoryk was one of the leading composers of contemporary Ukraine, also a musicologist and conductor; his style was often characterized by combining folk motifs, particularly from the Carpathians, with modern compositional techniques; he was the creator of symphonic and film music.

The melody will take us to neighboring Moldova, where Julius Isserlis, an outstanding pianist and composer, was born in 1888. His life story, in a way, reflected the turmoil of the era in which he lived. Do you happen to know the distinguished British cellist Steven Isserlis? Julius was his grandfather. But how did it come about that his grandfather was born in what is now Moldova, and his grandson is British? Let's start from the beginning – Julius reportedly displayed exceptional musical talent from an early age. Coming from a Jewish family with

strong ties to the cultural life of the region, he was immersed in music and art from the very beginning. From a young age, his family recognized and supported his talent, providing him with the best education possible. As a young man, he married Rita Rauchwerger, a pianist from a wealthy family in Odessa. Julius and Rita's son, George, was born in 1917, during the turbulent period of the Russian Revolution. The family attempted to escape the country on a British ship, but did not manage to succeed. Despite difficult times and a long period of closed borders, Isserlis was chosen by Lenin as one of twelve musicians to promote the newly formed Soviet Union abroad. In 1922, he left USSR to give a concert in Vienna, accompanied by his family. Seizing the opportunity to travel, he decided never to return to his homeland (incidentally, the other eleven musicians chosen by Lenin did the same – none of them returned to the Soviet Union after their first concert abroad). In Vienna, a dynamic cultural center, Isserlis continued his career as a pianist, composer, and teacher. In 1938, the Anschluss came, fortunately while Isserlis was in Great Britain on tour, where he managed to obtain permanent residency. His wife and son joined him – the family decided to stay in the British Isles permanently. Today, you will hear two works from his cycle "Memories of Childhood," which Julius Isserlis dedicated to his mother.

I invite you to listen to the songs - let me just remind you that the current series of episodes of Musical Metamorphoses is possible thanks to the support of the National Recovery Plan for Culture scholarship, which was financed by the European Union.