

Female Composers – a music podcast with a pinch of history: Poldowski (episode 3)

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Ministerstwo Kultury
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MUSIC: *Poldowski - Cythère (transcription: A. Bobrowska) – excerpt*

A very warm welcome to you all, this is the third episode of the series "Female Composers: A Music Podcast with a pinch of History." As always, it's Aleksandra Bobrowska speaking, sitting so far by the microphone, but I'll eventually move over to my home piano. However, before that happens, let me introduce today's episode - I can hardly wait for all the musical wonders awaiting us in a minute! 😊 The subject of today's episode is the perfect example of how useless it can be to try to categorise people based on their origins or nationality, as the story of today's composer unites together significant Polish, British, Belgian, and French elements. It is also difficult to definitively characterize her diverse body of work - a large portion of which has, unfortunately, been lost. To top it all off, she used several different surnames to sign her compositions throughout her life, making her a true enigma worthy of a seasoned detective. Before we dive into the story of Poldowski - or Irena Wieniawska, as she was actually known - I should mention that this series is made possible thanks to a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland. Let's begin today's journey!

MUSIC: *Poldowski - A Poor Young Shepherd (transcription: A. Bobrowska) – excerpt*

Poldowski - or, more accurately, Irène Régine Jessy Maria Wieniawska - was born in Ixelles, near Brussels, on May 16, 1879. Her mother was the English aristocrat Isabella Bessie Hampton-Wieniawski (a niece of the Irish pianist and composer George Alexander Osborne), while her father was the Polish violinist and composer Henryk Wieniawski. Although, I have just given our composer's official date of birth, there is some uncertainty surrounding it; in a later application for British citizenship for her daughter, Irène's mother listed the birth year as 1880 rather than the officially accepted 1879. She may have simply made a mistake, or - for reasons known only to herself - wished to formally make her child appear a year younger. We will likely never solve this mystery, but taking that opportunity I would like to tell you a short story about Irène's parents. Some of you may be familiar with the famous anecdote concerning a piece for violin and piano by our composer's father, Henryk Wieniawski, titled "Legenda", Op. 17, which he dedicated to his wife - though, to be more specific, she was still his fiancée at the time of its composition. Henryk reportedly used this piece to soften the heart of his future father-in-law, who had initially opposed his daughter's marriage to a musician; **upon** hearing the beautiful, melancholic melody, the father supposedly changed his mind and agreed on the wedding. Unfortunately, the story surrounding "Legend" Op. 17, is most likely -

fittingly enough - nothing more than only a beautiful legend; in reality, the future father-in-law's heart was won over by the news that Henryk had secured a steady job and taken out a substantial insurance policy for Isabella in the event of his sudden death. These were two conditions firmly laid down by the future father-in-law, who viewed the world of musicians and artists with considerable skepticism. As it later turned out, these demands were not unfounded. Poldowski's parents were married on August 8, 1860 in Paris. The bride was escorted down the aisle by the renowned pianist and composer Anton Rubinstein - who had introduced the couple in the first place - while the composer Gioacchino Rossini served as one of the witnesses. Isabella and Henryk had eight children, five of whom survived to adulthood; the youngest of them was Irenka, the composer who is the subject of our story today. Sadly, she had no memory of her father, who died suddenly on March 31, 1880, while performing in Moscow. Irenka was just over ten months old at the time. Yet, she was the only one of Wieniawski's children to pursue a career in music and become a composer.

MUSIC: *Poldowski - Dans une Musette (transcription: A. Bobrowska) – excerpt*

Irena Wieniawska was interested in music from an early age and made her first attempts at composition while still a young girl. Her first work, "Oriental Suite" - written when she was nine - is considered lost. She grew up in Brussels, where the Wieniawski family had moved in 1874 after her father, Henryk Wieniawski, accepted a position of a violin professor at the local conservatory. As a child, she also visited London, where her maternal grandparents lived. Biographers are not entirely certain how long Irena studied at the Brussels Conservatory; she was likely admitted at the age of twelve, though her education was largely based on private lessons. She played the piano and studied both violin as well as composition; it is highly probable that one of her teachers was her uncle, Józef Wieniawski - a pianist and composer who had been a professor at the Brussels Conservatory since 1878. Wieniawska was a talented student; as a teenager, she was already performing her own compositions in public - a fact noted by the English tenor Gervase Elwes. In a letter to his wife following one of her concerts, he wrote (I quote here an excerpt from a fascinating article about Poldowski by Maryna Terlecka):

"[...] Wieniawska, the daughter of the renowned Polish composer, was asked to perform two or three of her own compositions. Outstanding, original works... a very beautiful song, a romance too, and the "Danse Indienne", though less magnificent [...]. It was truly extraordinary to see and hear her—she is a born actress, with a touch of genius that has left its mark on her compositions."

When Irena, the youngest member of the family, was 17 - by then a well-educated young teenager - the family moved to London. There, she continued her musical studies in piano and composition while also publishing her works with the Chappel publishing house. The first release, appearing in 1900, was a collection bearing the simple, descriptive title "Two Songs". It contained two songs set to English lyrics: "O! Let the Solid Ground," based on a poem from Alfred Tennyson's "Maud", and "Down by the Salley Gardens," with lyrics by William Butler Yeats. Let us now listen to that second song, performed by the British-Greek soprano Danae Eleni. 😊 The recording dates from 2022 and was made at the Fryderyk Chopin Birthday Festival in Warsaw.

MUSIC: *Poldowski - Two Songs: Down by the Salley Gardens (Danae Eleni - voice, Aleksandra Bobrowska - piano; Warsaw, 2022)*

The lyrics to "Down by the Salley Gardens" were a popular choice for song settings; composers such as Herbert Hughes, Rebecca Clarke, John Ireland, and even Benjamin Britten incorporated them into their works.

Shortly after the beforementioned songs were published, Irena married Sir Aubrey Edward Henry Dean Paul, a British aristocrat, soldier, and amateur singer. She met him through a mutual acquaintance, the singer Nellie Melba, whom she had known since her time in Brussels. The couple had their wedding on October 16, 1901, at St Mary Abbots Church in Kensington; subsequently, the composer adopted British citizenship and the title Lady Dean Paul. Their marriage was deeply intertwined with the arts - her husband occasionally performed as a baritone at his wife's concerts under the pseudonym Edward Ramsay. They had three children, though their lives proved to be exceptionally turbulent and tragic. Their firstborn son, Aubrey Donald, died at just two years of age - a loss that devastated Irena. Their second son, Sir Brian Dean Paul, became an eccentric member of the "Bright Young Things" - a group of aristocrats and young socialites who dominated the British tabloids in 1920s and 1930s London with their extravagant antics; Brian suffered from a severe opium addiction and alcohol abuse, often falling asleep in random places, which earned him the nickname "Napper." Meanwhile, their youngest child, Brenda Dean Paul, gained fame as a silent film actress and an icon of the London bohemian scene in the 1920s (she, too, was - like her brother - part of the "Bright Young Things"); her life was ultimately ruined by high-profile scandals and a profound drug addiction. In 1935, she published a book titled "My First Life: A Biography", in which she describes not only her struggles with various addictions and her life story but also speaks of her mother, Irena. Irena Wieniawska herself - who would soon face a divorce - was also destined to change the course of her life; yet before all that happens, let us stay with her a moment longer in the days of her early youth, the beginning of her marriage, and the period of her further studies in Paris - a subject we shall talk about shortly.

MUSIC: *Poldowski - Berceuse d'Armorique (transcription: A. Bobrowska) – excerpt*

Irena Wieniawska's studies in Paris - undertaken twice over the course of several years at the beginning of the century (with an interruption caused by, among other things, the death of her first child and the births of subsequent children) - marked a pivotal stage in the development of her unique musical language. She honed her craft there under the guidance of distinguished teachers: first mastering the counterpoint and composition with André Gédalge, and later continuing her education at the prestigious Schola Cantorum de Paris under Vincent d'Indy. Her time in the French capital coincided with the flourishing of musical Impressionism, and Wieniawska drew deep inspiration from the works of Claude Debussy, Gabriel Fauré, Maurice Ravel, and the French Symbolist poets. Above all, this Parisian period helped the artist gain a refined sense of tone color and a technical freedom that enabled her to break away from traditional academic constraints. It was there, too, that her fascination with the poetry of Paul Verlaine took root; her masterful musical settings of these verses - comprising dozens of songs - earned her international acclaim and established her as one of the most compelling composers of her era.

Over time, her career and concert schedule gained significant momentum, entering a phase of mature success and cementing her position as one of the most original figures on the European music scene. Between 1911 and 1914, she returned to Brussels for a series of acclaimed concerts organized by the prestigious avant-garde association "La Libre Esthétique". This unique milieu, led by

the critic Octave Maus, shaped a style of Symbolism and Impressionism; this influence bore fruit in outstanding vocal works dedicated to Maus and his wife Madeleine - her neighbors and devoted friends in Brussels. However, a true breakthrough on British soil came with her monographic recital at London's Aeolian Hall in 1912, where distinguished singers such as Maggie Teyte and Gervase Elwes performed her songs set to the poetry of Paul Verlaine. From that time on, her output - regularly published by the renowned J.W. Chester publishing house - included such exquisite miniatures as *L'heure exquise*, *Dansons la gigue!*, *Mandoline*, *Spleen*, *Colombine*, and *Effet de neige*, as well as the piano collection *Caledonian Market*. She also gained a powerful ally in Sir Henry Wood; the famous conductor included her orchestral works in the programs of the celebrated Proms concerts at Queen's Hall. These successes were further solidified by the staging of her symphonic opera *Silence* at the Duke of York's Theatre in 1920.

MUSIC: *Poldowski - Impression Fausse (transcription: A. Bobrowska) – excerpt*

At the turn of 1921 and 1922, the artist decided to perform in the United States. This trip was driven by a desire to conquer a new market and an urgent need for complete financial independence, as her marriage was in pieces and maintaining the extravagant lifestyles of her two adolescent children in London required vast sums of money. Although a joint tour with Gervase Elwes - originally scheduled for 1921 - was tragically cut short by his horrible railway accident in Boston, Poldowski pressed ahead with her artistic plans. While a more extensive tour had initially been planned, her concert activities ultimately centered on New York, where her compositions attracted significant critical interest. On April 22, 1921, she gave a recital at The Town Hall - one of the highlights of her visit. The concert took the unique form of a literary-musical performance dedicated to the French poet Paul Verlaine. The event was organized in collaboration with Cecile Sartoris. The program was divided into three parts illustrating the stages of the poet's life and his spiritual evolution; Sartoris read biographical excerpts and poems, while Poldowski accompanied the readings by performing her own songs set to Verlaine's texts at the piano. The repertoire included, among other works, her famous "Trois mélodies sur des poésies de Paul Verlaine". On January 7, 1922, she performed at The Princess Theatre, where she presented a cross-section of her piano and vocal works to the New York audience.

After an eventful period in the United States, she returned to London in 1922 and ultimately separated from her husband. To meet the financial demands of living independently, Poldowski took a bold step entirely outside the frames of music industry by opening her own luxury fashion boutique in London. There, she created original haute couture collections, dressing members of the British aristocracy and stars of the theater world. Running this prestigious fashion business allowed her to maintain her high social status and cover the costs of life in London without abandoning her art. During this mature phase of her life, her new home became one of the capital's premier artistic salons, regularly hosting figures such as George Gershwin - during his travels to Europe - and Arthur Rubinstein. The composer also launched an influential series of afternoon chamber music concerts at the Hyde Park Hotel, titled "The International Concerts of La Libre Esthétique" in direct homage to her experiences in Belgium.

As noted on the website of the Henryk Wieniawski Music Society: Irena Wieniawska also wrote short stories, which she sold to earn extra income. After 1921, five essays on musical topics were published. The journal "Music and Letters" published two pieces signed by Irène Dean Paul. The first, titled "Musings," discusses the roles of rationalism and idealism in composition, while the second, "Verlaine," deals with Wieniawska's fascination with the poet's work. The periodical "The Chesterian"

published three further essays under the pseudonym Poldowski: "Man and Modernism" - addressing modernist trends in composition through the example of an allegorical story about Adam and Eve; "Poèmes Aristophanèssques" - concerning the poet-composer relationship; and "The Influence of Jazz," in which the author attacks the then-popular trend of incorporating jazz techniques into classical works. According to David Mooney, who is an international authority on the life and works of Poldowski, these essays "are - despite their brevity - remarkably intelligent and thought-provoking; in the absence of Wieniawska's diaries and letters, they provide key source material offering insight into the mind of this enigmatic woman."

MUSIC: *Poldowski - l'Heure exquise (transcription: A. Bobrowska) – excerpt*

I would like to pause here for a moment and share two quotes from the previously mentioned biography of Poldowski's daughter, Brenda Dean Paul - titled "My First Life" - which is unfortunately not available for general access or purchase; only a few copies can be found in selected library reading rooms across the UK. However, the Henryk Wieniawski Music Society has published two beautiful excerpts on its website - please listen to how Brenda perceived her mother and how she described her to us:

"Delicate, slender, and exotically beautiful, my mother grew into a promising professional pianist of great brilliance. With skin as white as a magnolia, with almond-shaped eyes, and dark, straight hair like a Japanese woman's, she was admired by many for her extraordinary - almost Oriental - beauty; she possessed a very delicate figure, while her talent and originality in dress were ahead of her time [...] She was an excellent artist - generous, inventive, witty, and intelligent - with a steadfast capacity for reasoning and perception worthy of any man. From the very beginning, she was a unique paradox and my ideal of womanhood."

I remember her sitting in the boudoir - with its small windows overlooking the cherry orchard - writing an orchestral score without the aid of a piano (almost all her works were completed this way; she used to say she could hear the sounds of all the instruments). Brian and I would pester her with silly, childish questions. It never bothered her - in fact, she rarely even noticed. Pen in hand, a cigarette - always a cigarette - dangling from her lips, she would look up without a trace of a grimace and ask, "What is it, darling?" Never irritated, rarely impatient.

MUSIC: *Poldowski - En Sourdine (transcription: A. Bobrowska) – excerpt*

In the late 1920s, Poldowski was forced to abandon her concert career entirely due to rapidly deteriorating health. She suffered from severe pneumonia, which led to serious complications; she underwent a complex surgery that resulted in the removal of her right lung. Worn down by illness and struggling with financial difficulties as well as her two adult children's drug addictions, she spent her final months in solitude.

She died suddenly of a heart attack in London on January 28, 1932, at the age of 52. She suffered from the same heart condition that had claimed the life of her father, Henryk Wieniawski, prematurely. She was laid to rest in the family tomb at Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey, near London.

Her operatic and symphonic works have all but vanished; only a few dozen of her songs, along with a

handful of piano and chamber miniatures, have survived to this day. On her deathbed, she reportedly said, "do look after my music," yet her children - physically and mentally shattered by their addictions - were unable to do so. I quietly do hope that, one day, we might rediscover some of the compositions currently considered lost - perhaps they are still waiting patiently in a library archive or an attic somewhere? It would be wonderful if that wish could come true.

MUSIC: *Poldowski - Two Songs: Down by the Salley Gardens* (Danae Eleni - voice, Aleksandra Bobrowska - piano; Warsaw, 2022) - fragment

We are slowly reaching the end of our story. Before I bid you farewell, however, I would like to take a moment for a musical interlude featuring four songs, and also explain how Irena Wieniawska signed her works - something I haven't mentioned yet today, but which is fascinating and, frankly, quite confusing on her part. You see, over the years she signed her compositions using her maiden name, her husband's aristocratic surname after marriage, and - most notably - the popular male pseudonym "Poldowski," which is the name I have primarily used when speaking about her in this podcast. This pseudonym appeared in various forms - Poldowsky, Poldowska, Madame Poldowski - and it was under this name that she published the majority of her mature works. In her youth and at the start of her creative career, she signed her work as Irene Wieniawska, Régine Wieniawski, Irène Wieniawska, or Irène Regina Wieniawski. After marriage, she used her aristocratic titles: Lady Dean Paul, Lady Irène Dean Paul, or Lady Irène Poldowski Paul. Now that we have cleared that up, it is high time to move on to our musical interlude.

MUSIC: *Poldowski - A Poor Young Shepherd* (transcription: A. Bobrowska)

"A Poor Young Shepherd" is one of the most distinctive works in Poldowski's compositional output. Composed in Paris in 1912 (though later London editions date from 1924), it stands as a classic example of vocal lyricism. Despite its English title, the text is written entirely in French. The lyrics are taken from a poem by the French Symbolist poet Paul Verlaine, found in the collection "Romances sans paroles" (specifically within the **Aquarelles** section, originally published in 1874). Verlaine - captivated by English culture and landscapes during his travels - gave the poem an English title to evoke the character of a traditional pastoral ballad, or a stylized folk song. The poem (opening with the lines "J'ai peur d'un baiser comme d'une abeille..." / "I fear a kiss like a bee...") tells the story of a young, shy, and naive shepherd in love with a mysterious girl named Kate. Although Valentine's Day is approaching and the girl has been promised to him, the young man is terrified to reveal his feelings to her. The lyrics represent one of the lightest and most innocent texts by Verlaine that Poldowski chose to set to music.

A Poor Young Shepherd

*I'm afraid of a Kiss,
As if it were a bee.
I suffer, stay awake,
And I get no relief:
I'm afraid of a Kiss!*

*Yet, I truly love Kate
With her eyes, so lovely.*

*She is so delicate,
Her long face, so pallid.
Oh! How much I love Kate!*

*It is saint Valentine!
I must and yet I haven't dared
Tell her in the morning..
This so terrible word
Called a Saint Valentine!*

*To me she is promised,
How fortunate I am!
Yet, what labour it is
To be a loving man
Near a promised woman!*

*I'm afraid of a Kiss,
As if it were a bee.
I suffer, stay awake,
And I get no relief:
I'm afraid of a Kiss!*

MUSIC: *Poldowski - Spleen (transcription: A. Bobrowska)*

The song "Spleen" by Poldowski (Irena Wieniawska), composed in 1913, is an outstanding work inspired by the poetry of Paul Verlaine that reflects the decadent atmosphere of the turn of the century. The poem's text describes the fear of rejection, while its translation presents an impassioned declaration of love.

*All the roses were red
And the ivy was all black.*

*Dear, at your slightest move,
All my despair revives.*

*The sky was too blue, too tender,
The sea too green, the air too mild.*

*I always fear—oh to wait and wonder!—
One of your agonizing departures.*

*I am weary of the glossy holly,
Of the gleaming box-tree too,*

*And the boundless countryside
And everything, alas, but you!*

MUSIC: *Poldowski - Dimanche d'Avril (transcription: A. Bobrowska)*

The poem comes from the collection "Sagesse" (Wisdom), published in 1881. It was written during the poet's stay in England, hence the landscape filled with elements characteristic of the British Isles. Thanks to its remarkable atmosphere, the piece inspired various composers: Claude Debussy created a famous song based on it, while Irena Wieniawska published a musical setting in London in 1911 under the title "Dimanche d'Avril".

*The hedgerows stretch out
Frothing afar, sea-like
And clear in the cleqar mist,
Fragrant with young berries.*

*Trees and windmills rise
Insubstantial on the delicate green,
Where agile colts
Come to stretch and frolic.*

*On this lazy Sunday,
Some large ewes, **JUZ**
Soft as their white wool,
Join them in their play.*

*Just now there broke
A curling wave
Of flute-like bells
In the milk-white sky.*

Before we move on to the final musical piece, a few introductory words about the last of today's songs. Paul Verlaine's poem **Colombine** (from the 1869 collection **Fêtes galantes**) is populated by traditional, archetypal figures from the Italian **commedia dell'arte**. Yet Verlaine imbues them with a decadent, marionette-like quality. These male figures form a "flock of dupes" (**troupeau de dupes**), blindly following the ruthless woman who is the titular Columbine.

Colombine – a character from the poem; beautiful and clever, yet—in Verlaine's vision—a cruel and calculating young woman (**belle enfant méchante**). She has feline, "perverse" green eyes and ruthlessly leads all her suitors by the nose, guiding them toward romantic ruin.

Harlequin (Arlequin) – in classical comedy, a cunning servant dressed in a diamond-patterned costume who is in love with Columbine. Verlaine describes him as a capricious rogue (**cet aigrefin si fantasque**) in a wild costume, with eyes gleaming sinisterly from behind his mask.

Pierrot—melancholic, unhappily in love, and with a face whitened by flour. In the piece, he casts aside his usual apathy and performs nervous, even grotesque leaps (jumping over bushes "like a flea") in an attempt to catch Columbine's attention.

Leander (Léandre) – a traditional type of romantic lead, wealthy and self-absorbed, whom Verlaine explicitly labels a fool (*Léandre le sot*).

Cassandre – an old man, often Columbine's father or guardian, a symbol of naivety and decrepitude. He appears hidden beneath his hood (*sous son capuce*), which heightens his grotesque and clumsy image.

See you in the next episode! :)

MUSIC: *Poldowski - Colombine* (DUO ALDICE: Candice Ielo - voice, Aleksandra Bobrowska - piano; Warsaw 2019)

Books, dissertations, and scholarly studies

- **The Pursuit of Ultimate Expression. The Works of Poldowski (Lady Irene Dean Paul, 1879–1932)** – doctoral dissertation by D. Mooney (National University of Ireland, 1999), discussing the artist's complete body of work as a composer.
- **Irena Wieniawska – A Forgotten Composer: A Biographical Sketch and the Reception of Her Work in the First Half of the 20th Century** – scientific article available on the website Academia.edu, analyzing the reception of Poldowski's works.
- Irène Régine Wieniawska: An Attempt to Reconstruct the Life and Work – a research article in *Krakowskie Studia Małopolskie* shedding light on previously unknown biographical facts.

Biographical articles and online broadcasts

- Poldowski – Wikipedia – a concise encyclopedic biographical note on the artist, her pseudonyms, and family connections.
- Wieniawska (Dean-Paul) Irena in Polska Biblioteka Muzyczna – a comprehensive biography and an analysis of the composer's Impressionist style, rooted in the aesthetics of Debussy.
- Who was Irena Regina Wieniawska (Lady Dean Paul / Poldowski)? – Henryk Wieniawski Music Society – an article by the Wieniawski Society in Poznań explaining the reasons for using numerous pseudonyms (including Poldowsky, Poldowska, and Régine Wieniawski).
- Irena Regina Wieniawska vel Poldowski – Polskie Radio Chopin – a discussion of the composer's song output based on the poems of Paul Verlaine.
- Debussy's spiritual daughter – Kultura u Podstaw – an article by Barbara Kowalewska on the rediscovery of the artist's forgotten heritage.
- Who was Poldowski? – Wysokie Obcasy – a biographical column about the complex life story of an aristocrat, mother, and composer.

Musical recordings and artistic materials

- [Poldowski - piano transcriptions by Aleksandra Bobrowska](#) – the project's official website, featuring information and audio materials with unique transcriptions of Poldowski's songs.
- [Works for piano and violin – Dobrze Płyty](#) – an album release by Art Chamber Duo featuring chamber compositions by Wieniawska.
- You can search for sample performances of her songs directly on YouTube by entering the terms "Poldowski composer" or "Irene Wieniawska songs," where archival chamber music recordings are available (such as the cycles or songs set to texts by Verlaine).

Publications and scientific articles in English

- [A Guide to the Songs of Poldowski \(Lady Dean Paul\) 1879–1932](#) – a monograph published by Peter Lang, currently the most comprehensive biography of the artist; it includes a detailed analysis of the musical-poetic relationships in her songs set to the words of Verlaine.
- [Poldowski Rediscovered – Arrow@TU Dublin](#) – a scholarly article analyzing the evolution of the composer's style, from early inspirations drawn from Fauré and Debussy to a later, dissonance-based modernism. It discusses, among other topics, the story behind the discovery of her Sonata for Violin and Piano at the National Library in Warsaw.
- **The Works of Poldowski (Lady Irene Dean Paul) 1879–1932 w SMI Music Theses Register** – a database of musicological works indexing research on the complete catalogue of Poldowski's works. The text focuses on the so-called "feminine aesthetic" (as opposed to the feminist one) in *fin de siècle* culture.
- [Wieniawska \(Dean-Paul\) Irena \(EN\)](#) – [Polish Music Library](#) – an English-language version of the encyclopedic entry in the Polish Music Library, providing a detailed description of the compositional technique (absence of text repetition, the role of piano autonomy, and modal harmony).
- [Régine Poldowski Profile – Oxford Song](#) – a biographical note on the Oxford Song platform, cataloging performances and promoting her vocal works in the UK.
- **Irene Régine Wieniawska Interview & Spotlight – Gwendolyn Masin / The Violin Channel** – an interview and feature for [The Violin Channel](#), in which violinist Gwendolyn Masin explores the figure of the composer through the lens of her piece *Tango*, uncovering the secrets of musical family dynasties.
- [Poldowski Composer Profile – Naxos Records](#) – the artist's official profile in the Naxos Records database, documenting her education at the Brussels Conservatory, brief studies with Vincent d'Indy at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, and concert successes in Europe and New York.

Publications and articles in French

- [Poldowski – Wikipédia en français](#) – a French-language encyclopedia article. It systematically clarifies the confusion surrounding the artist's name, listing all the name variants she used in her publications (e.g., Dame Irene Poldowski Paul, Madame Poldowska) and detailing her children's connections to the "Bright Young Things" artistic bohemian set during the 1920s.

- [22 Mélodies sur les poèmes de Paul Verlaine \(a booklet\) – EClassical](#) – a French-language musicological analysis included in the EClassical album description. The text verifies facts about her early life in Brussels and Paris and examines how, as an autodidact, she gained recognition in a male-dominated world.
- [Irena Regina Poldowski Song Texts – LiederNet Archive](#) – LiederNet, an international database of song texts that collects the French source texts (poems by Verlaine, Maeterlinck, or Marie Closset) used by Poldowski in her compositions, along with their translations.
- [Poldowski: Partition Musicale – IMSLP](#) – the international sheet music library IMSLP, containing free, publicly available French editions of her works (primarily vocal music) accompanied by editorial notes in French and English.