



HALINA SŁONICKA - SOPRANO

Professor Halina Słonicka – soprano, an opera singer

Halina Słonicka was born on 29th March, 1931, in Czerniany, Polesie (at present - Belarus), where her father was a supervising forester. The specific atmosphere of her family home at the Polish Eastern Borderland was not without influence on the further artistic development of a young, very sensitive woman. Her later tragic experiences, especially her father's premature death, were also of great importance. Ms Słonicka spent her childhood in Hajnówka and finished her secondary school in Białystok. It was there where her first contact with opera took place. As a schoolgirl, she took part in a competition entitled "Vocal Talents Looked for" and sang the Halka aria by Stanisław Moniuszko and the Caton waltz from "Casanova" by Ludomir Różycki. The future soprano vocalist won the first prize. After having obtained the secondary school certificate, Halina went to Warsaw and was accepted at the Architecture Department of Warsaw Technical University. Simultaneously, she attended a secondary music school and took lessons of singing tutored by Professor Magdalena Halfter. She got the diploma of the school in 1955. In the meantime, Halina Słonicka was a soloist of The Song and Dance Ensemble of the Polish Army. But she did not neglect vocal studies, she continued them within the years 1955 – 1960 at the Music Academy in Warsaw, also at Professor M. Halfter's class. Starting with 1957, she performed as a soloist in Warsaw Opera, her debut being the part of Zofia in *Halka* by S. Moniuszko and Frasquita in *Carmen* by G. Bizet. A year later, she sang the part of Hanna in *Straszny Dwór* (The Haunted Manor) by S. Moniuszko. Her original interpretation was very highly praised by the critics: "Her voice sounds stable, the artist is using it in a wonderful way, it also has a nice timbre" [A. Rowiński, 1958]. Still a year later, Halina Słonicka performed the part of her dreams – Violetta in *Traviata* by G. Verdi. Afterwards, during her career, she used to perform the part many times, both on Polish and foreign opera stages, filling her interpretation with great expression and nobility. The singer was perfect both as a vocalist and an actress. She sang high sounds and coloratura with bravado and ease. Professor Słonicka's subsequent opera parts were: Ewa in *Hrabina* ("The Countess") by S. Moniuszko, Gilda in *Rigoletto* by G. Verdi, Zerlina and Donna Anna in *Don Juan* by W.A. Mozart, Mimi in *La Bohème* by G. Puccini, Elizabeth in *Don Carlos* by G. Verdi, Roksana in *King Roger* by K. Szymanowski, Micaela in *Carmen* by G. Bizet, Desdemona in *Othello* by G. Verdi, Mrs. Ford in *Falstaff* by G. Verdi. The artist sang 30 parts during her career. She performed them mostly on the stage of The Great Theatre in Warsaw, but also in Vercelli, Moscow, Hertogenbosh, Toulouse, Geneva, Rio de Janeiro. Her stage presentations were enthusiastically praised by critics: "We underline the success of Halina Słonicka, captivating with her beautiful appearance and nobility of voice" [J. Macierakowski, 1964]. Apart from opera parts, Halina Słonicka sang songs and oratorios, and also cantatas (she had 30 of them in her repertoire), by such composers as, among others, J.S. Bach, J. Haydn and W.A. Mozart. She co-operated with eminent conductors, e.g. J. Krenz, S. Wisłocki, J. Katlewicz, W. Berdyayev, J. Semkow, W. Rowicki, B. Wodiczek, P. Klecky, K. Masur. Starting with 1980, Ms. Słonicka devoted herself to pedagogical work. At first, she lectured at the Music Education Department of the Branch of Warsaw Music Academy, and then – at the capital city's F. Chopin Music Academy. The artist died in 2000. She was buried at Białystok Orthodox graveyard, beside her mother. The gravestone epitaph was suggested by her students: "Great artist, eminent pedagogue, noble person".

/information from the website of OiFP in Białystok, quoted after Elżbieta Kozłowska – Świątkowska/