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The Violinist Christos Polyzoides (1931-2019)

Pedagogy as Music Philosophy

Abstract

The present research proposal deals with the life and educational work of the University Professor Christos Polyzoides (1931-2019). Christos Polyzoides was professor for violin, viola and chamber music at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz for more than 40 years (1961-2002).

After studying in Thessaloniki and Vienna, he came in 1961 to Graz as concertmaster and took over a class at the Styrian State Conservatory, transferred to the newly created Academy for Music and Performing Arts in 1963, where he became associate professor in 1968 and taught there from 1974 on as full professor at the University for Music and Performing Arts. He retired in 1999, but continued to teach until 2002 and left an extensive legacy that has not yet been evaluated.

For him, music was the means, the goal was always pedagogy. When working with his students, he always tried to ensure that they discover trails of thought for themselves, following the example of the Socratic Method. He had a soft spot for the philosophers of ancient Greece. Since he himself was able to read ancient Greek, he studied Xenophon, Plato and the New Testament in detail.

Since his death, some of his students have continued teaching his methods. However, today's violin students usually have few opportunities to discover and to tackle his interpretive ideas and teaching methods. The aim of this research is to document his pedagogical work for the first time and to comment on its principles. The violin personality of Christos Polyzoides and his importance for the Austrian and international musical life is another concern of the work. The repertoire he played, especially his preoccupation with contemporary music and his connections with Styrian composers, should be examined. His many students, who later joined orchestras or made a career as professors and soloists, are recorded by name and some of them are to be asked about a comprehensive determination of his artistic personality.