

# Ewa Chamczyk

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UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

## Apolinary Kątski as an Infant Prodigy

### Abstract

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Infant prodigies were a common phenomenon in the 19th century. They astonished the audience not only through their impressive abilities, but also the innocent beauty and the youthful grace. The perfect example of this is Apolinary Kątski (1826–1879), a violin virtuoso and a composer, known mainly as the founder of the Institute of Music in Warsaw, who, since he was three, was recognizable in concert halls all over Europe.

According to the author, the early stage of the violinist's activity requires more attention. The presented article sketches the path of young Apolinary's life from the moment of his first performance in 1829 to May 1838, when he was granted with the famous recommendation of Niccolò Paganini. It introduced him to numerous concert halls of Europe and positively influenced his further artistic activity. The hereby presented paper makes an attempt to find out the date and place of birth of Kątski in the context of the rich musical activity of his family members. It also shows the first artistic tours of the young virtuoso against the background of his artistically talented siblings: a violinist Karol, pianists Stanisław and Antoni, and a singer Eugenia. The crucial moments are reflections on the stay of the family in Paris and their first performances in the musical centre of Europe as well as contacts of the young violinist with Niccolò Paganini.

The studies on the correspondence of the father of the virtuoso, Grzegorz Kątski, and research on the foreign newspapers let the author reconstruct the life of Apolinary Kątski in the very first stage of his musical activity and place him in the context of infant prodigies of the 18th and 19th centuries.

## Keywords

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Apolinary Kątski, virtuoso, violin, infant prodigy, Niccolò Paganini

The phenomenon of “infant prodigies” was extremely popular in the 19th-century musical life. Little virtuosos delighted the audience not only through their extraordinarily skills, but also their innocent appearance and youthful grace. Parents, wanting to maintain the stage attractiveness of their children, frequently manipulated their metrics and aimed at patronage of prominent personas. At this moment, it is worthy to recall such artists as a Polish cellist Mikołaj Zygmuntowski (1776–1801) or a young pianist, the Fryderyk Chopin’s pupil, Carl Filtsch (1830–1845), as well as a pianist Józef Wieniawski (1837–1912) and his younger brother, a violinist Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880).

Apolinary Kątski (1826–1879) also corresponds to this trend. He is remembered as an excellent virtuoso violinist, extraordinarily looking after his advertisement, but also the founder and the many years’ headmaster of the Musical Institute in Warsaw (1861–1879), later transformed into the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music. In years 1852–1866, he was also the solo violinist at the court in Petersburg, combining responsibilities with numerous artistic journeys. Kątski gave many concerts, among others, in Russia, France’s departments, on the province of Congress Poland and in Wielkopolska (Great Poland). He performed also in such cities as Warsaw, London, Paris, Brussels or Vilnius. In the literature he was said to have an inglorious competition with Henryk Wieniawski, a conflict relation with Stanisław Moniuszko and mysterious contacts with Niccolò Paganini as a child.

What should also be mentioned is the compositional activity of the violinist, comprising together about twenty two published pieces with opus number and following little compositions, which were not published during his life, but frequently mentioned in the press. Kątski

most often used the instrumentation of violin with orchestra or piano, but he tried to provide each composition with the arrangement for piano. It is difficult to clearly state the artistic value of these works. However, it should be remembered that they were virtuoso compositions to show off, being the exhibition of the most sophisticated means of violin technique, in which Kątski was a real master. Among the most popular and most frequently performed by the author, there are such compositions as *Grande fantaisie sur l'opéra de Donizetti Lucia di Lammermoor* Op. 2, *Hommage à Bellini* Op. 21 and *Le Rossignol* Op. 22.

### **Around the birth of Apolinary Kątski**

Hitherto gathered information about the early period of the violinist's activity should definitely be supplemented. It is even difficult to precisely define the date and place of Kątski's birth. Adam Honory Kirkor, the author of the first monograph of the artist, writes that the later violin virtuoso "was born in Poznań on 2th July 1826".<sup>1</sup> This claim is shared by Albert Sowiński<sup>2</sup> and Zofia Chechlińska.<sup>3</sup> Giving this information, the researcher refers to the gravestone of the artist at the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw; however, the gravestone does not contain any name of the city. The text is following: "Here, there is a corpse Apolinary Kątski of blessed memory, a soloist at the court of the Tsar-King, the founder and headmaster of the Musical Institute in Warsaw. He was born on 2nd July 1826 and died on 29th June 1879. Remaining widow with a daughter and sons found this gravestone for his eternal memory".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A.H. Kirkor, *Apolinary Kątski na pamiątkę pobytu w Wilnie*, Wilno 1852, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "Né à Posen en 1826". Vide: A. Sowiński, *Les musiciens polonais et slaves, anciens et modernes*, Paris 1857, p. 326.

<sup>3</sup> Z. Chechlińska, *Kątski Apolinary*, [in:] *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM. Część biograficzna*, E. Dziębowska (ed.), Vol. 5 (KLŁ), Kraków 1997, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Orig. "Tu spoczywają zwłoki ś[więtej] p[amięci] Apolinarego Kątskiego, solisty dworu jego carsko-królewskiej mości, założyciela i dyrektora Instytutu Muzycznego w Warszawie. Urodził się d. 2 lipca 1826 r., zmarł d. 29 czerwca 1879 r. Pozostała wdowa z córką i synami kładą ten kamień ku wiecznej pamięci". The grave of Kątski family, Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw, plot 16, line 2, place 9–10. In Polish quotations from the epoch the orthography and punctuation have been modernized, although the specific language manners have been preserved, such as overuse of capital letters in the expressive function and to show respect, what was typical at that time.

Józef Reiss,<sup>5</sup> and then Jerzy Kusiak<sup>6</sup> also gives the date of 2nd July 1826 as the birth date of Kątski, but indicating Kraków as his place of birth. As Reiss notices, “Kraków has absolute right of priority, because here Apolinary Kątski spent his first years of life, here he was raised in the house under Blessed Mary at the Main Square”.<sup>7</sup> This attitude is said to be confirmed by the concert in Kraków from 8th of March 1849, where “Apolinary Kątski, going from Lviv to Poznań, to say goodbye to his hometown”<sup>8</sup> performed. We know that the family of Kątski was from Kraków, but they left the city in 1823 to come back for a few months in 1832. Other authors, like, for example, Stanisław Szenic, also suggest that the violinist was born in Kraków. However, the researcher gives another date of birth: 23th October 1825.<sup>9</sup> Such a date was also given by François-Joseph Fétis in *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, but he indicated Warsaw as the place of birth.<sup>10</sup> This city, together with the two mentioned above, appears in the literature yet during Kątski’s life, however, mainly in the texts published abroad.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, Józef Reiss assumes that the later violin virtuoso was born during the journey of the whole family from Kraków for “artistic voyage” to Warsaw and Poznań.<sup>12</sup> This hypothesis, regarding the busy lifestyle of Kątski family, may seem probable, but in order to decide if it is true other events from this period should be taken into account.

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<sup>5</sup> J. Reiss, *Bożyszczce Publiczności Apolinary Kątski*, Ilustrowany “Kurier Codzienny” 10.04.1937, No. 98, pp. 3–4.

<sup>6</sup> J. Kusiak, *Skrzypce od A do Z*, Kraków 1999, p. 492.

<sup>7</sup> Orig. “Bezwzględne prawo pierwszeństwa posiada Kraków, gdyż tu upływały najwcześniejsze lata Apolinarego Kątskiego, tutaj się wychował w domu pod Matką Boską w Rynku Głównym”. J. Reiss, *Bożyszczce Publiczności...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>8</sup> Orig. “Apolinary Kątski, w przejeździe swoim ze Lwowa do Poznania, na pożegnanie w swoim rodzinnym mieście”. Reproduction of the poster in: J. Reiss, *Skrzypce i skrzypkowie*, Kraków 1955, p. 151.

<sup>9</sup> S. Szenic, *Cmentarz Powązkowski 1851–1890. Zmarli i ich rodziny*, Warszawa 1982, p. 467.

<sup>10</sup> “Apollinaire, dernier enfant de cette famille, est né à Varsovie, le 23 octobre 1823”. *Vide*: F.J. Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*, Vol. 5, Bruxelles 1839, pp. 378–379.

<sup>11</sup> “Né à Varsovie en 1823”. *Vide*: *Kontski Apollinaire*, [in:] *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle: français, historique, géographique...*, P. Larousse (ed.), Vol. 9, Paris 1873, p. 1249.

<sup>12</sup> J. Reiss, *Bożyszczce Publiczności...*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

We know that in 1823 Grzegorz Kątski became an inspector of Warsaw High School. As he wrote in the letter from Vienna to the Association of Friends of Music in Kraków on 2nd June 1833:

Because I had a tight budget to live with my family, and I wanted very much to continue educating children, I went with them to Warsaw to search for the Government's care, where, having the position of the Inspector of the High School, I did my best to educate my growing children in music.<sup>13</sup>

Performed duties made it harder—or even impossible—to travel artistically outside Warsaw. Due to this fact, all his impresario efforts focused around the capital of Congress Poland. As we know from the further part of the letter:

In 1825, because of my request to the Royalty for the protection, Tsar Alexander of blessed memory decided to examine my sons [Karol and Antoni] to see if they are as talented as I presented in my request—the examination took place on 16th August 1825.<sup>14</sup>

The date mentioned by Kątski is the closest to the earliest date given as the birth of Apolinary, 23rd October 1825. It is also known that brothers Kątski, as they were called in the musical circle, gave concerts at that time in Warsaw:

On Tuesday, that is 1st of November, little Brothers Kątski will show their talents at the Hall of Musical Conservatory at 12 o'clock. They will be together playing *Symphony* by Pleyel on the violins. They will be singing *Duettino* by Rossini with Orchestra, and then Antoni will

<sup>13</sup> Orig. “Ze ja posiadałem szczupły fundusz do utrzymania się z rodziną, a chciałem koniecznie dalej dzieci sposobić, udałem się z tymi do Warszawy dla szukania Rządowej opieki, gdzie mając sobie powierzony Urząd Inspektora przy Liceum, dokładałem wszelkich usiłowań, aby dzieci, wzrastając, postępowali w zawodzie muzycznym”. The letter from Grzegorz Kątski to the Association of Friends of Music in Kraków, Vienna, 2.06.1833, [in:] *Listy Imć Pana Grzegorza Kątskiego do Filharmonii Krakowskiej*, J. Reiss (ed.), Kraków 1930, p. 28.

<sup>14</sup> Orig. “W roku 1825 z powodu podanej przeze mnie prośby do Tronu o protekcję śp. Cesarz Aleksander polecił egzaminować synów moich [Karola i Antoniego], czyli są w tym stopniu zdolności, jak w prośbie przedstawiłem—takowy egzamin odbył się 16 sierpnia 1825”. *Ibid.*

be playing *Allegro* from *Concerto No. 12* by Dussek on the piano, and next Karol will be playing *Allegro* from the *7th Concerto* by Rode, at the end Antonio playing *Finale* from *Concerto* by Hummel.<sup>15</sup>

The traces of the concert activity of young Kątskis in Warsaw can be also found in the sources from 1826, close to the second most probable date of birth of the Grzegorz and Anna's youngest son. According to "Kurier Warszawski" from 23rd June 1826, "As the Ladies and Gentlemen wish, young Kątskis will give the concert on the next Monday [25th June 1826] in the National Theatre".<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it is highly improbable that family decided to travel with concerts only 6 days before the birth. What is more, the further part of a mentioned letter of Grzegorz Kątski allows us to conclude that the family did not leave the capital over two years after momentous "examination". Only when, as the father highlights,

Many Amateurs and Experts advised me to go with the pianist, this young genius, to the Field, unparalleled in talent, rather than to Paris (as I had planned before): I listened to this advise and I left Warsaw on 17th October 1827 through Lublin, Brody, Krzemieniec and to Petersburg.<sup>17</sup>

Taking into consideration both facts mentioned before and the inscription on the gravestone of the artist, it can be stated that Apolinary Kątski was born on 2nd July 1826, most probably in Warsaw.

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<sup>15</sup> Orig. "We wtorek, to jest dnia 1 listopada, mali Bracia Kątscy okażą swoje talenty w Sali Konserwatorium Muzycznego o godzinie 12 w południe. Egzekwować razem będą *Symfonię* Pleyela na skrzypcach. Śpiewać duettino Rossiniego z Orkiestrą, po czym Antoni grać będzie *Allegro* z *Koncertu 12go* Duseka na Fortepianie, następnie Karol *Allegro* z *7go* *Koncertu* Rodego, na koniec Anton i *Final* z *Koncertu* Hummła". "Kurier Warszawski" 24.10.1825, No. 253, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> "Stosownie do życzenia łaskawych Amatorów, młodzi Kątscy w następnym poniedziałek [26 czerwca 1826] dadzą Koncert w Teatrze Narodowym". "Kurier Warszawski" 23.06.1826, No. 147, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Orig. "wielu Amatorów i Znawców radziło, abym z fortepianistą nie do Paryża (jak miałem zamiar), lecz wprzód do Fielda nieporównanego w talencie udał się z tym młodym geniuszem: posłuchałem tej rady i wyjechałem z Warszawy 17 października 1827 roku przez Lublin, Lwów, Brody, Krzemieniec i tak dalej do Petersburga". The letter from Grzegorz Kątski to the Association of Friends of Music in Kraków, 2.06.1833, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

The beginnings of the Kątski's career have not been discussed enough until today. What was known were only dates of his few early concerts: at the court of tsar in Petersburg in 1829, the first public presentation of the virtuoso in Paris on 1st February 1837, and also information about the presence of the virtuoso in London during the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1838. Moreover, researchers mentioned individual performances of Kątski together with siblings in Russia, Hungary and Vienna. The further part of this article will describe the life of a young violinist since his debut in 1829 until May 1838, when he received a famous recommendation of Niccolò Paganini. Despite the fact that Kątski had privileges of an infant prodigy until 1842, the meeting with Paganini was the landmark in his career development. This writing opened his door to many concert halls in Europe and positively influenced his further artistic activity. In order to reconstruct the life of Apolinary Kątski at that time, the research on his father's correspondence, Grzegorz Kątski, was used as well as studies on abroad press.

## First successes

In the musical family of Kątski, the artistic path of Apolinary was clearly visible. It was decided that the child, extremely interested in music, will start playing the violin. "From Riga, where we spent three months by the Baltic sea due to high temperature", as Grzegorz Kątski wrote to the Association of Friends of Music in Kraków, "little Apollinar, only 3-year-old, started learning how to play the fiddle."<sup>18</sup> Contrary to the frequently mentioned information that the father was his first teacher, his older brother Karol gave him the first lessons of violin playing.<sup>19</sup> The names of remaining teachers are unknown. The effects of studying appeared soon—"yet during the three Concerts at the Hall of the

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<sup>18</sup> Orig. "Od Rygi, gdzie bawiliśmy dla gorących upałów nad Morzem Bałtyckim miesiąc trzy Apollinar maleńki dopiero trzy lat mający zaczął uczyć się grać na skrzypczkach", *ibid*, p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> The letter from Leonard Niedźwiecki from London to Eustachy Januszkiewicz, 10.08.1838, [in:] L. Niedźwiecki, *Listy wybrane z lat 1832–1839*, S. Makowski (ed.), Warszawa 2009, p. 372.

Association of Dörptska Academy [in Riga], [Apolinary] was protégé of its members”.<sup>20</sup>

On 19th January 1829 the family of Kątski came to Petersburg.<sup>21</sup> Soon after this, 10th February 1829, “at the age of three and a half”<sup>22</sup> Apolinary took part in the family concert for empress Alexandra Fiodorovna at the tsar court. As Kirkor says, the young virtuoso is said to have performed *Violin Concerto* by Pierre Rode.<sup>23</sup> It is difficult to undermine the authenticity of this information as in the rare materials from that time there is little data about the repertoire performed then. However, it is enough to look closer at the Rode’s compositions to doubt the truth the Kirkor’s words. Although in the review of the performance of the musical siblings in Petersburg in “Severnaya Pchela” (“Northern Bee”) there is a notice that Apolinary “plays the not so easy variation”.<sup>24</sup> Probably there were *Variations* Op. 18 by Léon de Saint Lubin, later often performed by Kątski.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, it is unknown about which concert is the text, what makes it impossible to claim that the information given by Kirkor is untrue.

The event from 10th February 1829 was soon commemorated by the lithograph by Kaniowski, reported by “Powszechny Dziennik Krajowy” on 19th July 1829.<sup>26</sup> The daring performance of young Kątskis must have been noticed by Russian press. Several reviews from the above-mentioned journal “Severnaya Pchela” were included as the Polish translation in “Powszechny Dziennik Krajowy”. In the issue from 17th March 1829 we read:

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<sup>20</sup> Orig. “już w dawanych trzech Koncertach w Sali Towarzystwa Akademii Dörptskiéy [Dorpackiej w Rydze], [Apolinary] był przez członków tejże protegowany”. The letter from Grzegorz Kątski to the Association of Friends of Music in Kraków, 2.06.1833, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Orig. “trzy i pół lat mający”. T. Strumiłło, *Szkice z polskiego życia muzycznego XIX wieku*, Kraków 1954, pp. 210–211.

<sup>23</sup> A.H. Kirkor, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> The Polish translation of the review (without titles) in: “Powszechny Dziennik Krajowy” 19.07.1829, No. 175, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> L. de Saint-Lubin, *Variations brillantes sur un thème favori autrichien* Op. 18. The composition was created around 1825. It is written for the violin or piano solo, it consists of introduction and theme with six variations using different violin techniques.

<sup>26</sup> “Powszechny Dziennik Krajowy”, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

His [i.e. Grzegorz Kątski's] older daughter, Eugenia, sings very nicely and has a very clear, resonant voice alt. A son, Karol, 14-year-old, greatly plays the violin, performing difficult passages with extreme speed and in adagio he plays very nicely, with great sensitivity: he is better than all the virtuosos of his age. A third son, Stanisław, 7-year-old, plays the piano, very well for his age. The youngest one, Apolinary, at the age of 4 and a half, the boy as pretty as Cupid, plays carefully watching his tempo and harmony. Emperor Alexander I of blessed memory in the last days of his famous life paid attention to this musical family, and after His death, his Great Successor, an excellent protector of every talent, decided to give salary to the older sons of Mister Kątski, Karol and Antoni, to enhance them in music. The stay of the family in Petersburg will also satisfy greatly the music lovers, as well as in all cities where Kątskis have stayed. In Lent they are going to perform, and now they are to play during the musical evenings.<sup>27</sup>

The six months' stay in Petersburg, as Grzegorz Kątski underlined, was valuable also in financial matter: "Staying in this capital we had three concerts with much profit, which provided us with money for life, education and further journey."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Orig. "Starsza jego [tj. Grzegorza Kątskiego] córka, Eugenia, śpiewa bardzo przyjemnie i ma czysty, dźwięczny głos alt. Syn, Karol, 14-letni, gra przewybornie na skrzypcach, wykonuje z nadzwyczajną szybkością trudne pasaże i w adagio gra bardzo przyjemnie, z wielką czułością: na wiek swój, wcale jest mocny w graniu na tym trudnym instrumencie. Drugi syn, Antoni, 10-letni, gra na fortepianie z zadziwiającą sztuką, mocą i przyjemnością: celuje nad wszystkimi swymi rówieśnikami wirtuozami. Trzeci syn, Stanisław, 7-letni, także gra na fortepianie, jak na swój wiek, bardzo dobrze. Najmłodszy, Apolinary, półczwartoletni, chłopczyk piękny jak Kupido, z wielką troskliwością postrzegając taktu i harmonii. Błogosławionej pamięci Cesarz Aleksander I, w dniach ostatnich sławnego życia swojego, zwrócił łaskawą uwagę na tę rodzinę muzyczną, a po zgonie Cesarza Aleksandra, Dostojny jego Następca, Wspaniały wszystkich talentów Opiekun, raczył naznaczyć pensją dwóm starszym synom Pana Kątskiego, Karolowi i Antoniemu, na udoskonalenia ich w muzyce. Przebywanie tej rodziny w Petersburgu robi również niemało zadowolenia miłośnikom muzyki, jak i we wszystkich miastach, w których przebywali pp. Kątscy. W poście mają dać koncert, a teraz za wezwaniem grają na wieczorach muzycznych". As cited in: "Powszechny Dziennik Krajowy" 17.03.1829, No. 63, pp. 2-3.

<sup>28</sup> Orig. "Przebywając w tej stolicy, mieliśmy trzy koncerty bardzo zyskowe, które do życia, nauki i dalszej podróży fundusz nam zrobiły" The letter from Grzegorz Kątski to the Association of Friends of Music in Kraków, 2.06.1833, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

On 2nd August 1829, Kątskis came to Moscow. Soon, they gave concert in the Hall of Association of Noble Men for the Persian duke Khosrow Mirza, “during which 1500 people were present, and the every ticket cost one ducat (1 ducat = 17 zlotys) in gold”.<sup>29</sup> On 30th March 1830, also during the family concert, this time for the tsar Nikola I, Apolinary showed off as a great soloist. The infant prodigy enamoured the audience, and his age only raised the admiration. This rule was well known for Grzegorz Kątski, who from this moment cleverly manipulated the boy’s metrics—what is probably the reason for the problems when it comes to Apolinary’s date of birth.

The beginning successes in Moscow were soon interrupted by various illness of all the members of the family:

Karol, Stanisław i Apolek suffer from scarlet fever. I myself feel very weak due to the changing climate, wife and daughter as well; and last, Antoś, suffering from incurable Moldavian fever, was ill for the longest time, without any hope of living, because yet the doctor had made us ready to lose such a talented child—but after the third consultation he started feeling better.<sup>30</sup>

After a year in Moscow, the family decided to come back do Kraków. The problem was, however, the epidemic of cholera and “Revolution starting in Poland”, keeping Kątskis for five months in Kyiv. It was a hard time for the family:

Gathered money we had to spend—because neither in Petersburg, nor in Moscow we spent as much as in Kyiv for life and flat; and we had none income during that time.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Orig. “na którym było osób 1500, a bilet każdy był po dukacie (1 dukat = 17 zł) w złocie”. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Orig. “Karol, Stanisław i Apolek [zapadli] na szkarlatynę. Ja sam ciężkiej słabości podpadłem z przyczyny zmiennego klimatu, żona i córka; a na koniec Antoś, dostawszy nieuleczonej febry mołdawskiej, najdłużej, bo bez nadziei życia chorował, bo już doktor nas jawnie przygotowywał do straty tak utalentowanego dziecka—lecz po trzecim konsylium dopiero do zdrowia zaczął przychodzić”. *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Orig. “zebrane pieniądz[e] wydawać musieliśmy—bo ani w Petersburgu, ani w Moskwie tak wielkich wydatków nie robiliśmy jak w Kijowie na życie i mieszkanie; a żadnych najmniejszych dochodów podczas tego zamieszkania nie mieliśmy”. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

On 14th March 1831 Kątskis left the city and on 17th April came to Lviv, where also due to cholera epidemic the Governor prohibited attending churches; offices and theatre were closed, what paralysed the concert life. Two months later Kątskis continued journey and stayed in Tarnów,

as a still healthy place, to ask about the circumstances and where to go next: as to Vienna three quarantines were and I would be forced to stay there 40 days with my huge family; it is why after 21 days I came to Wieliczka from Tarnów, three month lived with my family of seven people; and only sons had any profit of it, because they learnt Italian for a few hours per day from Jesuits.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, after the difficult journey Kątskis came to “Family City Kraków”.<sup>33</sup> As we can read in “Warsaw’s Correspondent” from that time, “young musical artists Kątskis, after the journey around many cities of Russia, are currently in Kraków, where they performed last Sunday [4 Decenmber 1831]”.<sup>34</sup>

What is also connected with Kraków is one of the earliest Apolinary’s concerts. On 17th February 1832, during the common concert with the siblings—the pianist Antoni, violinist Karol and singer Eugenia—played the piece by Léon de Saint-Lubin, known at that time as *Variations of Lubin* Op. 18.<sup>35</sup>

## On the Vienna’s stages

After one year stay in Kraków, the family of Kątski went to Vienna, where around November or December 1832 they stayed in the flat

<sup>32</sup> Orig. “jako w zdrowym miejscu jeszcze, dla wypywania o okoliczności i gdzieby dalej posuwać się wypadało: że zaś do Wiednia trzy kurantyny ustanowione zostały i dni 40 w tych z liczną familią przebywać byłbym zmuszony, dlatego po 21 dniach z Tarnowa do Wieliczki przybywszy, trzy miesiące z familią z siedmiu osób składającą się przemieszkowałem; w tym tylko synowie profitowali, że się od Jezuitów włoskiego języka kilka godzin dziennie uczyli”. *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Orig. “Rodzinnego Miasta Krakowa”. *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Orig. “Młodzi artyści muzyczni Kątscy, odbywszy podróż w wielu głównych miastach Rosji, są teraz w Krakowie, gdzie w zeszłą niedzielę [4 grudnia 1831 roku] dawali koncert”. “Korespondent Warszawski” 10.12.1831, No. 79, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> J. Reiss, *Bożyszczce Publiczności...*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

at the address: “Wildpraedtmarkt zum roten Igel N. 550, I. Stiege, 3 Stock, Tür N. 14”,<sup>36</sup> so the house number 550 at Wildpretmarkt Street 1, known as “Zum roten Igel”, stairs I, floor III, flat number 14.<sup>37</sup> The main aim of the journey, not hidden by Grzegorz, was to request for the membership of Vienna’s Musical Association for his older sons, Antoni and Karol. As he wrote on 18th of December 1832 in the letter for the Kraków’s Association of Friends of Music:

Every member of this Association must know music enough and in this way the Archduke Antoni—the vice-chairman of Kiesevetter, a secretary of Sonnleithner—from the members baron Lanna, who was delegated from the Musical Association to examine our children as a composer of great pieces, he was discreet and good that not in the Conservatory in public, but he visited us in our flat, examined, and then sent the article to the local newspaper—the examination was conducted, because our children, or rather their talent was not known in Vienna.<sup>38</sup>

Grzegorz did not predict the fact that young Kątskis were not famous in Vienna. Local artists, as he claimed, only knowing that the talented siblings are coming, “five months earlier took the days for concerts on Sundays and festivities, and for me coming they left 27th January and 17th February, during the Carnival, the worst for a concert”.<sup>39</sup> According

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<sup>36</sup> The letter from Grzegorz Kątski to Jacek Janowski, the secretary of The Association of Friends of Music in Kraków, Vienna, Since 18.12.1832, [in:] *Listy Imć Pana Grzegorza Kątskiego...*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>37</sup> The tavern in the neighbourhood was famous in the 19th century for the performances of Gipsy musicians, and its habitués were, among others, Franz Schubert and Johannes Brahms. *Vide*: [online] [https://www.wien.gv.at/wiki/index.php/Zum\\_roten\\_Igel](https://www.wien.gv.at/wiki/index.php/Zum_roten_Igel), [accessed: 14.03.2018].

<sup>38</sup> Orig. “Každy członek tego Towarzystwa musi dostatecznie posiadać muzykę i tym sposobem prezes arcyksiążę Antoni—wiceprezes Kiesevetter, sekretarz Sonnleithner—z członków baron Lanna, który był od Towarzystwa Muzykalnego delegowany do egzaminowania naszych dzieci jako kompozytor wielkich rzeczy, ten tyle był dyskretnym i łaskawym, że nie w Konserwatorium publicznie, ale do naszego mieszkania wizytę zrobiwszy, egzaminował, a później do teatralnej gazety artykuł przesłał—egzamin zaś był z tego powodu, że nikt o naszych dzieciach, czyli raczej o ich talentach w Wiedniu nie był wiadomy”. The letter from Grzegorz Kątski to Jacek Janowski..., *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>39</sup> Orig. “na pięć miesięcy wprzódzy pozabierali sobie dni do koncertu, to jest święteczne i niedzielne, a dla mnie przybyłego zostawili 27 stycznia i 17 lutego w karnawał najgorsze do koncertu”, *ibid.*, p. 22.

to Gregorian calendar, both dates are Sundays. Therefore, it is unknown why Kątski saw them as the most inconvenient.

A resourceful father, listening to the “advisors”, decided to use the time possibly most effectively, going for a month to Bratislava (known then as Pressburg), the capital of Hungary at that time, where the “Sejm, which happens only once in three years”<sup>40</sup> was going to start. There, Kątskis also gave performance, but, as Grzegorz noticed,

It cost a lot, because it is extremely expensive with family during such a journey—and, besides this, giving the concert in Theatre Eugene, a daughter of us, singing, dressing delicately, when there were minus 18 degrees, and also a draft in the Theatre, she caught cold, and was ill because of it.<sup>41</sup>

On 15th January 1833 Kątskis came back to Vienna and soon started organizing the first concert, effectively caring for the promotion of the event. The traditions of that place were scrupulously noted down by Grzegorz:

Two months before the concert there are posters in houses and shops to give away and sell tickets, and public posters are put on the walls a week before the concert, there is on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. On Saturday the posters are taken printed together with theatrical ones, 1500 of which are taken to the shops for the city. And finally, at the day of the concert, on Sunday, they are put on the walls. Every day there are so many posters put that two hours would not be enough to read them all.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Orig. “Sejm, który co trzy lata tylko bywa”. *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Orig. “dużo ekspensy ponieśli, bo z familią podczas owego zjazdu wszystko nadzwyczaj drogo—a prócz tego w Teatrze dając koncert, Eugenia córka nasza, śpiewając, delikatnie będąc ubrana, podczas zimna 18 gradusów, a jeszcze przeciąg straszny w Teatrze, przeziębiła się, i z tego powodu chorowała”. *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Orig. “Na dwa miesiące wprzód są afisze po domach i po sklepach do rozdania i sprzedania biletów, a zaś afisze publiczne rozlepiają się po ścianach tygodniem wprzód przed koncertem, to jest w niedzielę, we wtorek i w czwartek. W sobotę zaś afisze roznosi z teatralnymi razem drukowane, których dla miasta 1500 po sklepach roznoszą. A na koniec, w dzień koncertu, w niedzielę rozlepiają po ścianach. Co dzień tak wiele afiszów jest przyklepanych, że chcąc wszystkie odczytać, to dwie godziny czasu mało na to”. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Apolinary was not present among the performers of the first “Concert of the family of Kątski from Kraków” on 27th January 1833.<sup>43</sup> His presence during the second concert, on 17th February 1833, is not certain. On the other hand, we know that on 10th March 1833 the “Concert of 7-year-old Apolinary Kontski” took place, about which “Wiener Zeitschrift” wrote:

On Sunday, 10th March, the concert of the youngest, yet unknown members of a talented family took place, a family which already has the attention of a musical audience, making a sensation during the first concert. During the concert the 10-year-old pianist Stanisław and 7-year-old violinist Apolinary performed. It was unique, as many claimed, and moving to watch the boys together with their teacher, their older brother, performing and showing their talent as well as diligence. [...] A young performer played part I from Rode’s *Concerto*, and at the end St. Lubin’s *Variations*. It is obvious that the 7-year-old virtuoso during such a performance must be watched over for the whole time. But if such an attitude is rightly seen as surprising, and it combines with the fact that playing that instrument is highly difficult, the attention must be paid also to the teacher, and the student must be expected to be great in the future.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The reprint of the poster “Concert der Familie Kontski aus Krakau” available in: *Listy Imć Grzegorza Kątskiego...*, *op. cit.*, annex.

<sup>44</sup> Orig. “Von der talentreichen Familie welche diese Aufmerksamkeit unsers musicalischen Publicums schon durch ihr erstes Concert in ungemöhnlichem Grade erregt hatte, find am Sonntag, den 10. März, nun auch die beiden jüngsten, uns bisher noch unbekanntten Mitglieder, nämlich der zehnjährige clavierspieler Stanislaus und der siebenjährige violinspieler Apollinar aufgetreten. Es war ein eigener und wie es von vielen Anwesenden empfunden wurde, rührender Anblick, die beiden Knaben an der Hand ihrer Lehrer, ihrer ältern Brüder, erscheinen und unter ihren Augen die Proben ihres Talents und ihres Fleißes ablegen zu sehen. [...] Der kleine Concertgeber Apollinar spielte den ersten Satz aus einem Concerte von Rode und am Schlusse noch Variationen von St. Lubin. Es ist allerdings natürlich, dass man den Umstand der sieben Jahre des kleinen Virtuosen bei beiden Leistungen nicht einen Augenblick aus den Augen verlieren muss; wenn man aber diesen Umstand ganz und gehörig wuerdigt, und mit ihm die bekannte, unendliche Schwierigkeit des zusammenkaelt, so wird man nicht umhin können, den Lehrer aufrichtig zu achten, und von dem Schüler sich etwas sehr Bedeutendes für die Zukunft zu versprechen”. *Vide*: “Wiener Zeitschrift” 23.03.1833, No. 36, pp. 293–294.

Soon after that, during the concert of Kątski's family on 11th April 1833 in the hall of Musical Association, as "Wiener Zeitschrift" informed, "Quodlibet for violin will be presented by the young, seven-year-old Apolinary Kątski".<sup>45</sup> Few days after the concert in this newspaper, the following review was published:

Young, 7-year-old Apolinary also today pleased [the audience] playing the violin, and even more by his instrument, which were suitable for the owner, still learning how to play. If the following seven years will be as intensive as the first ones, we can expect more than seven fat years for him.<sup>46</sup>

What is connected with the stay in Vienna is another issue that requires explanation. Adam Honory Kirkor writes that Apolinary "received the famous Stradivari's violin as a gift from the Emperess of Austria [Carolina Augustine]."<sup>47</sup> The information appears in most of the publications devoted to Kątski. Its reliability is rather doubtful. Researchers, explaining the later lack of such a precious instrument, said that the father decided to forward it to the Krakow's Philharmonic, i.e. the Association of Friends of Music. Józef Reiss, explaining this situation, recalled words of Grzegorz Kątski from the letter to the Association from the 2nd June 1833: "in the future, these violin will gain the great respect and will be a nice memory for the Polish people that at this age a Polish child amazed amateurs and experts through his play".<sup>48</sup> Both in the Kątski's memories and in the press from that time, there are no notes mentioning the fact of forwarding Stradivari's

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<sup>45</sup> Orig. "Quodlibet für die Violine, vorgetragen von den kleien siebenjährigen Apollinar von Kontski". As cited in: "Wiener Zeitschrift", 9.04.1833, No. 43, p. 356.

<sup>46</sup> Orig. "Der Kleine siebenjährige Apollinar erfreute auch heute durch sein Spiel auf der Violine, oder vielmehr seiner Violine, die im Verhältniss zu ihrem Inhaber stand, und natürlich wie er selbst noch im Machsen ist. Sind die nächsten sieben Jahre so ausgiebig als die ersten, so lassen sich mehr als sieben fette Jahre für ihn erwarten". As cited in: "Wiener Zeitschrift" 20.04.1833, No. 48, p. 396.

<sup>47</sup> Orig. "otrzymał w podarunku Cesarzowej Austriackiej [Karoliny Augusty] słynne skrzypce Stradivariego." A.H. Kirkor, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Orig. "z czasem nabiorą owe skrzypeczki wielkiego szacunku i będą miłą pamiątką Rodakom, że w tym wieku już dziecię polskie swoim graniem amatorów i znawców zadziwiło". As cited in: J. Reiss, *Apolinary Kątski*, "Poradnik Muzyczny" 1950, No. 9.

violin to the 7-year-old Apolinary. Moreover, words of Grzegorz Kątski recalled by Reiss indeed refer to the instrument, but the one supposed to be given by the Empress, but the one which Apolinary played four years later, at the Petersburg's court:

Vienna's Musical Association asked me for leaving the Apollinarek's violin, which he played at the age of 3 and a half in Petersburg, in front of the Russian Emperor in Moscow on the 30th March 1830, to have a memory, but I suspect that the Musical Association in Kraków will not deny the care for preserving the violin and they will be a nice memory for the Polish people that at this age Polish child travelled and surprised the amateurs and experts by his play. Appollinarek, currently at the age of seven, made a great impression on the amateurs and experts in Vienna, playing the Rode's *Concerto* and Lubin's *Variations* Op. 18.<sup>49</sup>

Kątskis remain in Vienna until the middle of the 1834. "Gazeta Warszawska" wrote:

The musical family of Kątski is still in Vienna. As we read in the press from there, there was their concert on 4th May of this year at the Hall of Friends of Music under Tuchlauben No. 558. Antoni and Karol Kątski became the members of the Association of Friends of Music in Vienna, in Kraków and in other places. Miss Eugenia Kątska sang during this concert, performing the aria from Ricci's *Chiara di Rosenberg* and the second one from Pacini's *La schiava di Bagdad*, and her

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<sup>49</sup> Orig. "Towarzystwo Muzykalne Wiedeńskie żądało ode mnie zostawienia skrzypiec Apollinarka, na których trzy i pół lat mający popisywał się na pokojach w Petersburgu przed Najjaśniejszą Cesarzową 10 lutego 1829 roku i przed Najjaśniejszym Cesarzem Rosyjskim w Moskwie 30 Marca 1830 roku, aby takowe zachować na pamiątkę, lecz ja spodziewam się, że Towarzystwo Muzykalne Krakowskie nie odmówi troskliwego zachowania takowych w swoim zbiorze, a z czasem może skrzypieczki owe nabiorą wielkiego szacunku i miłą pamiątką będą rodakom, że w tym wieku, już polskie dziecię wojażowało, i swoim graniem amatorów i znawców zadziwiło. Tenże Appollinarek siedem lat mający, grając w Wiedniu siódmy *Koncert* Rodego i *Wariacje* Lubina dzieło 18, wielkie na amatorach i znawcach zrobił wrażenie". The letter from Grzegorz Kątski to the Association of Friends of Music in Kraków, 2.06.1833, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

brothers, Antoni (pianist) and Karol as well as Apolinary (violinists) played their instruments (R.L.).<sup>50</sup>

It is unknown when exactly Kątskis left Vienna. Probably, it was at the turn of May and June 1834.

In the July of the same year we find them in Pest, where—as we read in “*Kurier Warszawski*”, “8-year-old Apolinary Kątski gave concert at the theatre, as he was commonly requested for it, on 23rd July, that is on the day of his name.”<sup>51</sup> The reaction was so enthusiastic that

From the ground floor, there was a garland of beautiful flowers thrown at him, with adequate German poems pinned, which we print here in the translation:

*Flower blooms for the artist and for the child,  
So in the day of your name, celebrating your festivity,  
We give you the bouquet of flowers willingly,  
Little is that gift from us  
But it will become more valuable  
When you will surround it with the rays of your fame.*<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Orig. “Muzykalna familia Kątskich bawi ciągle w Wiedniu. Jak w pismach tamtejszych wyczytujemy, dawała tamże koncert 4 maja r.b. w Sali Przyjaciół Muzyki pod Tuchlauben Nro 558. Antoni i Karol Kątscy zostali członkami Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Muzyki w Wiedniu, w Krakowie i w innych miejscach. Panna Eugenia Kątska śpiewała na tym koncercie arię z opery Riccego: *Chiara di Rosenberg* i drugą z *La schiava di Bagdad* Paciniego, a bracia jej, Antoni (fortepianista) i Karol, tudzież Apolinary (skrzypkowie) wyszczególniali się na swoich instrumentach (R.L.)”. “*Gazeta Warszawska*” 22.05.1834, No. 136, p. 5. It is *Chiara di Rosenber. Melodramma* written by Luigi Ricci to the libretto of Gaetan Rossi, performed for the first time on 11th October 1831 in Teatro Alla Scala in Milan, and *La schiava in Bagdad, ossia Il papucciajo. Melodramma* written by Giovanni Pacini to the libretto of Vittor Pezzi, performed for the first time on 18th October 1820 in Teatro Carignano in Turin.

<sup>51</sup> Orig. “8-letni Apolinary Kątski dawał tamże na powszechnie żądanie dnia 23 lipca, jako w dniu imiennin swoich, koncert w tamtejszym teatrze”. “*Kurier Warszawski*: 28.08.1834, No. 229, p. 3. Highlighted in the original text.

<sup>52</sup> Orig. “rzucono mu z parteru pięknych kwiatów upleciony wieniec, do którego stosowne wiersze niemieckie były przypięte, a które tutaj w przekładzie umieszczamy: / *Kwiat dla artysty i dla dziecka kwitnie, Więc w dniu imiennin czcząc Ciebie zaszczytnie, / Z kwiatów Ci wieniec składamy ochoczo, / Mały jest dar ten niesion Ci w ofierze, / Lecz on wartości od Ciebie nabierze, / Gdy go twej sławy promienie otoczą. Ibid.*

Pest was only a station in the journey to Paris, where “family of Kątski travelled [...] to see the Conservatory and uses the education given there.”<sup>53</sup>

By the end of 1834, the family of Kątski stayed in Munich to show off their talent for the audience there. On the 5th January 1835 at the concert hall next to Odeonplatz, Eugenia and brothers Antoni, Karol, Stanisław and Apolinary were welcomed with general applause.

## In the musical centre of Europe

In 1836 the family of Kątski stayed in Versailles near Paris.<sup>54</sup> We do not know exactly their place of residence from that time. Since 1838 in the letters from Leonard Niedźwiecki to Grzegorz Kątski, the following address is written: “363 rue St. Honoré, Paris”. Therefore, Kątskis decided to stay in the capital not so long after moving in to France.

It is hard to say how the musical siblings were welcomed by French audience. However, it should be remembered that in 1830s Paris belonged to the most active European cities in terms of culture. Many times, it was an asylum as in other countries the political situation was ambivalent. The vivid artistic life attracted representatives of various arts—literature, painting and music. It is not surprising that Grzegorz Kątski, dreaming about his children’s success, decided to go there.

1st February 1837 was remembered as the date of the first solo concert of the young Kątski at Paris City Hall (Hôtel de Ville). Soon after that, as the journal “Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris” writes, the brothers Kątskis were said to have given “a musical evening [...] on Saturday, 4th March 1837, at 8 p.m., in the salon of mister Erard at 13 Mail Street”.<sup>55</sup> The tickets costing ten francs could be bought at Maurice Schlesinger’s, a German journalist and the founder of Parisian “Gazette Musicale”, at 97 Richelieu Street.<sup>56</sup> Taking into consideration the fact that the issue

<sup>53</sup> Orig. “familia Kątskich wybiera się [...] dla poznania tamtejszego Konserwatorium i korzystania z dawanych w nim nauk”. *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> “Rocznik Emigracji Polskiej” 1836, p. 140.

<sup>55</sup> Orig. “Une soirée musicale donnée par les freres aura samedi 4 mars 1837, à 8 heures du soir, dans les salons de M. Erard, rue du Mail, n. 13”. *Vide:* “Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris” 26.02.1837, No. 9, p. 74.

<sup>56</sup> Orig. “On peut se procurer de billets chez M. Maurice Schlesinger, 97, rue Richelieu”. *Vide: ibid.*

of the journal "Journal des Débats" cost five francs, the price of the ticket seems not to be too high. Although at the beginning words of the advertisement clearly stated that it was going to be the concert of the brothers Kątskis (Antoni, Karol, Stanisław and Apolinary), looking at the detailed programme, they were not the only performers. That evening, misters Richelmi and Thys sang the romance by Brice called *Enfants dormes sur l'avenir* and nocturne *J'attends le soir* by Thys, and the lady named Bincourt sang two arias, which titles are unknown.<sup>57</sup> As the sixth piece, there was "Grande fantaisie sur les motifs DE LÉOKADIE",<sup>58</sup> for violin, composed by [Charles Phillippe] Lafont, performed by mister Apolinary Kątski, 10-year-old."<sup>59</sup>

The stay in the capital of France was full of numerous events that influenced the career of young Apolinary. Among them, there was primarily the meeting with Niccolò Paganini, staying in Paris at that time. It should be kept in mind that the Italian violinist yet staying in Warsaw in 1829 had the opportunity to hear about the talented child Apolinary Kątski, who was called "the four-year-old miracle".<sup>60</sup> Then, Kątski many times used his Parisian meeting with Paganini for advertisement, writing "the only student of Paganini, which was given the secret of the play of the great master" on the concert posters.<sup>61</sup>

However, the character of cooperation between the master and the young adept of violin playing is still not fully examined. It is worth noticing that the only actual student of Paganini was Camillo Sivori from Genoa (1815–1894). The rest of violinists pretending to such a title, as for example Kątski, had only the occasional contact with him, although they claimed to be his students.<sup>62</sup> As indicated by Zdenek Vyborny and Willis Wager, "For individual musicians Paganini wrote down his professional opinion in the form of testimonial, obviously

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Léocadie. Drama lyrique* in three acts, music: Daniel François Auber; libretto: Eugène Scribe and Mélesville (properly baron Anne-Honoré-Joseph Duveyrier); performed for the first time on 4th November 1824 in Salle Feydeau Opéra-Comique in Paris.

<sup>59</sup> Orig. "Grande fantaisie sur les motifs de LÉOKADIE, pour le violon, composée par Lafont, exécutée par M. Apollinaire Kontski, âgé de 10 ans". *Vide*: "Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris" 26.02.1837, No. 9, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> Orig. "czteroletnim cudem". J. Powroźniak, *Paganini*, Kraków 1972, p. 127.

<sup>61</sup> Orig. "jedynym uczniem Paganiniego, któremu wielki mistrz przekazał sekret swojej sztuki". A.H. Kirkor, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> J. Kusiak, *Apolinary Kątski*, [in:] *idem, Skrzypce od A do Z*, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

at their request.”<sup>63</sup> It was also true in the case of Apolinary. The Italian violinist, keeping the secret of his technique for himself, was interested in the persona of Kątski, as it is said, “as a most interesting musical phenomenon”,<sup>64</sup> gave the young violinist few practical lessons, and in the note from the 5th may 1838 wrote as follows:

Having listened to Master De Kontski, a youth of eleven, perform several pieces of music on the violin and having found him worthy of being numbered among the first and already well established concert players on this instrument, I take the liberty of saying that this young man, if he perseveres in this fine art, will be able with the passing of time to surpass the abovementioned artists.<sup>65</sup>

Prophetic words of Paganini became not only the Kątski’s way to perform at the concert halls of Europe, but also the excellent advertisement, the master of which the violinist was going to be in the near future. Soon, as Mai Kawabata says, he started to be known as “little Paganini”.<sup>66</sup> Since then, in the press Apolinary was more and more often described in the context of his relation to the Italian virtuoso. Parisian “Journal des Débats” called him “a pupil of Paganini”,<sup>67</sup> and London’s “Mirror Monthly Magazine” wrote in 1849 about the concert of Kątski, “a celebrated protégé of Paganini”.<sup>68</sup> On the contrary, Karl Guhr, when

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<sup>63</sup> Z. Vyborny, W. Wager, *Paganini as Music Critic*, “The Musical Quarterly” 46 (1960), No. 4, p. 472.

<sup>64</sup> A.H. Kirkor, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>65</sup> As cited in: Z. Vyborny, W. Wager, *op. cit.*, p. 472. As the authors write, the original is kept in the British Library in London. Within the correspondence from Apolinary Kątski to Leonard Niedźwiecki, preserved in the collections of the Kórnicka Library, the find two copies of the Paganini’s opinion in Italian and French, prepared by Kątski. The first of them (cat. No. B. K. 2406) is as follows: “Avendo inteso l’esecuzione di varii pezzi di musica sul violino dal Sig. De Kontski giovinetto di 11. anni, ed avendolo trovato degno di essere annoverato fra i primi professori Concertisti di tale istrumento, raputadi celebri, mi permetto di dire, che perseverando Egli in questa bell’ arte, potrà, col progresso del tempo, superare i sopra accennati artisti”.

<sup>66</sup> M. Kawabata, *Paganini: The Demonic Virtuoso*, New York 2013, p. 97.

<sup>67</sup> Orig. “M. Apollinaire de Kontski, élève de Paganini”. *Vide*: “Journal des Débats” 28.01.1850, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> *Vide*: “Mirror Monthly Magazine” 6 (July–December 1849), No. 1348, p. 130.

describing the musical life in Germany, wrote a following note about Kątski in the journal “Didascalia” from 27th May 1848:

Today, the political incidents probably cut us off from the visits of the excellent virtuosos for the long time, who like these birds appear with their talent in numerous cities during their journey. Only the one of these favourites of Muses, Apollinary Kątski, the student of Paganini, is a pleasing exception.<sup>69</sup>

Kątski never denied the legend about his relations with the “demon of violin”. He also approved the claim that he was a real pupil of Paganini. Adam Honory Kirkor underlined the significance of Paganini in Kątski’s life in the following way:

To only one [Paganini] showed all secrets of his magical school, as a proof for his satisfaction saved him one of his own violins and many compositions in the manuscripts.<sup>70</sup>

However, these words did not gain the approval of the “mysterious commentator”—a reader of one of two volumes of Kirkor’s book kept in the National Library in Warsaw, who allowed himself to write in blue, red and black crayon colourful and mean comments.<sup>71</sup> On the margin he wrote the following note: “total lie”.<sup>72</sup> The abovementioned words of Kirkor can be connected with the information, popular in Poland, that the Genoas citizen gave some of the manuscripts of his pieces to Kątski, such as *Fantasy “Moses” on G string* and *Venetian Carnival* Op. 10, as well as that he left him his Stradivari violin as a legacy. The information is doubtful, however, and it would be recommended to check its reliability, if it is possible.

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<sup>69</sup> Orig. “Die politischen Ereignisse der jungstverflossenen Zeit werden uns wahrscheinlich noch lange des Besuche jener grossen Tonkünstler berauben, die noch kurz zuvon, gleich fliegenden Zugvögeln, auf ihrer musikalischen Pilgerschaft bald diese, bald jene Stadt durch ihr ungewöhnliches Talent entzücken. Nur einer von diesen Lieblingen der Muse, Apollinary Kontski, Zögling Paganini’s bietet uns die freundliche Erscheinung des Gegentheils”. *Vide*: A.H. Kirkor, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–21.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>71</sup> The Polish National Library, cat. No. I.426.832.

<sup>72</sup> Orig. “fałsz wirutny”. *Ibid*.

In April 1837, so a year before the meeting with Apolinary Kątski, Paganini presented his will in the Senate Archive in Genoa, according to which his main inheritor was his son Achilles. Guarnerius del Gesù, his beloved instrument, was gifted to the city of Genoa with the wish to keep it there forever. Many biographers of Paganini say that the remaining precious instruments were given for the greatest violinists of that time: Charles de Bériot, Joseph Ernst, Karol Lipiński, Josef Mayseder, Bernhard Molique, Ole Bull, Louis Spohr i Henri Vieuxtemps.<sup>73</sup> That information is confirmed by the note in “Gazeta Lwowska” from December 1840, in which we can read: “There are words from Vienna that Karol Lipiński has already got the violin left him by Paganini. Soon, he is going to play them during the court concert”.<sup>74</sup> The name of Kątski as an inheritor does not exist in the will, because Apolinary was a teenager at that time.

## Conclusion

Apolinary Kątski, if we believe his father’s relation, began his career of the violinist as soon as at the age of three. Being an infant prodigy, he performed on the stages of Europe—at the beginning together with his concerting siblings, and in 1837 by himself for the first time. Since his debut in 1829 until March 1837, young Kątski took part in eighteen confirmed concerts in fourteen different cities. However, we do not know what happened to the virtuoso from the last mentioned concert (March 1837) to the Paganini’s opinion about him (May 1838). Probably, Kątski spent that time enhancing his technique. Undoubtedly, the landmark of his career of violin virtuoso was Niccolò Paganini’s opinion. The note not only opened him the door of concert halls in Paris, but also allowed him to perform in front of Queen Victoria in London. What is obvious, at that time he used the privileges of the infant prodigy, performing among older artists. However, it should be noticed that Kątski, contrary to many infant prodigies, did not disappointed people who had believed in him and continued, also outside of France, his great artistic career.

<sup>73</sup> J. Powroźniak, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>74</sup> Orig. “Donoszą z Drezna, że Karol Lipiński otrzymał już skrzypce zapisane mu przez Paganiniego. Wkrótce wystąpi na nich na koncercie dworskim”. *Ibid.*

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