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## *Goplana* by Władysław Żeleński. A few remarks on the style of the opera

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### Abstract

In November 2016, the National Theatre in Warsaw staged *Goplana* by Władysław Żeleński for the first time after its long absence from the stage. The opera was received with great acclaim by the critics worldwide, and in May 2017 it was granted an award at International Opera Awards in London in the category “rediscovered work.” This surprised not only Polish music lovers but also musicians, as the belief that Żeleński was a conservative composer whose works are a remnant of a bygone era had become widespread. This view had been shared by several generations and could not be verified since the composer’s pieces were very rarely performed, perhaps with the exception of his early works – the concert overture *W Tatrach* [*In the Tatra Mountains*] and a few songs. It was only recently that research on his oeuvre has been undertaken. The present article is aimed at providing additional information concerning the composing technique of Władysław Żeleński.

**Keywords:** Władysław Żeleński, *Goplana*, lyric opera, opera in Poland.

Władysław Żeleński is among the most prominent Polish composers of the second half of the nineteenth century. His composing oeuvre is abundant in nearly all genres and musical forms that were being created at that time, starting from solo pieces through chamber compositions and ending with symphonies and operas. However, it is his songs and operas that are believed to be the most significant. In these genres, the composer demonstrated the main feature of his style –

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lyricism. His songs, of which he wrote more than ninety, are marked by stylistic diversity, extensive range of genres and brilliant composing technique as well as formal mastery<sup>1</sup>.

No less important position in Żeleński's oeuvre is occupied by his four operas, three of which were premiered in Lviv: *Konrad Wallenrod* on 26 January 1885<sup>2</sup>, *Janek* on 4 October 1900<sup>3</sup> and *Stara baśń* [*An Ancient Tale*] on 14 March 1907. Only *Goplana* was not premiered in this city although it was prepared by the Lviv opera group. It was performed for the first time in Cracow on 23 July 1896.

Each of Żeleński's operas represents a different genre. *Konrad Wallenrod* is an example of *grand opéra*, *Goplana* is a lyric opera<sup>4</sup> (although Żeleński called it a Romantic opera), *Janek* has the features of a realistic opera, while *Stara Baśń* is a reference to Wagner's musical drama. *Goplana* is thought to be the composer's best piece written for the stage; it is based on Juliusz Słowacki's drama *Balladyna*. Despite its significance for Polish musical culture, the opera has been ignored by musicologists for many years. It was only recently that it started being researched. Anna Wypych-Gawrońska<sup>5</sup>, an expert in the field of theatre, compared Ludomił German's libretto with Juliusz Słowacki's drama and examined the press reception of the first stagings of *Goplana*. Grzegorz Zieziula<sup>6</sup> comprehensively discussed the origins of the opera, the circumstances surrounding its subsequent premieres and the attempts at staging it abroad. He also presented the views of contemporary critics on the work itself, raising the subject of its leitmotifs and folk character. Furthermore, he discussed the opera works of the end of the century, counting *Goplana* among lyric operas. On the other hand, Michał Jaczyński<sup>7</sup> investigated the reception of the opera from its first premiere in Cracow to the performances in 1900.

The above-mentioned works are more focused on the reception of the piece than its analysis. The aim of this article is to provide more information concerning Władysław Żeleński's composing technique. It discusses the issues that have not been raised so far, and the ones that have already been studied will be considered at length.

<sup>1</sup> A. Zwierzycka, *Pieśni solowe Władysława Żeleńskiego*, Akademia Muzyczna im. Karola Lipińskiego, Wrocław 2016, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> It was premiered at the Count Skarbek Theatre.

<sup>3</sup> The premiere was held on the opening of the new building of the Municipal Theatre.

<sup>4</sup> G. Zieziula, *Wstęp*, [in:] W. Żeleński, *Goplana* (1897), Warszawa 2016, pp. 106–113.

<sup>5</sup> A. Wypych-Gawrońska, *Literatura w operze: adaptacje dramatyczno-muzyczne utworów literackich w Polsce do 1918 roku*, Akademia im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Częstochowa 2005, pp. 83–100.

<sup>6</sup> G. Zieziula, op. cit.; idem, *Wokół opery „Goplana” Władysława Żeleńskiego: pytania o genezę i styl*, [in:] *O Słowackim – „umysł ludzi różne”*, ed. U. Makowska, Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa 2009, pp. 127–148.

<sup>7</sup> M. Jaczyński, *Recepcja twórczości Władysława Żeleńskiego w latach 1857–1939*, Musica Iagellonica, Kraków 2017, pp. 116–150.

## Structure

*Goplana* is not divided into numbers, which is typical for the Romantic opera. It consists of three acts divided into scenes. Thus, the scene becomes the basic structural unit and not one of the numbers of the opera form. It is not, however, a scene of the Wagnerian type because it clearly consists of separate, self-contained wholes. It is usually multi-sectional and the division does not pose any problems as it is emphasized not only by the changes of tempo or key but also by the use of rests. The individual fragments differ in terms of metre, dynamics, articulation and melody type. A scene may also include larger, self-contained wholes. Żeleński does not call them arias or songs, although they clearly show typical features of these genres (for example *Goplana*'s aria from the first scene of act I or Kirkor's romance from the third scene of act I). They might be songs characteristic of the Romantic opera – a folk song, romance, drinking song or prayer. The songs are set in a strophic form or in a strophic form with a refrain, while the arias are in the reprise form – multipartite ABCA<sub>1</sub> or tripartite ABA<sub>1</sub>.

The scenes are strongly connected with the plot; they reflect a different dramatic situation, but in the sense of a sequence of events, they are combined to create greater entirety (which results in a change of the place of action). They differ in terms of the cast of performers – solo voices, choir and ballet may all appear in them. The solo voices are conducted in two ways – they either sing in turns, resembling a dialogue involving from two to six people, or simultaneously, creating duets, trios, quartets and quintets. The entire opera is dominated by dialogues, yet other elements of the opera form appear apart from them. The solo voices often sing together with the choir, which doubles their part or interjects in the form of a dialogue. This concerns both ensembles and solo performances. Scenes that include self-contained choral parts are also present, for example the female choir of ghosts (act II scene 3), the male choir of knights (act I scene 3) or the mixed choir of peasants (act II scene 6). The choirs primarily take active part in the plot, but they also perform the commenting function (act I scene 1, act II scene 3).

There are few scenes with longer independent instrumental and ballet parts. They include the fourth scene of act II, which contains an instrumental *Intermezzo*, the sixth scene of act II, with elaborate dances and the singing of Grabiec's procession of ghosts, as well as the *Krakowiak* from the finale of act II, which was added for the Warsaw stage<sup>8</sup>. Each act begins with an instrumental introduction. The opera does not include an overture; there is only a short orchestral prelude that is directly connected with act I.

In *Goplana*, Żeleński implements his theoretical principles: he shapes the melody of folk songs and arias by ordering sections, showing preference for pe-

<sup>8</sup> More information about the instrumental sections may be found in: G. Zieziula, *Wokół opery...*, pp. 133–134; idem, *Wstęp...*, pp. 59, 69, 133–135.

riodic structure and symmetry. In his handbook entitled *Nauka harmonji oraz pierwszych zasad kompozycji* [*The study of harmony and basic principles of composition*] he writes: ‘Each melody should have certain symmetry if it is to satisfy the soul,’<sup>9</sup> and adds that ‘the most [...] rounded and aesthetically satisfying [form] is a composition consisting of three parts.’<sup>10</sup> Such a preference for order and symmetry certainly arose from the love of classical music that Alexander Dreyschock<sup>11</sup>, Żeleński’s piano teacher in Prague, planted in him, but perhaps also from the composer’s obsessive-compulsive personality<sup>12</sup>. What can be noticed throughout the whole opera is repetition. The frequent repetition of motifs, phrases and larger structural units, the repetition of freely constructed, irregular, lengthened or shortened, phrases and periods results in symmetry, and this is what links Żeleński with the tradition of classical and early-Romantic music. He draws on the creative experience of the composers of those periods, which is confirmed by the names that he cites in his handbooks – Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Schumann.

### Musical characterization of environments and characters

In the libretto, just like in the drama, there are three worlds – three environments so characteristic of Romanticism: the world of knighthood connected with Kirkor, Kostryn and knights, the world of fantasy – of Goplana, Skierka, Chochlik [Goblin] and spirits, and the world of the people represented by Grabiec, Alina, Balladyna, the Widow and peasants. Those three environments as well as individual characters are characterized in a masterly way by means of music.

The world of knighthood is best invoked by means of instrumentation – the use of full orchestra sound. A particularly important role is played by brass and percussion instruments; an attention-drawing element is also the trumpet fanfare played by the knights from Kirkor’s hunting procession. The parts of Kostryn and the knights are full of energy, verve and resoluteness, which the composer achieves by means of instrumentation, but also other elements such as marching rhythm, *forte* dynamics (reaching *fortissimo* at culmination moments), numerous accents and performance and expression markings, e.g. *ben deciso*, *marcato*, *con brio*. The character of music is also emphasized by its bright keys (A major and D major) and simple, uncomplicated harmony. These features are present throughout the whole third scene of the second act.

The character of Kirkor, connected in the libretto only with a love story, is treated by Żeleński in a slightly different way. Kirkor sings a melodious, cantilena

<sup>9</sup> W. Żeleński, G. Roguski, *Nauka harmonji oraz pierwszych zasad kompozycji*, 2nd edition, Warszawa 1899, p. 267.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 282.

<sup>11</sup> J. Reiss, *Almanach muzyczny Krakowa 1780–1914*, vol. 1, p. 105.

<sup>12</sup> A. Zwierzycka, *op. cit.*, pp. 47–58.

romance in *piano* dynamics with expressive markings of *dolce*, *espressivo*. It is accompanied by a small group of instruments with the oboe leading the way and additionally emphasizing the lyrical character of the song. Zdzisław Jachimecki rated this fragment among the most beautiful tenor parts in the Polish repertoire<sup>13</sup>.

The world of fantasy is distinct from other environments thanks to the instrumentation, articulation and dynamics used by the composer. All characters of this world are generally characterized in a similar way, although every one of them has its own musical language. The mysterious world of fantasy is connected with a delicate instrumental accompaniment including harp and triangle, with *pizzicato* articulation, *piano* or *pianissimo* dynamics and such expressive markings as *legiero*, *dolce*, *scherzando*.

Goplana, the queen of the Gopło lake, sings cantilena arias with coloratura elements in a moderate tempo and triple metre (the aria from the second scene of act I is a waltz). The instrument accompanying this character is the harp. Skierka and Chochlik, two mischievous spirits, are characterized mainly by means of articulation and the melody consisting of short rhythmic values performed *staccato*. The orchestra part includes the use of mutes and *pizzicato* articulation in string instruments, and the distinctive instrument, apart from the harp and cymbals – is the triangle. Contrary to the parts of Skierka and Chochlik, the choral parts (spirits) are characterized by consistent *legato* articulation.

The world of the people is described by means of stylized folk melodies. The melodies gathered by Kolberg became the starting point for the composer. However, he did not quote them literally but subjected them to artistic stylization, which Żeleński confirmed himself:

I transformed the original material according to my likes. That was the case with *Goplana*. I read the libretto to Kolberg, who referred me to appropriate volumes and titles that were relevant to given situations. ‘Don’t copy – he added – don’t imitate note for note, but draw inspiration and write your own music.’<sup>14</sup>

The songs are usually simple, characterized by periodic structure consisting of repeated phrases and motifs, and rhythms typical of Polish dances: mazurka, oberek and krakowiak. They have clearly defined keys (G major, A major, A minor, E major) or are based on modal scales (Aeolian, Phrygian). Their harmony is simple, often based on tonic and dominant or empty fifths. They are accompanied by a small group of instruments, usually woodwinds, with the bassoon as a distinctive instrument which characterizes hearty Grabiec. The best examples of this world are: Grabiec’s song from the first scene in act I, Alina’s song from the fourth scene in act II and the wedding peasants’ chorus from the sixth scene in act II. Although *Balladyna* comes from the world of the people, she is charac-

<sup>13</sup> Z. Jachimecki, *Władysław Żeleński*, 2nd ed., Kraków 1987, p. 62.

<sup>14</sup> Fa-sol, *Z Filharmonii. W gabinecie dyrektora. Władysław Żeleński*, “Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne” 1902, no. 968, p. 182.

terized by Źeleński in a different way as she represents a different type of character. It is Balladyna who, contrary to the title of the opera, is the main character of the drama. She is a psychologically complicated character with great imagination, swaying between normal behaviour (the strive for wealth and power) and madness. Her part is developed mostly in an evolutionary manner, it consists of recitative melody with large interval leaps, short, broken motifs, restless rhythm, numerous accents and a varied range of dynamics (from *pianissimo* and *forte fortissimo*). The character of Balladyna is also connected with constantly present dissonances, augmented and diminished chords and continuous modulations. It is accompanied by a massive group of instruments with the low sounding instruments in the foreground and the low register of other instruments being also exploited.

The diversity of musical devices used by Źeleński to depict the personality and mental state of Balladyna and Alina is illustrated by table 1.

**Table 1.** Musical characterization of Balladyna and Alina

Musical elements	BALLADYNA	ALINA
Type of shaping	gradual, short motifs, broken phrases	sequencing, frequent self-contained entireties, dance songs
Melodic pattern	recitative, large interval leaps	melodious cantilena, no large interval leaps, diatonic and melodic triad progression
Rhythmicity	diverse rhythmical values, dotted rhythm, pauses, syncopes; tempo marking: <i>stringendo</i>	Mazurka and Krakowiak rhythmic pattern or simple rhythmic progressions
Harmonics	dissonances, unresolved dominants, augmented and diminished chords, modulations	simple harmonic structures, clearly defined key
Dynamics	diverse dynamics: from <i>pp</i> to <i>fff</i> , mostly <i>f</i> and <i>ff</i> ; gradual or contrasting in short sections	<i>p</i> or <i>pp</i> dynamics; <i>f</i> only twice – in a moment of terror (pulled out knife and murder)
Articulation and expression	<i>tremolo</i> , <i>tremolando</i> , <i>marcato</i> , numerous accents; expression markings: <i>appassionato</i> , <i>espressivo</i> , <i>con stretto</i> , <i>con gran passione</i> , <i>affrettando</i> , <i>con fuoco</i> , with anger, irony, fury, scorn, enthusiasm, anxiety	<i>pizzicato</i> ; expression markings: <i>dolce</i> , <i>con tenerezza</i> , <i>leggiero</i> , <i>con espressione</i> , <i>scherzando</i> , with amazement or fear, affectionately, dreamily, playfully, anxiously
Instrumentation	massive; low-sounding instruments – bass clarinet, trombones; percussion instruments – timpani, bass drum, cymbals; low register of instruments	subtle and transparent; delicate instruments – English horn, harp, glockenspiel, triangle; often sings without instrumental accompaniment

## Orchestration

The orchestra instrumentation is typical of Romanticism: triple woodwinds (without contrabassoons), four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, harp and string quintet (sometimes playing *divisi*). The percussion section includes timpani, bass drum, snare drum, tambourine, cymbals, triangle, glockenspiel and tam-tam. The composer also introduces trumpets which are played on and behind the stage. The orchestra plays an important role in the drama; it helps to create the mood and characterize individual environments and characters, but it is treated in a traditional way. Just like in the classical orchestra, the individual orchestra groups have their specific melodic, harmonic and dynamic functions. As a result, the orchestra part is often divided into two layers – a melodic one and a harmonic one, or its role comes down to a harmonic background. The idea of showing up solo instruments and using them for expressive purpose was taken by Żeleński from Romantic composers and it shows his sensitivity to timbre, for example the harp shown before Goplana's entry in the first scene of act 1, the English horn accompanying Alina, or the trumpets in the scene with Kirkor's hunting procession (act I, scene 3).

Discussing the instrumentation of the composer's concert overtures, Felicjan Szopski, Żeleński's student, claimed that it was not very ingenious, which resulted from the fact that Żeleński did not go too deeply into the characteristics of individual instruments<sup>15</sup>. But there could also have been another, more prosaic reason, namely the absence of a professional symphony orchestra in Poland at the time – a situation caused by deliberate policy of the partitioners. The situation is also illustrated by Żeleński's question which has often been quoted: 'How am I to write *divisi* for violas if there is only one?'<sup>16</sup>.

In *Goplana*, the orchestra is subordinate to vocal parts which come to the fore. The most important element is melody, which results from the composer's creative attitude. In his handbook entitled *Nauka pierwszych zasad muzyki* [*The study of basic music principles*], Żeleński states that:

Melody is a sequence of sounds easily grasped by the ear and arranged in a certain rhythmic pattern. [...] It has always been based on human voice and represented the feelings of the heart. [...] The characteristic feature of vocal music is its close relation with words which give it expression and character [...]. [For the main purpose of musical art] is to bring out the thoughts contained in words by means of music<sup>17</sup>.

It should be added that vocal parts in *Goplana* are imbued with lyricism, which is a characteristic feature not only of this opera but of all Żeleński's works and thus constitutes a *differentia specifica* of his entire oeuvre.

<sup>15</sup> F. Szopski, *Władysław Żeleński*, Warsaw 1928, p. 42.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> W. Żeleński, *Nauka pierwszych zasad muzyki*, Warszawa 1898, pp. 4, 5.

## Technique of reminiscent themes

Some authors – such as Tomkowicz, Biernacki, Poliński, Kański<sup>18</sup> – write about leitmotifs in Żeleński's opera, trying to find common features with Wagner's drama. They, however, wrongly equate Żeleński's technique with the technique of leitmotifs<sup>19</sup>. *Goplana* contains various structural units (not only a motif) which correspond to given themes in terms of content; those themes are related to characters and objects and only to a minor extent to feelings and situations. They are only reminiscences which contribute to the integration of the music in the drama, but they do not form a continuous musical-and-dramatic progression as was the case in Wagner's works. For that reason, it seems much more appropriate to use the term **'the technique of reminiscent themes'** rather than 'the technique of leitmotifs'. **The themes** in *Goplana* have not only their corresponding **motives** and **phrases**, but also **whole melodies** or even **songs**. They are often repeated, exactly or with minor changes, in their entirety or in fragments. Żeleński modifies the melics and rhythm, changes the key, metre and instruments. Nevertheless, the fundamental outline of the theme is always preserved and clear. There are considerably more themes than it was previously stated. They predominantly appear in the vocal or the vocal and instrumental part. In this respect, they may be divided into four groups:

- I. occurring only in the instrumental part;
- II. occurring only in the vocal part;
- III. shown for the first time in the vocal part and then in the instrumental or vocal one;
- IV. shown for the first time in the vocal and instrumental part and then presented in the same way or only in the vocal part or only the instrumental part.

The themes, their diverse structure and the use of the technique of reminiscent themes are briefly presented in table 2.

<sup>18</sup> S. Tomkowicz, *Goplana. Opera Władysława Żeleńskiego*, "Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne" 1896, no. 670–671; S. Tomkowicz, *Goplana. Opera Żeleńskiego*, "Przegląd Polski" 1896, no. 363; M. Biernacki, *Goplana*, "Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne" 1898, no. 746; A. Poliński, *Goplana. Opera Władysława Żeleńskiego*, "Tygodnik Ilustrowany" 1898, no. 3; J. Kański, *Władysław Żeleński – Goplana*, [in:] *Przewodnik operowy*, Kraków 1978.

<sup>19</sup> The issue of *leitmotifs* in *Goplana* was also discussed by: G. Zieziula and M. Jaczyński (G. Zieziula *Wokół opery...*; idem, *Wstęp...*; M. Jaczyński, op. cit.).

**Table 2.** Technique of reminiscent themes

GROUP	THEME	STRUCTURAL UNIT	REMINISCING TECHNIQUE	PLACE OF OCCURRENCE
I	competition	motif	motif – literal repetition, extended, shortened; melic, rhythm, tone and tone colour changes	Act I scene 4, 5 Act II scene 4 Act III scene 1, 4, 7
	Balladyna	motif	motif – rhythm, tone and tone colour changes	Act II scene 4 Act III scene 1
	knife wounds	motif	motif – rhythm and tone changes	Act II scene 4 Act III scene 4
II	Chochlik	song	entirety – limited and increased number of motifs; melic, rhythm, tone and tone colour changes; fragment of melody – melic changes	Act I scene 4, 5 Act II scene 4 Act III scene 7
	Goplana	aria	fragment of melody – metric and tonal changes; antecedent – literal repetition; consequent – melic and rhythm changes	Act I scene 2 Act II scene 2
III	raspberries	song	entirety – omitting sounds, tone changes; sentence – literal repetition, shortened; changes of melody and rhythm, metre, tone and tone colour; phrase – melic and rhythm changes; transformations of melody and rhythm, changes of metre, tone, dynamics and tone colour	Act II scene 4 Act III scene 1, 4, 7
	Grabiec	song	fragment of melody – literal repetition, tone and tone colour changes	Act I scene 1 Act II scene 5 Act III scene 1
IV	Alina	melody	entirety – extended repetition, melic, tone and tone colour changes	Act I scene 4, 5
	willow	melody	entirety – tone changes; phrase – literal repetition, rhythm and tone changes; motif – rhythm and tone changes	Act II scene 2, 4 Act III scene 6, 7, 9 (first source: Act I scene 1)
	Kirkor's love	romance with an instrumental introduction	entirety – reduction of individual tones, shortening; fragment of melody – literal repetition, melic, rhythm and melody, tone and tone colour changes; motif – literal repetition, melic, melody and rhythm, tone and tone colour changes	Act I scene 3, 4 Act II scene 6 Act III scene 1

## Summary

*Goplana* belongs to the group of lyric operas<sup>20</sup>, but the composer himself described it as a Romantic opera, even though he wrote it at the end of the nineteenth century. Its “Romanticism” manifests itself not only in the contents of the libretto but is also visible in the musical devices used in the piece, which are not innovative. Even the composition of the orchestra and its treatment are “Romantic.” On the other hand, *Goplana*’s structure is in between the Romantic opera and Wagnerian drama. Żeleński borrowed merely the external features of Wagner’s drama, that is the resignation from the division into numbers, yet in the structure of the scene he remains faithful to the tradition of the Romantic opera. The same applies to leitmotifs. Only the idea of unifying the opera with the use of the thematic material instead of the composing technique was taken from Wagner’s music. Furthermore, Żeleński differs from Wagner in his use of the technique of reminiscent themes predominantly in the vocal part and the vocal and instrumental parts rather than only in the instrumental part.

In a jubilee text on Żeleński, Edmund Walter explains the composer’s attitude to Wagner in the following way:

Żeleński could not [...] take everything uncritically from Wagner – he was too intelligent and too Polish to do that, and he understood that Wagner’s ideas could not be transplanted directly on to the Polish ground as that music had too many purely German elements to be properly accepted there. He understood and felt that the Polish soul was always taken with the broad Italian cantilena, did not like too much polyphony, which hindered the direct experience of melody, and preferred closed, clarified forms, even at the cost of dramatic continuity<sup>21</sup>.

And the composer himself said:

I highly value Wagner as a composer; he amazes me with his greatness, but I am not delighted with Wagnerism at all<sup>22</sup>.

Żeleński had the soul of a Romantic. He thought that the work of art should “come from the heart, to the heart.”<sup>23</sup> That is why he valued Verdi more than Wagner. He said the following about the Italian composer:

[Verdi] found the most appropriate path, affecting the hearts, moving the listeners and awakening the purest emotions in them<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> See G. Zieziula, *Wstęp...*, pp. 106–113.

<sup>21</sup> E. Walter, *Władysław Żeleński (sylwetka jubileuszowa)*, “Gazeta Lwowska” 1912, no. 274; quoted after: M. Dziadek, *Polska krytyka muzyczna w latach 1890–1914. Koncepcje i zagadnienia*, Katowice 2002, p. 533.

<sup>22</sup> W. Żeleński, *W pięćdziesiątą rocznicę zgonu*, [in:] *Kompozytorzy polscy o Fryderyku Chopinie*, ed. M. Tomaszewski, Kraków 1964, p. 72.

<sup>23</sup> Fa-sol, op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> W. Żeleński, *Józef Verdi*, “Przegląd Polski” 1901, vol. 140, p. 258.

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After the triumphant first premiere in Cracow, *Goplana* was soon staged in Lviv and Warsaw, where it was also successful. Therefore, a decision was made to present the opera to the European audience. There were attempts to stage it at Vienna, Prague, Zagreb and Bratislava, but they all failed<sup>25</sup>. The situation with other works was similar. Although they gained great recognition and received awards, their influence did not reach beyond Polish borders and, at the beginning of the twentieth century, they were overshadowed by the achievements of the new generation of composers with Karłowicz and Szymanowski in the lead.

It was only recently that the interest in Żeleński's work, including the opera *Goplana*, has grown. After several dozen years of its absence on stage, it appeared at the Polish National Opera in Warsaw in October 2016 and was received by the critics worldwide with great acclaim. In May 2017, it was granted a prestigious award at International Opera Awards in London in the category "rediscovered work." Żeleński's dream also came true – audiences throughout Europe could see the opera thanks to an internet broadcast and the streaming platform [www.the-operaplatform.eu](http://www.the-operaplatform.eu).

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## ***Goplana* Władysława Żeleńskiego. Kilka uwag o stylu opery**

### **Streszczenie**

W październiku 2016 roku Teatr Wielki – Opera Narodowa w Warszawie wystawił, po kilkudziesięciu latach nieobecności na scenie, *Goplanę* Władysława Żeleńskiego. Opera ta została przyjęta przez światową krytykę z ogromnym uznaniem, a w maju 2017 roku została uhonorowana w Londynie statuetką International Opera Awards w kategorii: dzieło odkryte na nowo. Nagroda ta była zaskoczeniem nie tylko dla polskich melomanów, lecz także muzyków. Upowszechniła się bowiem opinia o Żeleńskim jako kompozytorze konserwatywnym, którego twórczość jest jedynie wyrazem minionej epoki. Pogląd ten był powielany przez kilka pokoleń i nie mógł zostać zweryfikowany, ponieważ utwory kompozytora były bardzo rzadko wykonywane, za wyjątkiem może jego młodzieńczego dzieła – uwertury koncertowej *W Tatrach* i kilku pieśni. Dopiero w ostatnim okresie podjęto badania nad jego twórczością. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest uzupełnienie informacji dotyczących warsztatu kompozytorskiego Władysława Żeleńskiego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Władysław Żeleński, *Goplana*, opera liryczna, opera w Polsce.