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Warsaw as a center of music tourism

Abstract: The article describes music tourism, i.e. a subset of cultural tourism. The aim of the present paper is to present the elements of Warsaw's cultural offering, land management and identity, which underlie the potential for the development of music tourism in the capital city of Poland. The author assumed that Warsaw's music tourism resources make Poland's capital city a center of music tourism. The aim set forth the author accomplished through fieldwork observation and in-depth interviews with the Promotion Office of the Cultural Department of the Municipality of Warsaw.

Keywords: music tourism, Warsaw, music tourism resources

1. Introduction

Cultural tourism understood as a set of tourists' behaviors towards their interests in cultural heritage and their participation in broadly understood cultural life (Kowalczyk and Derek, 2010) is thriving today. Genuine interest in culture is often one of the main reasons behind tourist travel both to urban and rural areas. Cultural tourism involves travel based around, among other things, a direct contact with local culture or perception of art (Sorokowski, 2004; Gaworecki, 2007; Stasiak, 2007; Kowalczyk, 2008; Czerwiński, 2011).

The following article examines music tourism, i.e., one of the many types of cultural tourism. To date it has been of interest to mainly foreign researchers, including but not limited to Bolderman (2018), Fitzgerald and Reis (2016), while in Poland, it has been a subject of little scientific investigation within the field of geography of tourism (briefly mentioned, among others, by Kozak, 2009).

Taking into account the above mentioned literature, the author of the present paper understands music tourism as a type of cultural tourism that involves a temporary migration of individuals from their usual place of residence to another place, in which they directly and consciously experience music events and

other music-related phenomena as well as enhance their knowledge about history and theory of music as well as their music skills. In the most intuitive way, music tourism can be defined as any travelling for the purpose of participating in a concert (of classical and pop music) or a music-based performance. Yet, its scope does not end there. Besides concerts and other music-related events, tourists interested in music can be attracted by places related to personalities established in the world of music (e.g. former places of residence or activity, biographical museums and burial places, etc.). Additionally, music tourism might be linked to some extent to educational tourism due to music courses or studies that can be, for instance, partially completed at a foreign music school – a practice popular among musicians. However, the latter aspect of music tourism, just mentioned above, will not be discussed, as the author focuses on the cognitive-leisure domain of tourism activity.

In order to discuss music tourism in Warsaw, the author first outlines case studies of four European hubs of music tourism located in four countries, being by far most critical, from a historical perspective, to the development of

classical music. They are discussed with regard to three pillars of classical music:

- symphonic music – Vienna, Austria,
- ballet – Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia,
- opera – Bayreuth, Germany.

On the basis of travel guide books and website-based content regarding cultural offering of the selected centers, the author analyzed the elements of the cultural offering, land management as well as the cities' identities facilitating the development of music tourism in the aforementioned cities. The last part of the paper presents in the same manner the inventory

of Warsaw's tourism resources which prove that Warsaw is an important cultural center of Europe. Literature analysis and fieldwork observation (conducted mainly within Śródmieście and its close vicinity) were supplemented with in-depth interviews with the Promotion Office of the Cultural Department of the Municipality of Warsaw. Małgorzata Naimska, the vice-director of the Department and a person working at the Promotion Office¹ were interviewed in the study. Both the fieldwork observation and the interviews were conducted in June, 2014.

2. Case studies – Vienna, St. Petersburg and Moscow, Bayreuth

Vienna is commonly considered to be the European capital of music and a city of grand musical geniuses as it was chosen for a home by many of most outstanding personalities from the world of music in the history of mankind (Rognoni, 1978; Wechsberg, 1978; Jusserand, 1998; Lisowska and Lisowski, 2004). Among them are first and foremost the three Vienna Classics (Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven), leading Romantic composers (e.g. Franz Schubert), Neoclassics (e.g. Johannes Brahms), Neoromantics (e.g. Gustav Mahler and Anton Bruckner), and the several generations of the Strauss family composers and also the representatives of the so called 20th century new Vienna school (Arnold Schönberg, Anton Webern and Alban Berg). All the above mentioned artists contributed most of all to a substantial development of symphonic music in this city. Although, it is obviously not the only type of classical music in the present or future repertoire of the Vienna music institutions.

Wiener Musikverein and *Konzerthaus* remain the main home for the symphonic music developing in Vienna. *Wiener Musikverein*, the Vienna Philharmonic, houses one of the most renowned concert halls in the world, where most outstanding classical music works are performed. It is the *Goldener Saal of the Musikverein* where the Vienna Philharmonic

play their New Year's Day Concerts, which is broadcast every year and is considered to be one of the most important cultural events in Vienna (so crucial in the context of music tourism).

Other major music institutions in Vienna (although less related to symphonic classical music) are, inter alia, *Wiener Staatsoper* (one of the greatest opera houses worldwide, ranking first internationally by the number of performances) (www.wien.info.com/pl), *Volksoper* (with musicals, and dance performances and operettas) and *Theater an der Wien* (mainly a musical theatre). Live music rings out also in the famous Viennese Concert Cafés, with live piano music of Waltz by Johan Strauss, jazz pieces or songs by Schubert most often accompanying a visit to a coffee house. The most famous sites of that type include, among other places, *Café Schwarzenberg* (founded in 1860) or *Konzertcafé Schmid Hansl*. Besides in Vienna, there are many museums related to music, for instance *Haus der Musik*, the *Museum of Historical Musical Instruments*, Haydn Museum, Schubert Museum, Strauss Museum, *Figarohaus* and several former Beethoven's apartments. And on top of this, annual open air symphonic music concerts performed in the *Schönbrunn* Palace park since 2004 complement the Viennese musical repertoire.

Furthermore, busts, monuments, bas-reliefs of the composers can be found, for instance

¹ In accordance with the procedure only senior employees have the authority to speak on behalf of the Office in interviews and reveal their personal data.

in parks, green squares, public venues, public squares and on the walls of various buildings. The Viennese music geniuses also had a separate section at the Central Cemetery granted to them, where Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert and Strauss lay to rest, side to side. A symbolic tomb of Mozart was also set up.

Music also flourished in Eastern Europe with Moscow and St. Petersburg, the two largest Russian metropolis as very important European music centers (Lissa, 1955). Almost all Russian most important composers studied there, created and presented their works to the general public. And these were, among others, Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Diaghilev, a great creator of ballet art. Until now Moscow and St. Petersburg are both considered to be the European centers of ballet and world's most professional dance centers (Turska, 1983). Among most important ballet institutions are the *Mariinsky (ex. Kirov) Theatre* in St. Petersburg (famous for classical ballet) (Richmond, 2005) and the Bolshoi Theatre (where the Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake* premiered) – one of the top tourist landmarks for opera and ballet music lovers visiting Russia (www.wien.info.com/pl). Besides above mentioned institutions where ballets are display, in this both cities there are many other music institutions, e.g. Moscow Chamber Opera, Moscow Theatre of Operetta, Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow and St. Petersburg Philharmonic. As in Vienna, the space of Mokswa and St. Petersburg are also full of monuments referring to important artists, e.g. eminent cellist Mstislav Rostropovich.

Bayreuth is another city of particular cultural importance in Europe, known throughout the world mainly as a European opera center for its Richard Wagner Festival,

which is held annually in the summer period (*Bayreuther Festspiele*) (Wagińska-Marzec, 2007). Richard Wagner created giant-sized synthetic works, integrating various art forms and hence his need for a specifically adapted stage. To this end, he built from scratch a new opera house (*Festspielhaus*). And since 1876 all stage works by Richard Wagner have been performed during the summer Richard Wagner Festival. Bayreuth owes its reputation as a cultural city mainly to the Richard Wagner Festival. It is a world scale event with a nearly 140-year-long tradition. By this particular cultural value, Bayreuth is also considered to be a tourist destination. Each year the city attracts approximately sixty thousand tourists (www.bayreuth.de/turystyka/kultura) during this most important event in Bayreuth.

The data from the above case studies was used to identify the elements of the cultural offering, land management and the city's identity contributing to the development of music tourism. Given the results, the author believes that the following elements affect the development of a city as a center of music tourism:

- personal music tourism resources – this shall be understood to refer to a situation in which prominent personalities from the music world lived in a given city and created their works there, and whose (past or present) activities attract tourists,
- institutional music tourism resources – this shall be understood to refer to a situation in which music or music-related institutions constitute an important component of the city's cultural offering to tourists,
- music festivals organized in place,
- music-related elements of land management, i.e., monuments, commemorative plaques of a given personality, elements of small architecture.

3. The potential of Warsaw as a center of music tourism – the inventory results of the music tourism resources

According to the female interviewees from the Department of Culture at the Warsaw City Hall, Fryderyk Chopin constitutes a major contribution to the music identity of Warsaw. Despite being born in Żelazowa Wola, Warsaw is considered to be his home town and a cradle of his

talent as he spent his youth there and shaped his attitude to composing and modeled his talent (Atwood, 1987; Albán-Juárez and Sławińska-Dahlig, 2007; Mysłakowski and Sikorski, 2009; Majewski, 2010; Niewiarowska, 2010). Chopin's bonds with Poland, particularly with Warsaw,

are highlighted by many researchers examining the phenomenon of Chopin's music. In essence, they consist mainly in the fact that Chopin as an individual living in a defined geographic space exerted a decisive influence on this particular space with his artistic activity.

Chopin's impact on Warsaw continues to be felt to this day. Many institutions and events in Warsaw are linked to Fryderyk Chopin, including the Fryderyk Chopin Museum (which holds a collection of approximately seven thousand pieces of Chopin's memorabilia), the Fryderyk Chopin Institute, the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music, the International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition, the "Chopin and his Europe" Music Festival, and others. Also according to the opinion given by the interviewees, following the Jubilee Chopin Year (2010), Warsaw has become even more of a city of music, with Chopin being an integral part of the city brand. In their opinion, the composer requires no additional promotional activity neither in Poland nor abroad and the popularity of the Polish composer may therefore be used to promote the city. On the occasion of the Chopin Year celebrations musical elements also appeared in the urban space of Warsaw, including crosswalks (Emilii Plater street) or sidewalks (Tamka street) painted like the piano keyboard. Additionally, musical benches, playing pieces of Chopin music were set up to fill the open urban space of Warsaw with music.

The interviewees also pointed out that the figure of the Polish pianist is what makes Warsaw unique, and that this fact was finally recognized in Europe. All this required considerable labor and financial input (much greater than that consumed in the Year of Maria Skłodowska-Curie), thanks to which following the Jubilee Chopin Year celebrations, the great composer Fryderyk Chopin has come to be identified with the capital city of Warsaw. This is strongly supported by the results of the opinion polls held among tourists about Warsaw, according to which Fryderyk Chopin is one of the elements mostly associated with the Polish capital city (since 2011 Chopin has received most indications amongst such other symbols

as the Palace of Culture and Science, the Warsaw Mermaid or Maria Skłodowska-Curie)².

One of the major music tourism resources of Warsaw is a thematic trail along the Royal Route, linking sites related to Fryderyk Chopin. The benches can be found in places such as Łazienki Park (The Royal Bath Park) next to the monument of our composer (the biggest statue in Warsaw presenting a single person), which is one of the best-known tourist attractions in the city (compare Dudek-Mańkowska, 2011), the Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw (the former parish church of the Chopin Family, where in accordance with Chopin's wish – who died in Paris – his heart found its resting place), next to the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music (with three busts of Fryderyk Chopin standing there) and also other places, where the composer either lived or performed (for instance churches and palaces). Besides benches playing Chopin pieces, symbolically reminding us of the Chopin's presence in the 19th century Warsaw, there are many more spatial traces of the composer's presence. Numerous commemorative plaques that can be found, e.g., at the Presidential Palace, the Zamoyski Palace or next to the gate of the University of Warsaw also remind us of the composer.

According to the female interviewees musical traditions of Warsaw are also cultivated in several institutions, the most important of them being the National Philharmonic and the Grand Theatre in Warsaw, holding in total several hundred concerts of classical music, opera and ballet performances as well as other music events each year. Symphonic or chamber music concerts are also held at the Witold Lutosławski Polish Radio Concert Studio in Warsaw, the concert room of the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music or at the headquarters of Symphonia Varsovia. When it comes to popular music, the Congress Hall at the Palace of Culture and Science is all the more important, where the concerts of the greatest pop stars and film music concerts used to be organized as well as Warsaw club stages (e.g. Proximy, Stodoła) or theatre stages (e.g. Palladium, Syrena). Musicals and operettas appear at several Warsaw musical theatres, for example Roma and Buffo.

² *Warszawa w oczach mieszkańców Wielkiej Brytanii, Niemiec, Rosji, Francji i Hiszpanii*, 2014, Grupa IQS, Warszawa, badanie przeprowadzone na próbie 1000 osób [research carried out on a sample of 1000 people].

And also old manufacturing sites have been rebuilt to be concert halls as it was in the case of *Fabryka Trzciny* Artistic Centre in Praga Północ. Sports facilities such as the National Stadium and Torwar Sports Hall matter increasingly in the city's cultural offering. Other Warsaw's historical sites, including the Royal Palace, *Dziekanka* Students' Dormitory or the Main Building of Warsaw University of Technology are used to house concerts. Orchestral or vocal religious music is performed in many churches in Warsaw, including the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. John the Baptist Metropolitan Cathedral or St. Anne's Church. Music resonates not only in the interiors. Other typical open-air venues where musical performances are organized include public parks (mainly the Royal Bath Park famous for Chopin piano recitals and also Sowińskiego Park, Praski Park or Królikarnia Park).

The Warsaw festival offering is significantly varied. Some festivals have been in the cultural calendar for a long time and have taken root in the identity of Warsaw so strongly that they can be seen as the music highlights of the city. The interviewees agreed that jazz festivals constitute an important part of the festival scene in Warsaw, with Jazz Jamboree Festival – cultivating traditional New Orleans sounds – being the oldest and most prestigious one. A world-class Warsaw Summer Jazz Days festival is also of high relevance. It was founded to present the latest trends in jazz music. The concerts are held

at Torwar, the Congress Hall or Warsaw clubs. New Orleans jazz music can be heard outdoors during the International Summer Open Air Jazz in the Old Town Festival.

Further Warsaw also hosts prestigious classical music festivals. For example, the Easter Ludvig van Beethoven Festival, Chopin and his Europe and Warsaw Autumn are held in the National Philharmonic, while in the Grand Theatre (as well outside the theatre – at *Plac Teatralny* (the Theatre Square) *Le Folle Journee* international festival takes place. Furthermore Warsaw Chamber Opera remains the host of the only opera music festival in the world, i.e. Mozart Festival, during which all stage works of Mozart are performed. Festivals aimed at a younger audience account for a significant part of the total number of music festivals held in Warsaw (e.g., Orange Warsaw Festival, the Warsaw *Juwenalia*, Free Form Festival, Warsaw Underground Festival).

According to the representatives of the Warsaw City Hall, one of the most prestigious music events and at the same time one of the oldest music competitions in the world held every five years in Warsaw is the International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition. Since 1927 the National Philharmonic invariably remains the home of the competition and the first edition of the Chopin Competition is considered to be the most important episode in the history of Warsaw (Głębocki and Mórąwski, 1996).

4. Summary

City is nothing but a space for activity of people living in a given time, while social phenomena occur in certain geographical surroundings (Kaczmarek, 2005). Intangible musicality of the city has a symbolic meaning. It was created mainly by people who lived in a given time and in a given volume of space, and who satisfied their own spiritual needs, and who through their music activities continuously developed a network of artistic and institutional relationships. Society as a historical being has its own continuance and geographical location, and the biographies of individuals, especially those exceptionally talented would have an impact on the city's identity. People have also an import-

ant role in creating tourist space as there are cases in which they constitute a potential for tourism or even a tourist attraction itself (compare Włodarczyk, 2009). In music tourism, famous musicians, mostly composers are the main attraction for tourists to come and visit urban centers. Therefore we can refer to certain cities as music cities thanks to the people (personal music resources) who embodied artistic ideas, thus contributing to musical traditions and shaping the musical atmosphere of the city.

The attractiveness of the contemporary urban centers in the context of their potential for music tourism development is also largely dependent on institutions whose activities

relate to music. They are treated as components of tourism management thanks to which people visiting those cities may satisfy their artistic spiritual needs (Frączyk, 2007; Kowalczyk and Derek, 2010).

Participation in music festivals is undeniably settled in the current of music tourism (Gaworecki, 2007, Mika, 2007). Importantly, from the music tourism perspective, some of them can attract a substantial audience to a given urban center. Festivals can, in a way, be a tourist highlight because thanks to them some cities have or can reinforce their music image.

By recalling the opinions of the representatives of the Department of Culture at the Warsaw City Hall and the results from the fieldwork observation, the author presented the inventory of the music tourism resources of Warsaw. According to the author of the present paper their number and rank make Warsaw – like Vienna, Moscow, St Petersburg and Bayreuth – an important European music hub. Fryderyk Chopin himself as well as the music events, institutions and other elements of land management related to Chopin are definitely the city's most important resources of music tourism.

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