

ZBIGNIEW SEIFERT'S COLLECTION IN THE POLISH JAZZ ARCHIVE

The aim of creating the Polish Jazz Archive, established at the Manuscript Department at the National Library in Warsaw, is the collection and compilation of documents pertaining to the jazz scene in Poland. The archive includes materials both from musicians and journalists, and from those taking active part in jazz life in Poland. The collection of Krzysztof Komeda (1931–1969) is the major part of the collection to date. This text is devoted to Zbigniew Seifert's archive, acquired in 2014 from the musician's wife, Irena (Agnieszka) Seifert, and from Małgorzata Seifert, his sister.

Zbigniew Seifert (1946–1979) was among the greatest Polish jazz violinists, and among the first Polish jazzmen to make it big in the United States, the home of jazz. Seifert was born in Cracow, where he began his music education at the Primary Music School under the supervision of Maria Maksysiowa. He continued his studies at the Chopin Secondary Music School and the Academy of Music, also in Cracow, where his teacher was Prof. Stanisław Tawroszewicz (1906–1978). He was a promising violin virtuoso.¹ His musical experi-

1 He mentioned that he faced no technical problems. See: J.E. Berendt, "Zbigniew Seifert - romantyk na tropach Coltrane'a", *Jazz Forum*, 1977, no. 4 (48), p. 24 [reprinted from *Jazz Podium*, 1977, no. 4].

ence from that period would influence his later work; he approached classical music with great attentiveness and sensitivity.² During his high school studies, under the influence of John Coltrane's recordings, he began to learn to play saxophone, which changed his career. In 1962, with pianist Jan Jarczyk (1947–2014), drummer Janusz Stefański (1946–2016) and bassist Jan Gonciarczyk (b. 1947), then learning to play viola,³ Seifert became a student in the experimental jazz class run by Alojzy Thomys (1929–2005), saxophonist in the Melomani Band.⁴ They made their debut as the Zbigniew Seifert Quartet at the All Souls' Day Jazz Festival in 1965, then performed in 1968 and 1969 at the Jazz on the Odra Festival in Wrocław,⁵ where they received awards (as a band and Seifert as an instrumentalist). Earlier, like many young musicians, Seifert had performed at dances at the Feniks club in Cracow and at student events.⁶ The awards received during the Wrocław festival allowed the band members to establish themselves as jazz musicians.

In 1968 Seifert and Stefański began working with trumpeter Tomasz Stańko (1942–2018), along with Janusz Muniak (1941–2016) and Bronisław Suchanek (b. 1948). They created a quintet playing in a modern style, both for Poland and for Europe, as evidenced by a series of concerts from 1969 to 1973, mostly abroad, and by the recording of three important albums: *Music for K.* (1970), *Jazzmessage from Poland* (1972) and *Purple Sun* (1973). From the outset of performing with the Stańko quintet, Seifert played alto saxophone, but he took up violin again at the suggestion of his bandmates.⁷ Through practice and determination, he had developed his own distinct style, derived from his experience of playing such a typical jazz wind instrument as saxo-

2 P. Brodowski, "Pasja życia", *Jazz Forum* 1979, no. 3 (59), p. 23.

3 A. Norek-Skrycka, *Man of the Light. Życie i twórczość Zbigniewa Seiferta*, Warsaw 2016, p. 24.

4 Among the first jazz bands in Poland, operating from 1952 to 1958 (from 1956 under the name Hot Club Melomani). See: K. Brodacki, *Historia Jazzu w Polsce*, Warsaw 2010.

5 Among the oldest jazz festivals in Poland, founded in 1964. See: K. Brodacki, *Historia jazzu w Polsce*, Warsaw 2010.

6 *Ibidem*, p. 27.

7 *Ibidem*, p. 78.

phone. The first results of Seifert's work as a jazz violinist were recorded on the album *Five Hits in a Row*, 1971, by flautist Jiří Stivín. It appears that, due to the fact that both his instrument and his playing technique were rare in jazz, Seifert was regularly invited to work with other musicians once he moved to West Germany, in 1973. The many acquaintance he had made while performing with Stańko were significant. Seifert worked with Hans Koller in the band Free Sound, with Volker Kriegel, Joachim Kühn, Wolfgang Dauner, Jasper van 't Hof, Philip Catherine, Charlie Mariano and others. Their musical encounters resulted in numerous concerts in West Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium and in radio and TV recordings (including for Norddeutsche Rundfunk, Deutsche Demokratische Rundfunk and Belgische Radio en Televisie), and in recording sessions for albums. Seifert appeared on van 't Hof's *Eyeball* (1974), Kühn's *Cinemascope* (1974) and *Springfever* (1976), and on Mariano's *Helen 12 Trees* (1976). Seifert also founded his own band Variospheres, which worked (with various line-ups) from 1975 to 1976.⁸ In 1977, Seifert released his first studio album, *Man of the Light*.⁹ In 1976, he left for the first time for the United States, where he performed at the Monterey Jazz Festival. That same year, he learned that he was ill with cancer - he would struggle with the disease through the final years of his life. Despite difficulties playing the violin that were related to cancer, this was a creative period in his life. It resulted in recording two albums for the Capitol label, *Zbigniew Seifert* (1977) and *Passion* (1979), and in many concerts. Seifert did not live to see the release of his second album (which he finished recording in December 1978),¹⁰ as he died following post-surgery complications on 15 February 1979 in a hospital in Buffalo, New York.

8 In 2017, the Zbigniew Seifert Foundation released the Variospheres bootleg *Live in Solothurn* from 1976. This is the first record by the band.

9 Roman Kowal describes the circumstances of the album's creation in detail. See: R. Kowal, *Polski jazz. Wczesna historia i trzy biografie zamknięte Komeda - Kosz - Seifert*, Kraków 1995, p. 189.

10 *Ibidem*, p. 203.

The Zbigniew Seifert's collection presently included in the the Polish Jazz Archive consists of various materials. Biographical ones documenting his life and career prevail. Correspondence is a very interesting part, especially the largest part, consisting of letters written by Seifert to his parents and sister. This also consists of his writings and compositions, mostly works in progress. The archive consists of sixteen manuscript units; there are also photos, jazz periodicals mentioning Seifert, and three-dimensional objects such as strings, violin chinrests and saxophone reeds.

The most important part, due to the area of his artistic activity, consists of sheet music. These testify to how special jazz composition is. This part consists mostly of drafts and works in progress. There are seven A4 notebooks, with sheet notes including jazz standards and songs popular in the 1960s written down by Seifert. The first group of pieces includes such compositions as "Ain't Misbehavin" by Fats Waller, "Stella by Starlight" by Victor Young, and pieces by Cole Porter and George Gershwin. This is basic repertoire for jazz musicians, used

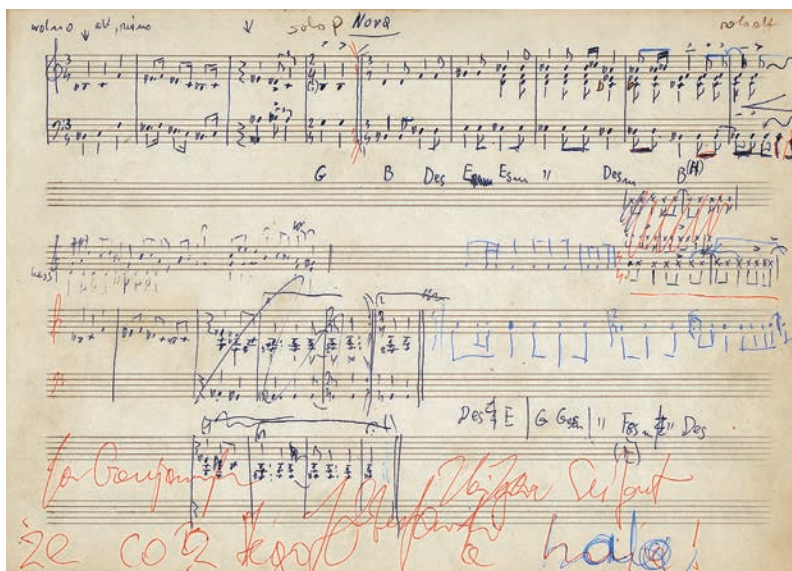


FIG. 1. Notebooks with pieces and sketches, p. 70

to practise their improvisational skills as well as to learn the rules of composition. As swing hits, they can also be performed as dance music. The notebooks also contain works created in the post-war years, for example themes by Thelonious Monk (“Bolivar Blues”, “Round Midnight”), John Coltrane (“Lazy Bird”), Wayne Shorter (“Seeds of Sin”) and Krzysztof Komeda (“Crazy Girl”, “Repetition”), as well as early compositions by Seifert: “Aga” and „Nora”.¹¹ Among the popular non-jazz pieces composed by Seifert, we find various kinds of songs: Polish pre-war songs (“Rebeka”, “Czy tutaj mieszka panna Agnieszka”) and post-war songs (“Wala-twist”, “Czarny Ali Baba”, “Żółte kalendarze”), Soviet songs (“Подмосковные вечера” [*Podmoskovnye vechera*]) as well as a large collection of Western songs like “Georgia on My Mind”, popularised by Ray Charles, “The Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde”, “Sous le ciel de Paris” from the repertoire of Juliette Gréco, Édith Piaf and Yves Montand, and the Beatles’ songs. A large number of notations remain unidentified or illegible. This is mostly due to the fact that these are drafts, sometimes just a few bars without annotation, while sometimes they are too enigmatic, and sometimes – as in notebook 3 – there are only dots on the staves for the sound pitches. In many cases, notation in the form of harmonic functions that Seifert used makes it difficult to identify an untitled piece.¹² None of the notebooks are dated, but dates can be determined based on the relation between the repertoire each contains and our knowledge of Seifert’s life and career. His first notations can be traced back to the beginnings of his jazz studies in music high school. The notation of Komeda’s “Repetition” is most probably the latest one. It appears on the album *We’ll Remember Komeda* – which was recorded with Tomasz Stańko Quintet

11 A piece performed in 1969 at the Jazz on the Oder Festival. See: K. Sadowski, “Jazz nad Odrą 69”, *Jazz* 1969, no. 5.

12 Notation of harmonic functions in the form of letters and numbers provides no place for notation of melodic information, though the melody would help us in recognising a song. Jazz standards and popular songs are easy material to transpose and, as a result, the connection between a particular melody and its original tones diminishes in listeners’ reception. In such a situation, it is still possible to identify a song based on interval relations between successive functions, but here we face many possible alternative notations when it comes to jazz and popular melodies.

in 1972 (with Seifert playing alto saxophone). The presence of popular music can be explained in turn by the fact that Seifert, like many other jazz musicians in high school and student days, earned money performing in bars and cafes in Cracow and at the Baltic seaside, for example with the band the Lessers.

In another file, we find Seifert's compositions and arrangements from the 1960s and 1970s. The piece titled "Ad Libitum" is preserved as a complete score for alto saxophone, piano, bass and drums. This was the instrumental lineup of Seifert's quartet from 1963 to 1970. Two other pieces, "Liczyrzepa"¹³ and "Taniec garbusa" are notated on one staff in form of themes for improvisation. There is also one unnamed piece in the form of a coloured score (fig. 2). We can see here, as in the case of the piece "Ad Libitum", unconventional notation in the form of dots and lines. Only separate parts, such as piano, bass or drums remain from Seifert's arrangements of jazz standards. A separate section of materials consists of unidentified drafts.

Jazz-Konzert für Geige, Symfonische Orchester und Rhythmusgruppe is the most extensive piece by Seifert. The collection acquired by the National Library preserves a photocopy of the score manuscript. The original remains in the archives of Norddeutsche Rundfunk (NDR), which commissioned it in 1974. The piece was recorded that year by the composer with Joachim Kühn (piano), Eberhard Weber (bass), Daniel Humair (drums) and the Norddeutsche Rundfunk symphony

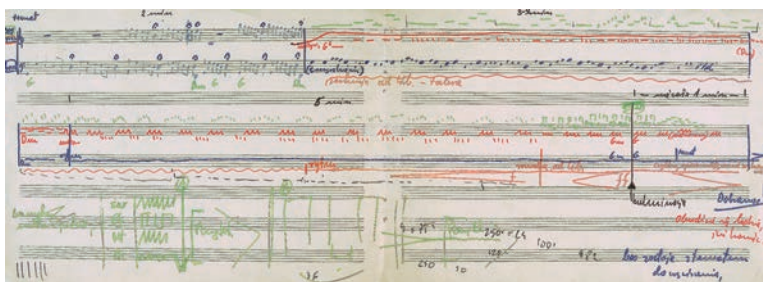


FIG. 2. Zbigniew Seifert's compositions, p. 6-7

13 According to Aneta Norek-Skrycka, the piece was recorded around 1967 with the Organ Band of Polish Radio Broadcasting in Cracow. See: A. Norek-Skrycka, op. cit., p. 43.

orchestra in Hanover conducted by Mladen Gutesha.¹⁴ According to Seifert himself, it was broadcast by NDR.¹⁵ Excerpts of this piece can be found in new arrangements on the final Seifert album, *Passion*.¹⁶

In addition to Seifert's music materials, the collections include pieces written by unidentified people, such as the alto-saxophone part and the piece "Chrzążnik" by Witold Robotycki (b. 1945), with whom Seifert performed at the Feniks club.¹⁷ It may have been written by Robotycki, but a lack of comparative material makes identification impossible.

Personal documents assembled in the collection reveal the official side of Seifert's life during Communism in Poland. Membership cards indicating his enrolment in the Polish Students' Association (Zrzeszenie Studentów Polskich, ZSP), the Trade Union of Arts and Culture Workers (Związek Zawodowy Pracowników Kultury i Sztuki) and the Association of Polish Musical Artists (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Artystów Muzyków, SPAM) show how minimally engaged he was. One can assume that membership in such organisations was necessary to receive a passport and travel abroad. This is particularly likely as regards the Association of Polish Musical Artists membership card issued in 1976 - when Seifert lived in West Germany. The most important document seems to be the card issued in 1968 by the Cracow Helikon Jazz Club (fig. 3), a branch of the Polish Jazz Federa-



FIG. 3. Personal documents of Zbigniew Seifert, p. 25-26

14 Ibidem, pp. 121-122.

15 R. Kowal, "Zbigniew Seifert: droga do sukcesu", *Jazz Forum* 1975, no. 2 (13), p. 8.

16 P.W. Hinley, "Ostatnia sesja Seiferta", *Jazz Forum* 1981, no. 2 (70), p. 34.

17 A. Norek-Skrycka, op. cit., p. 27.

tion (PJF); this, at the same time, provided admission to the club.¹⁸ It is not the first document confirming his PJF membership – there is an annotation indicating Seifert as a member since 1965. Among other documents is a noteworthy certification of identity issued in 1978 by the Strahlenklinik Jancker in Bonn. Seifert went through exhausting chemotherapy there, which markedly altered the features of his face, and the document was necessary when crossing the Polish border.¹⁹ There is also a collection of documents related to Seifert's death and transporting the body to Poland. These include the doctor's statement of death, a photocopy of a certificate of death issued by the State of New York along with a certified translation to Polish, and a copy of the Polish death certificate issued on that basis. It also shows what formalities the widow had to fulfill. Seifert's funeral took place on 15 March 1979 in Cracow, a month after his death.

Other personal documents include those related to Seifert's education. Among these are a collection of certificates from the Primary Music School and the Chopin Secondary Music School in Cracow, and a student ID, transcript and diploma from the Music Academy in Cracow. There are also programs from Seifert's school performances, including high school and academy graduation recitals (fig. 4), which are typical in music education: from a score for solo violin with piano accompaniment from the Baroque period (required to be by J.S. Bach) to contemporary pieces, with an emphasis on 19th-century virtuoso pieces. In the same file are materials for his master's thesis, "Metrorhythmic issues and associated performance problems in selected works of Bohuslav Martinů for violin and piano". Seifert discusses *Intermezzo* in it, as well as *Rhythmic Etudes* and *Impromptu*; he performed this last cycle during a graduation recital. The file includes four typescript versions and a handwritten draft. The thesis is very casual and

18 This is mentioned by Jan Byrczek, then president of the Helikon, in *Krakowski Jazz-Klub „Helikon” 1956–1969: wspomnienia, impresje i relacje*, cf. G. Tusiewicz, Kraków 2006, p. 133.

19 A. Norek-Skrycka, op. cit., p. 154.

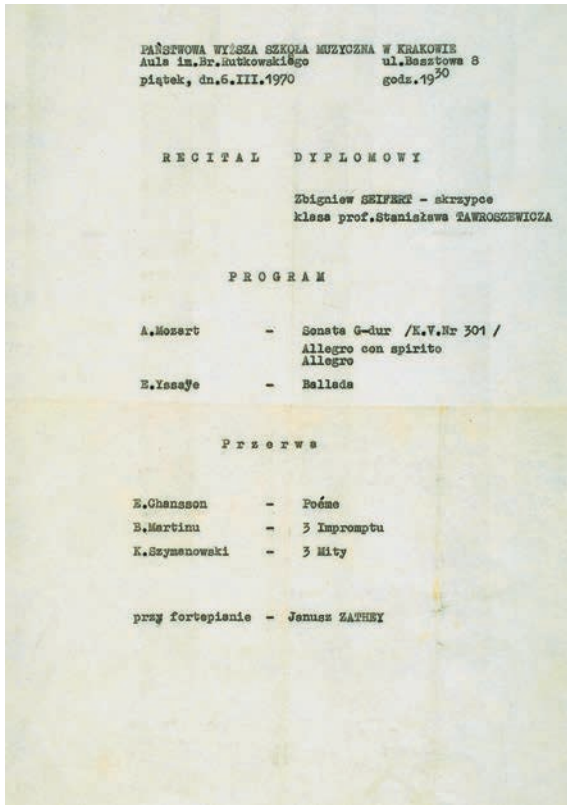


FIG. 4. Zbigniew Seifert's documents concerning education, p. 88

laconic (its lengthiest version has seventeen pages), as emphasised by Prof. Eugenia Umińska (1910–1980) in her review.²⁰ The thesis was mainly required in order to receive a diploma and a master's degree in arts, and is included in biographical materials.

Materials documenting Seifert's artistic activity are collected in three files. The first and most extensive includes contracts and bills for studio and radio recordings and concerts, with Seifert's notes and materials from festivals and concerts. It also contains documents related to travel, including customs documents, a certificate authorizing

²⁰ Quotation in: *ibidem*, p. 64.

transportation of violin, and a Pagart²¹ manual for musicians traveling abroad.²² There are also notes with information about the Seifert's quartet and its members (in typescript and handwritten draft), as well as manuscripts about the Stańko's quintet and about Seifert after the band broke up, and advertising leaflets for the Stańko's quintet. Those materials were probably prepared for the Polish Jazz Federation unit cooperating with Pagart on organising concerts (a letter to Seifert on this matter is included). His career is also documented by materials related to concerts and festivals in which Seifert took part: entry passes, rehearsal schedules and programs. Among the Polish festivals are the Jazz Jamboree (1969, 1970), Jazz on the Odra (1970), as well as the fourteenth edition of the Cracow Jazz Festival ("All Souls' Day Jazz Festival") and the first Festival of Cracow Music Bands, in 1969. Slightly more material comes from international performances, including the jazz festival in Nagykovács, Hungary, in 1969 (the first foreign trip by Seifert's quartet). Other materials come from 1972 and 1973, from concerts with Tomasz Stańko Quintet in Sweden, Switzerland and West Germany. Relatively little material documents Seifert's solo career after 1973. There is only one leaflet about summer jazz courses in Remschied, West Germany, in 1974, where Seifert was teaching violin. Fragments from programs of the Donaueschinger Musiktage festival and the Monterey Jazz Festival have survived (both from 1976). A curiosity is a notebook with a list of concerts performed in 1972 and three pieces of A5 paper with notes about jazz albums: *Sorcerer* (1967), *Nefertiti* (1967), *In a Silent Way* (1969) and *Bitches Brew* (1970) by Miles Davis, and *Bells* (1965) by Albert Ayler, and about the first album of Michael Gibbs (1970). It is difficult to accurately date these notes; the date of release of the records indicate the second half of the 1960s.

-
- 21 The state institution dealing from 1972 to 1992 with the organisation of concerts, the promotion of Polish artists and cultural exchange with foreign countries. Pagart supervised foreign trips of Polish performers and organised the arrival to Poland of artists from other countries.
 - 22 Among the guidelines are an instruction to leave an ID card when collecting a passport, the obligation to check in at a Polish diplomatic office upon arrival, and the necessity of negotiating the extension of a foreign contract through an agency.

Based on the fact that they were made with a single felt-tip pen,²³ we can assume that they were created in a short space of time, which allows us to assume that they were made at the end of the 1960s. They indicate that Seifert was interested in recordings made in the United States. The list of concerts may indicate that the composer wanted to keep a record of his career but probably had to give up due to a large number of responsibilities.

Materials documenting Seifert's musical activity are collected in the second folder. Noteworthy are certificates displaying early successes at the Jazz on the Odra Festival and a copy of the certificate posthumously awarded to Seifert by the Union Deutscher Jazzmusiker for winning second place in the album survey in 1980, with his recording *Solo Violin*.

Materials mentioned above are complemented by press clippings gathered in the third folder. These come from Cracow newspapers, and from *Jazz*, the Polish edition of *Jazz Forum*, and from newspapers and periodicals from abroad, including *Music Joker*, *Jazz Podium* and *Swing Journal*. In addition to these clippings, there are full issues of magazines: *Jazz* and *Down Beat* from the US (both from 1979), as well as posters - the oldest, from 1965, announces Seifert's graduation recital at the Higher State School of Music.

An important part of the archive is correspondence, divided into two separate folders. The first includes thirty-five letters, most of which are related to professional matters. They come from institutions Seifert cooperated with (concert agencies, festival offices, radio stations) as well as musicians he was friends with, including Boško Petrovič, Jiří Stivín and Janusz Stefański. In most cases, these are single let-

23 Most of the notes in the notebooks are made by pen, and due to their content and character we can assume they were made in the 1960s. The same applies to musical notes. There are also notes made with color felt-tip pens, like those for Komeda's 'Repetition' recorded with Stańko's quintet in 1972 and the score for an unidentified piece in unconventional notation (instead of traditional notes on staves, there are colourful dots and wavy lines). Felt-tip pens are also used for letters to his wife, Agnieszka, from the 1970s, to his parents and sister in 1971 and 1972, and an unposted postcard with greetings in German written by Seifert on behalf of Stańko's quintet. One can therefore link Seifert's use of felt-tip pens with the period 1970-1972.

ters, except for the Polish Jazz Federation – five letters. Two letters remain from Petrovič, Stivín and Herwig Pöschl related to Ensemble Schallmomente²⁴ and the artist Dieter Meyer, who was a friend of Seifert during his stay in the West. A curiosity is a collection of letters from Selmer, the Paris-based instrument maker, from 1971, regarding the purchase of a saxophone; in addition to these, drafts of letters remain, in the original and in translation, written by Seifert to Selmer. They show how difficult it was to import an instrument from abroad, especially from countries beyond the iron curtain. Another curiosity is the invitation from the US Embassy in Warsaw to a meeting with the Dave Brubeck Trio and with saxophonist Gerry Mulligan on the occasion of their performing at Jazz Jamboree in 1970,²⁵ which we can take to be at once a distinction and the confirmation of Seifert's inclusion among the top Polish jazzmen. In addition to letters addressed to Seifert, the folder contains letters from bands with which he performed: his own quartet and Tomasz Stańko Quintet. Drafts and copies of Seifert letters are also interesting, including one addressed to Jan Ptaszyn Wróblewski (b. 1936), asking about accepting delivery of Selmer's saxophone from Czechoslovakia, and the photocopy of a letter sent by Seifert to Pagart concerning the extension of his passport, as he was to travel to the US to record an album for the Capitol label.

The second folder contains sixty-four letters sent by Seifert and his wife, Agnieszka, to their family. The large part is written by Seifert and begins with headings addressed to family members living on Zwierzyniecka Street in Cracow, to his parents and younger sister Małgorzata. A few letters addressed to his mother, Antonina, or his sister are included in chronological order, many also signed by Agnieszka Seifert. The earliest letter, from 1963, was written during Seifert's sojourn in Poland's Tatra Mountains; the final letter is dated 10 January 1979, more than a month before his death. Most letters come from the

24 Ensemble Schallmomente operated in Austria as an avant-garde composer-improviser group in 1968–1974 under the direction of Werner Raditschnik. See: Music Information Center Austria, <http://db.musicaustria.at/en/node/45633> [accessed: 20/11/2017].

25 K. Brodacki, *Historia jazzu w Polsce*, Kraków 2010, p. 336.

period of his life in the West. Seifert describes his life in detail: flats, cars, concert tours and recordings. He often responds to requests to send various things to Poland for close and for extended family mem-

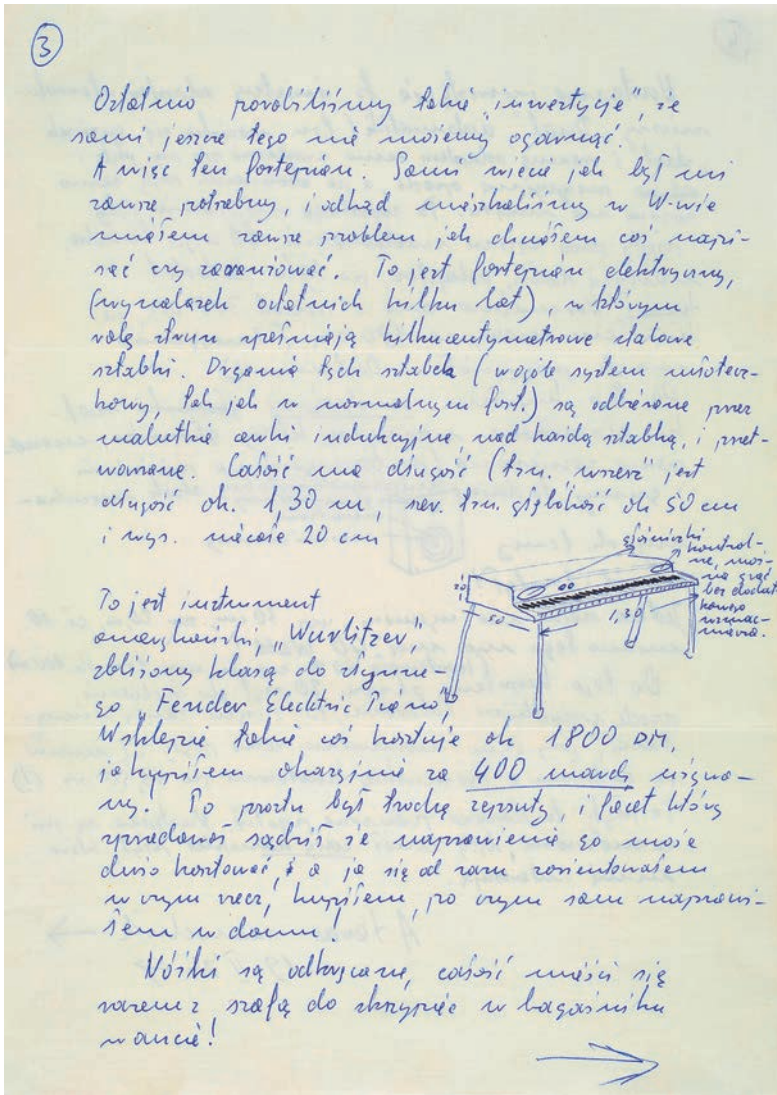


FIG. 5. Zbigniew Seifert's family correspondence, p. 34

bers. He asks as well for items to be sent to him - food products, in large part. There are also five letters from Seifert to Agnieszka, mostly from before their wedding, held in 1972. Two letters from Agnieszka Seifert addressed to her husband's family complement the collection of Seifert's letters. There is also one letter from Antonina Seifert to her husband, which she wrote while she was visiting their son in 1974.

In addition to this collection of letters gathered during his lifetime are materials related to events commemorating Seifert, including *We'll Remember Zbiggy*, an album released posthumously in 1979 at the initiative of Joachim Ernst Berendt, as well as programs and entrance passes for concerts in Poland and abroad, as well as press clippings.

The collection also contains several dozen photos and an album of family photographs (mostly from the inter-war period). Photos loosely document Seifert's life from his early childhood to the beginning of his music career, with most of them private. A photo series of Seifert's quartet by Jacek Stokłosa, and photos from club performances (probably from the late 1960s), also remain. There are also a few colour photos from performances with Stańko's quintet in 1972, probably in West Germany, as well as photos from a concert with the band Free Sound. There are also portraits of Seifert with his wife and sister from November 1978, taken in Cracow by Maciej Sochor. In addition to photos, there are copies of unused cover designs for the album *Passion* made by Seifert. A calendar for 1978 with photos of popular jazzmen, made by Joachim E. Berendt, is also interesting. Along with major names such as Dizzy Gillespie, John McLaughlin and Jaco Pastorius are Zbigniew Seifert and vocalist Urszula Dudziak.

The collection includes some exhibits: violin strings and chinrests, saxophone reeds, as well as school badges - probably from his high school period, as only the treble clef and the word "Kraków" are depicted on them, so this cannot be ascertained.

Materials and documents that remain in Zbigniew Seifert's collection are diverse but incomplete, and depict only selected aspects of the life and activities of an outstanding violinist. Given an overview of the "collection", we can specify two original storage locations. Letters

addressed to the family, personal documents, photos and most notes are related to his initial period of activity. Materials and documents connected to that period (contracts, bills, posters, diplomas) were kept in a family home in Cracow, with Seifert leaving them there before leaving for West Germany. This information is certain, for all letters, personal documents and festival materials are dated. The family remained an important point of reference after Seifert moved to the West, as formally he was professionally connected to Pagart. Even after 1973, letters addressed to Seifert came to his parent's place, especially those from Polish institutions: the Higher State School of Music and the Polish Music Publishing House (PWM). An important part of the archives that come from Cracow are letters addressed to his family, who also collected press clippings about Seifert. Fewer materials remain from his stay in the West. This can be easily explained by Seifert's busy lifestyle; the plan of moving to the United States held a bearing on the fate of documents, as they may have been dispersed due to preparations for departure. From that period, letters about concerts and recordings in various places in Europe and a few US travel certificates have survived. Many documents from this period remain only in photocopies (the score of the Jazz-Konzert, foreign press clippings, fragments from festival programs). It is possible that press information about Seifert was transferred to the archives in the form of photocopies, but one may assume that some photocopies were made in connection with transferring the archives to the National Library.

Much indicates that Seifert's family had a significant influence on the form of the archives: his parents and sister kept materials from the pre-1973 period at home in Cracow, while his wife, Agnieszka, kept some documents from the period of his life abroad as well as those related to his death. This is where materials documenting events that commemorate the outstanding violinist come from.

The collection of Zbigniew Seifert, although not very extensive, is very significant, as Seifert is among the preeminent jazz musicians from Poland. It is a valuable addition to the recordings that Seifert left to us.

translated by Alicja Rosé

SUMMARY

Zbigniew Seifert was one of the most eminent jazz violinists in history and one of the first Polish jazzmen to achieve success in the United States. Seifert learnt to play the violin in Cracow. Owing to John Coltrane's music he discovered jazz and became interested in the alto saxophone. "In 1968 and 1969" together with his quartet he won several prizes at the Jazz on the Oder Festival. He co-operated with Tomasz Stańko, in whose band he played both the saxophone and the violin. In the 1970s Seifert gave more and more concerts in Western countries, where he gained recognition and career opportunities. He recorded with Joachim Kühn, Charlie Mariano and the Oregon music group. He managed to release two albums in the US, but his further career was stopped by severe illness and death in 1979.

Seifert's collection, donated to the Polish Jazz Archive, National Library of Poland, comprises different types of materials. Most of them are biographical sources documenting Seifert's life and career, i. a. his school reports and papers dating back to his studies at the Academy of Music (PWSM). An interesting part of it is Seifert's correspondence with musicians, activists and institutions he worked with, as well as letters to his family. The collection also contains musical scores by Seifert, albeit mainly drafts and working notes, together with a considerable number of photographs and clippings from Polish and foreign newspapers, presenting different fields of Seifert's musical activity.

Not only is Zbigniew Seifert's archive an interesting testimony to the life of the great musician, but it also shows certain aspects of how the jazz environment behind the Iron Curtain worked.

KEYWORDS: Zbigniew Seifert, Polish Jazz Archive, violin, jazz