



<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/em.2019.14.02>

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Warsaw seasons of Salomea Kruszelnicka (1898–1902)

Translation of the article published in this issue (<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/em.2019.14.01>)

Abstract

The article discusses the artistic activity of Salomea Kruszelnicka in the years 1898–1902. It predominantly concerns her performances on the stage of the Warsaw Government Theatres. The account is supplemented with a report on her other activities in that period. The work is based on source material gathered from the press published in Poland, Leipzig (“Signale für die musikalische Welt”) and Saint Petersburg (the Polish-language weekly “Kraj”). The reviews of Kruszelnicka’s performances constitute a valuable record of the reception of her art and, at the same time, paint an interesting picture of a fragment of Warsaw’s musical culture at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – a time when traditional views on art clashed with modernist trends.

Keywords: Salomea Kruszelnicka, operatic vocalism, Warsaw opera, Polish musical culture in the period of the Partitions, Polish musical criticism at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The most important events in the history of Polish opera at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries undoubtedly include the employment of Emil Młynarski as the director of the opera, the premiere of *Goplana* by Żeleński, the first staging of *Widma* [*Phantoms*] by Moniuszko and, finally, the recruitment of outstanding soloists. Among them, Salomea Kruszelnicka should definitely be mentioned in the first place – she was, perhaps, the best Halka and certainly the best Countess in the history of the Warsaw opera.

In this way, Elżbieta Szczepańska-Lange describes the state of the Warsaw opera in the years 1898–1901 in a work devoted to the musical life of the city in

Date of submission: 7.10.2019

Review 1 sent/returned: 23.10.2019/24.10.2019

Review 2 sent/returned: 23.10.2019/7.11.2019

Date of acceptance: 24.11.2019

the second half of the nineteenth century¹. Emil Młynarski, who had previously worked at the Russian Musical Society in Odessa, received the position in Warsaw owing to the patronage of prince Alexis Obolensky (the deputy for Governor-General Alexander Imeretinsky). As the opera bandmaster, he performed for the first time on 29 March 1898², conducting the performance of *Carmen* in place of Cezary Trombini, the institution's artistic director and chief conductor, who fell ill. Trombini died in Warsaw on 15 August 1898. Młynarski was then offered the office of the director of the Polish Opera at the Grand Theatre. Vittorio Podesti was brought to direct the Italian opera. In practice, Podesti became the chief conductor and directed some of the Polish premieres as well. In the days of Podesti and Młynarski, the authorities of Warsaw theatres assembled an excellent team of singers. Apart from Kruszelnicka, it included, among others, Mattia Battistini, Giuseppe Russitano, Władysław Floriański, Janina Korolewiczówna, Aleksander Myszuga, Wiktor Grąbczewski and Adam Didur. Jan Chodakowski, who is remembered by the historians as a great patron of Polish opera, was the stage director. The ballet performances were conducted by Stanisław Barcewicz – an eminent violinist and profesor of the Warsaw Musical Institute. Francesco Spettrino, the bandmaster who had already worked there in the days of Trombini, was also occasionally hired. There was a fierce rivalry between the soloists, as in every theatre around the world. Janina Korolewiczówna was Kruszelnicka's direct competitor; she was endowed with lyrical soprano, but the authorities also had her perform coloratura roles. Under the surname of Korolewicz-Waydowa, she published a memoir, in which she made a few insinuating remarks regarding the alleged activities of the Ukrainian (as she called her, taking advantage of the contemporary anti-Ukrainian feelings of the Polish readers), which were supposed to be aimed at Polish artists and undertaken in cahoots with the Russian authorities of the Warsaw Government Theatres. There are no sources that could confirm the insinuations; therefore, we choose not to quote them in this article.

The first season of Kruszelnicka's work at the Grand Theatre in Warsaw was inaugurated on 1 October 1898 with the premiere of *La bohème*, which was conducted by Vittorio Podesti, yet the newly employed star did not participate in it. Kruszelnicka's debut in Warsaw took place on 4 October – the artist performed the eponymous role in *Aida*, which had already been known in the city, receiving the audience's applause and the recognition of the press. Even Aleksander Świętochowski (the editor of the leading newspaper of Warsaw positivists³ “Prze-

¹ E. Szczepańska-Lange, *Historia muzyki polskiej*, vol. 5: *Romantyzm*, part 2B: *Życie muzyczne w Warszawie 1850–1900*, Warszawa 2010, p. 511–512.

² All the dates concerning the events that took place in Warsaw are provided in the main text according to the Gregorian calendar.

³ Positivists are a group of Polish writers and scholars, who – being inspired by the writings of Western philosophers and sociologists (Comte, Spencer, Darwin, Le Bon, Tarde) – called for the reform of society and, in the case of art, for its liberation from the trivialized patterns of national art related to the aesthetics of the so-called little Romanticism.

gład Tygodniowy”), who was extremely strict in his judgements, wrote that in all of that praise there was:

przypuszczalnie [...] nic, a przynajmniej niewiele było przesady⁴. [perhaps [...] no, or at least very little, exaggeration⁵.]

On 7 October 1898, Kruszelnicka sang Halka’s part in a new production of Moniuszko’s opera. This event, on the other hand, marked Emil Młynarski’s debut as the newly employed bandmaster. However, it was not him who could celebrate after the performance, which was received rather coldly by the press, but Kruszelnicka. Antoni Sygietyński, the critic of the most widely-read daily in Warsaw, “Kurier Warszawski,” devoted several dozen lines of his review to the artist’s performance, starting from the following sentence:

Za to panna Kruszelnicka przeszła wszelkie oczekiwanie. [Miss Kruszelnicka, on the other hand, exceeded all expectations⁶.]

He enumerated several qualities of the singer’s voice and talent, which would be noticed by other reviewers as well, that is: impeccable vocal technique, strength of expression, tasteful artistic interpretation of her character, moderate use of stage effects and emphasis on the depth of music and the text.

Halka p. Kruszelnickiej to nie pierwsza lepsza dziewczyna wiejska, zbałamucona przez panicza – puentował Sygietyński – to nie pierwsza lepsza warjatka, rzucająca się w nurty rzeki z rozpacy, iż straciła kochanka, ale postać z poematu, jak ją Włodzimierz Wolski w swej wyobraźni pojął, a Moniuszko geniuszem swej muzyki opromienił. [Miss Kruszelnicka’s Halka is not an ordinary country girl who was seduced by a lordling – Sygietyński pointed out – it is not just any madwoman who threw herself into a river because she had lost lover, but a character straight from the poem, as envisioned by Włodzimierz Wolski and bathed in Moniuszko’s genius music⁷.]

Aleksander Świętochowski, conversely, saw Kruszelnicka’s Halka as a “real country girl, inherently good, open and honest,” but he also appreciated the artist in his own way, claiming that:

[...] ten występ jeszcze bardziej utwierdził w przekonaniu, że się ma w każdym razie z talentem do czynienia. [this performance confirmed my belief that we are dealing with a true talent⁸.]

Halka remained a permanent part of the Warsaw theatre’s repertoire, yet by the end of January 1898, Kruszelnicka temporarily handed her role in the opera over to a member of the Italian troupe, Maria d’Orion.

⁴ [Translator’s note: the original quotations are written in a slightly archaic language and were translated into modern English.]

⁵ A. Świętochowski, *Echa warszawskie*, “Przegląd Tygodniowy” 1898, No. 41, p. 453. Emphasis M. Dziadek. All source quotes in this work are given in original spelling.

⁶ A. Sygietyński, *Wczorajsza “Halka”*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1898, 25 September (7 October), No. 277, p. 2–3.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ A. Świętochowski, *Echa warszawskie*, “Przegląd Tygodniowy” 1898, No. 42, p. 465.

In the next days of October 1898, Kruszelnicka played Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana* (conducted by Francesco Spettrino) and Balladyna in *Goplana* by Żeleński (conducted by Emil Młynarski). Both performances earned high praise from Sygietyński⁹, especially the second one since he was personally involved in promoting Polish opera as a member of a group of radically predisposed writers of the young generation associated with positivism. It should be explained that these radicals fought for the survival and proper quality of Polish opera at a time when it was dominated by a group of Italian artists¹⁰.

During the period in question, the existence of opera performances at the Grand Theatre in Warsaw was determined, as everywhere around the world, by financial success, hence the very careful policy of the theatre's Russian authorities with regard to Polish singers and Polish repertoire. The Polish side interpreted it as Russification; it should be remembered, however, that nineteenth century Warsaw was a multinational city, in which the success of a theatrical performance was decided not by the Polish majority alone, but also by the Jews, Russians and Germans who lived there. Furthermore, the Polish upper classes were reluctant to support native art¹¹. Even at the time of Moniuszko, it could be noticed that the audience in Warsaw was not sufficiently interested in Polish opera; even the performances by the father of Polish opera would not always fill the opera house. Italian performances, on the other hand, were very popular among the larger audience. We have evidence for that in various memoirs, for instance in the memoirs of the leading Warsaw bookseller Ferdynand Hoesick.

In the period that preceded Salomea Kruszelnicka's stay in Warsaw, feuds between the radical group of the supporters of Polish opera, inspired by rebellious young writers such as the aforementioned Antoni Sygietyński or Aleksander Świętochowski, and Italian artists were not infrequent. They were blatantly motivated by commercial reasons (the Poles were dissatisfied with the fact that foreign singers and conductors received much higher pay than native artists) and hidden political background. For instance, Mattia Battistini came under fierce criticism from the patriotic faction of the press since his friendship with Maria Andreevna Gurko, the wife of the hated Governor-General of Warsaw Iosif Gurko¹² (Gurko governed Warsaw in the years 1883–1894) was well known. The activity of the Warsaw Opera, which was dominated by the Italians, was also overly criticized by the patriots who wrote for foreign newspapers – many such materials were published in the Lviv press.

⁹ Cf.: A. Sygietyński, *Z muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1898, 29 September (11 October), No. 281 p. 2; idem, *Z muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1898, 1 (13) October, No. 283, p. 2–3.

¹⁰ The group consisted of artists of various descent (not only Italians), who sang in Italian.

¹¹ Cf.: J. Szczublewski, *Publiczność teatralna w Warszawie (1868–1883)*, [in:] *Teatr warszawski II połowy XIX wieku*, ed. T. Sivert, Wrocław 1957, p. 73.

¹² Cf.: E. Czekalski, *W cieniu zamkowego zegara*, Warszawa 1956, p. 159.

During Kruszelnicka's artistic activity, the office of Governor-General of Warsaw was held by Alexander Imeretinsky (until 1900), who represented the policy of relaxed repression (he gave permission to unveil a monument to Mickiewicz in Warsaw in 1898). In that period, the fate of opera performances as well as singers' contracts and pays was still largely decided behind the scenes – as we shall learn, this also influenced Kruszelnicka's career in Warsaw.

As we return to discussing the initial months of the artist's stay in Warsaw, we reach 2 November, when Kruszelnicka performed in a new production of Moniuszko's *The Countess* under the baton of Młynarski. The piece was released in a spectacular new adaptation after 15 years of absence on the Warsaw stage. Kruszelnicka was accompanied, as in the case of *Goplana*, by Janina Korolewiczówna, and Emil Młynarski conducted the performance. It was tremendously successful, which the foreign press attributed to the patriotic attitude of the Polish audience, who flocked to see the premiere and the subsequent performances. It was even prophesied that the success of *The Countess* would seal the failure of Italian opera in Warsaw¹³. This obviously never happened since the artist simultaneously appeared in Italian performances. She took part in a new production of Verdi's *The Force of Destiny* under the baton of Vittorio Podesti as early as on 28 November 1898. She was accompanied by Mattia Battistini. Antoni Sygietyński's opinion about Kruszelnicka's acting and the performance as a whole was negative. With an obvious tendency to disregard the Italian production, he wrote that:

Panna Kruszelnicka w roli Eleonory wyzbyła się najpiękniejszej cechy swego talentu: wyrazu artystycznego interpretacji. Wprawdzie jej głos brzmiał metalicznie, dźwięcznie i czysto, lecz frazowaniu zbywało na wytworności muzycznej i na pogłębieniu psychologicznym, wskutek czego wada stała *tremolowania* głosem uwydatniła się niepomierne. A przytem uwaga poboczna: Panna Kruszelnicka za mało studiowała ruchy rąk i ciała w rzeźbie. Aktor na scenie jest żywym posągami. Eleonora panny Kruszelnickiej była żywą, lecz nie była posagową. [In the role of Leonora, Miss Kruszelnicka deprived herself of the most beautiful feature of her talent: expression of artistic interpretation. While her voice was metallic, resonant and pure, the phrasing lacked musical sophistication and psychological depth; as a result, the permanent flaw of the vocal tremolo was immensely emphasized. And a marginal remark: Miss Kruszelnicka took too little time studying the movements of arms and the body in sculpture. On the stage, the actor is a living statue. Miss Kruszelnicka's Leonora was alive, yet she was not a statue¹⁴.]

On 5 December 1898, Kruszelnicka acted under Podesti's baton in the role of Valentine in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*. Antoni Sygietyński handed the responsibility of writing a review of the performance over to his colleague Benedykt Filipowicz, which may be interpreted as yet another demonstration of his disregard for the artist's performances in Italian operas¹⁵. Two weeks later (16 Decem-

¹³ Cf. E. Szczepańska-Lange, op. cit., p. 517.

¹⁴ A. Sygietyński, *Z muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1898, 17 (29) November, No. 330, p. 3.

¹⁵ Cf.: B. F[ilipowicz], *Z muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1898, 24 November (6 December), No. 337, p. 3.

ber), she accompanied Battistini, singing the main female role in Verdi's *Il trovatore* [*The Troubadour*]; just before Christmas (22 December), she sang in the composer's *Un ballo in maschera* [*A Masked Ball*] (it was a benefit performance of Battistini) and on 8 January 1899, she performed for the first time as Rachel in Halevy's *La Juive* [*The Jewess*]. These events did not receive much publicity since the press, headed by "Kurier Warszawski," was preoccupied with following the unprecedented success of *The Countess* – by 9 February 1899, 25 performances of this opera had been given, with all the seats at the opera house completely sold out; its main performers: Kruszelnicka, Korolewiczówna and Młynarski enjoyed great success. Only "Przegląd Tygodniowy," which in time became more and more distanced from the commotion created by the patriotically predisposed faction of journalists, had a dissenting opinion. In an article entitled *Echa warszawskie* [*Echoes of Warsaw*], Świętochowski wrote the following about *The Countess*' success:

Otóż z ręką na sercu powiedzieć mogę, iż obecnych wykonawców *Hrabiny* kuryery z p. Sygietyńskim na czele przereklamowały nad zasługi. Przysiągłbym prawie, że nie o takim Podczaszycu, Dzidzim, Kaźmierzu marzył ś.p. Moniuszko, że nie zgodziłby się z p. Kruszelnicką na pojęcie w wykonaniu ostatniej brawurowej arii [...]. Nie można brać postaci Hrabiny tak „modernę,” nie można utrzymywać, że ta kobieta była tak lekomyślną, że nie zgoła nie czuła [...]. [I can, in good conscience, say that the journalists, and Mr Sygietyński in particular, have overrated the current performers of *The Countess*. I could almost swear that the late Moniuszko did not dream of such Podczaszyc, Dzidzi and Kazimierz, that he would not approve of Miss Kruszelnicka's performance of the last aria [...]. The character of the Countess cannot be so "modern"; it cannot be maintained that the woman was so reckless, that she felt completely nothing [...]¹⁶.]

In the wake of *The Countess*' tremendous success, Młynarski decided to stage another opera by Moniuszko – *The Haunted Manor*. Strictly speaking, the plan of staging the opera had been created in the autumn of the previous year (it was even announced in the press), yet the theatre's authorities probably objected to the idea. The work had been forbidden by the censorship since its premiere performances (1865) because the patriotic allusions it included evoked a dangerous enthusiasm in the Polish audience. Ultimately, however, it premiered on the Warsaw stage on 22 February 1899. Kruszelnicka did not participate. She also did not take part in a new production of a single-act play *Verbum nobile* by Moniuszko, which took place at a similar time. She appeared, however, in two concerts with mixed programmes organized in Warsaw and Łódź, and furthermore had her first benefit performance, in which she sang *Halka* (14 March 1899). "Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne" wrote about the artist's benefit performance, suggesting that it was organized as a reward from the authorities of the theatre for the promise to remain in Warsaw, for there was a rumour that the London opera

¹⁶ *Echa warszawskie*, "Przegląd Tygodniowy" 1899, No. 5, p. 54.

Covent Garden sought to acquire Kruszelnicka for the spring season¹⁷. She reprised the role of Halka a few more times. *The Countess* with her signature role was still present in the repertoire (the 35th performance of the opera fell on 12 April 1899), and Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable* [*Robert the Devil*], in which she played the role of Alice (Robert was played by Giuseppe Russitano), was restaged. Aleksander Poliński, the new reviewer of "Kurier Warszawski" – neutral in comparison with Sygietyński, shunning overt political remarks¹⁸ and relatively conservative – admitted that Kruszelnicka sang her role "beautifully,"¹⁹ without going into details.

The next month was spent on playing the current repertoire; there were fewer performances than usual since, at the same time, the Grand Theatre was holding the performances of a Russian company (a troupe from the Maly [Small] Theatre in Moscow), which were boycotted by the radical part of the Polish audience²⁰.

The 1898/1899 season was crowned with a premiere of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* (4 May 1899) with Kruszelnicka, Battistini, Giuseppe Russitan and Aristodemo Silich in the main roles. The opera was sung in Italian, conducted by Podesti, and the stage design was prepared by Józef Chodakowski. Some sources suggest that the premieres of Russian operas on the Warsaw stage (Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* and Rubinstein's *Demon* had already been introduced to the repertoire) were a kind of ransom – Chodakowski's payment for the permission to play Polish operas²¹. This is not obvious, however. It should be taken into consideration that Rubinstein and Tchaikovsky enjoyed great respect in Warsaw, similarly to all representatives of high music. At the time, Anton Rubinstein was a regular guest in Warsaw. He and his brother were honorary members of the Warsaw Music Society; Anton Rubinstein's and Pyotr Tchaikovsky's leading instrumental pieces were introduced to the programmes of symphony concerts of the opera orchestra, which were initiated in 1885. In January 1892, Tchaikovsky appeared in Warsaw in person and held his own concert at the Grand Theatre. In general, the frequently discussed chasm between the Polish and Russian culture in Warsaw at the time of the Partitions was not very deep. In patriotic circles, listening to Russian music for entertainment was forbidden by honour²²; demonstrations

¹⁷ -a-. [A. Rajchman], *Salomea Kruszelnicka*, "Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne" 1899, No. 806, p. 115.

¹⁸ At least in the period in question. Today, Poliński is predominantly remembered as a historian of Polish music; he participated in the 1863 uprising against the czar, which was only revealed in his obituaries published beyond the border. Poliński demonstrated his anti-imperial patriotism several times during the revolution of 1905, when the censorship became more lenient.

¹⁹ A. Poliński, *Z muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1899, 10 (22) March, No. 81, p. 3.

²⁰ Cf.: W. Zwinogrodzka, *Przypadki bojkotu w życiu teatralnym Warszawy*, [in:] *Z domu niewoli. Sytuacja polityczna a kultura literacka w drugiej połowie XIX wieku*, Wrocław – Warsaw – Cracow 1988.

²¹ Cf.: E. Szczepańska-Lange, op. cit., p. 508.

²² Cf.: J. Korolewicz-Waydowa, *Sztuka i życie. Mój pamiętnik*, Wrocław 1969.

during the performances of the imperial anthem in theatres were also notorious. On the other hand, professional composers made tributes in the form of dedications to the czar and the members of the court; some (such as Apollinaire de Kontski, the director of the Warsaw Institute of Music) would visit the residence of Governor-General at the Royal castle and frequented Russian salons (Maria Kalergis-Muchanow, the famous patron of artists, was the liaison between the Polish and Russian musical circles). Polish artists, such as the previously mentioned Emil Młynarski, sought protection from high-ranking Russian officials, and many of them, starting from Moniuszko, were interested in pursuing a career in Saint Petersburg or Moscow²³.

The reaction of the press to the premiere of *Eugene Onegin* was very positive. Aleksander Poliński wrote an extensive text for "Kurier Warszawski," in which he analysed the libretto and music in detail as well as reported on the general reception of the performance. The critic put the pair of the main characters played by Kruszelnicka and Battistini in the first place²⁴. The review in question is devoid of any ant-Russian allusions; on the contrary, Poliński presented the literary basis for the opera – Pushkin's poem – as a model example of Russian national art and a work of "immense political and social significance."²⁵ He supported his view with a thought formulated by Vissarion Belinsky, a philosopher who was cited extremely rarely in Poland. It is worth adding that as he commented on the greatness of Tchaikovsky's opera, Poliński also informed about its success in Western Europe. Other, less bold, reviewers were careful not to write about *Onegin* in the context of Russian art. Feliks Starczewski, who was "loaned" by "Przegląd Tygodniowy" used the more general term "Slavic" with regard to Tchaikovsky's music. Adapting to the critical line of the magazine, he found some faults in the performance; in Kruszelnicka, for example, he detected a fatigued voice²⁶.

Eugene Onegin was played to a full house until the end of the season (starting from the 13th staging, the interval between the acts was filled with dances performed by a trio from the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, including Matylda Krzesińska, who came to Warsaw on tour) and alternated with *The Countess*, *Halka*, *Goplana* and *La Juive*, which still enjoyed great popularity, as well as Gounod's *Faust*, restaged in the second half of May (here, the main roles were played by Janina Korolewiczówna and Battistini; they also appeared in the performances of *Demon*, which was still on release).

By the end of the season (29 May), Kruszelnicka appeared as Elvira in a new production of Verdi's *Ernani*, which was prepared for a benefit performance of

²³ Cf.: M. Dziadek, *Warsaw–Petersburg. Kontakty muzyczne dwóch stolic na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*. "Muzyka" 2009, No. 3, p. 181–204.

²⁴ A. Poliński, *Eugeniusz Oniegin*, part II, "Kurier Warszawski" 1899, 24 April (6 May), No. 124, p. 2.

²⁵ Idem, *Eugeniusz Oniegin*, part I, "Kurier Warszawski" 1899, 23 April (5 May), No. 123, p. 1.

²⁶ F. Starczewski, *Piotr Czajkowski, Oniegin* [...], "Przegląd Tygodniowy" 1900, No. 19, p. 224.

Battistini, who was leaving the Warsaw stage and going abroad. Aleksander Poliński treated the opera and the artists courteously, yet without being overly enthusiastic (he noticed, for instance, a few errors in the prima donna's intonation)²⁷.

The Warsaw Opera began the summer season on 15 June with the 40th performance of *The Countess*; a few artists from the outside were invited, including Władysław Floriański from Prague. They performed until the end of July 1899, playing the operas from the current repertoire as well as old productions “re-hashed” for the summer: Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* [*Clowns*] for Janina Korolewiczówna, and Wagner's *Lohengrin* for Floriański, in which Kruszelnicka also took part. She bid the Warsaw audience farewell as the Countess on 1 July and went for a longer holiday abroad.

The artist returned to Warsaw at the end of September in order to inaugurate the next opera season with her performance in *Les Huguenots* (1 October 1899; she was accompanied by Adam Didur, who was hired in place of Battistini). In the next days, she appeared before the audience in *Halka*, *Aida* and *La bohème*. *Les Huguenots* was repeated on 9 October, yet Kruszelnicka had to be replaced by Maria d'Orio since the star – as the press reported – passed out²⁸. Fortunately, the singer's indisposition did not last long – she returned to the stage as early as on 11 October in *La bohème*. By the end of the year, she had acted in several performances from the current repertoire as well as in a new production of Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele* (22 November). On 14 November, she performed with a group of outstanding Polish artists: the violinists Emil Młynarski and Stanisław Barcewicz and the pianist Aleksander Michałowski at the palace in Skierniewice in front of czar Nicholas II and his family; the Polish press did not comment on the fact that Kruszelnicka performed a Ukrainian folk song²⁹ at the concert, perhaps because the Ukrainian culture was perceived as a branch of the Polish culture at that time, hence it was not viewed as a sensation³⁰. However, the journalists publicized Kruszelnicka's performance at a concert whose profits were to be donated for the so-called Kasa Literacka [Literary Fund] (26 November). They highlighted the kindness of the theatre's authorities, which made an exception in giving permission for that performance (Kruszelnicka's contract, which was in force during the season in question, prohibited her from taking part in concerts held outside of the theatre)³¹. The star also performed in support of writers with

²⁷ A. Poliński, *Z muzyki*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1899, 18 (30) May, No. 147, p. 3.

²⁸ [no name and title], “Kurier Warszawski” 1899, 28 September (10 October), No. 280, p. 1.

²⁹ The properties granted to prince Konstanty were located in Skierniewice and the nearby Spała; the czar and his family eagerly hunted in these parts. Kruszelnicka's personal entry in *Grosser Sänglerlexicon* by K.J. Kutsch and L. Riemens (3rd edition, Bern – München 1999, p. 1930) contains a false piece of information that this event took place in Saint Petersburg.

³⁰ Cf.: A. Korzeniowska-Bihun, *Genderowy i narodowy dyskurs w biografii Salomei Kruszelnickiej*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288617189_Genderowy_i_naro... [access: 2.01.2018].

³¹ In the future, the authorities would give permission for Kruszelnicka's performances at charity concerts more often.

elite Polish artists, that is the opera soloists Janina Korolewiczówna, Wiktor Grąbczewski and Adam Didur, actor Bolesław Ładnowski, pianist Aleksander Michałowski and the young violinist Paweł Kochański (Młynarski's student). She performed the aria from Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* [*The African Woman*] and Paderewski's song *Gdy ostatnia róża zwiędła* [*When the last rose withered*]. The review of the concert written by an editor of "Kurier Warszawski," Marian Gawalewicz, who was normally eager to endorse Kruszelnicka, included a somewhat tactless allusion to the artist's local stardom:

Gdybym miał pióro i zapach Sygietyńskiego [...], napisałbym pieśń na cześć divy Kruszelnickiej, która, nawet będąc „Afrykanką,” nie przestaje ani na chwilę być „Hrabinią,” wczoraj śpiewała arię Meyerbeera i zdawało się, że wszystkie perły i brylanty, które ze słowiczego gardła wyrzuciła, nanizaly się same na sznurki i otoczyły jej szyję drogocenną kolją.

Wiem jednak, że cała kadzielnica pochwał w mych rękach wywołałaby na piękne usta naszej primadonny tylko jeden z tych majestatycznych jej uśmiechów, który zdaje się mówić:

– Wiem, wiem. Śpiewam jak cherub, a wyglądam jak królowa.

– Pozostałoby mi wtedy tylko skłonić się pokornie i szepnąć:

– Tak, pani...

Nie wiem czemu, ale wobec panny Korolewiczówny czułbym się śmielszym, gdyby z uśmieżkiem Broni na ustach spytała:

– I jakże? Dobrze dziś śpiewałam?

[If I had Sygietyński's knack for words and enthusiasm [...], I would write a paean to diva Kruszelnicka, who does not cease to be the "Countess" even when she is an "African woman;" yesterday, she sang Meyerbeer's aria, and it seemed as if all the pearls and diamonds that came out of her nightingale-like throat threaded themselves onto a string and looped around her neck to form a precious necklace.

Nevertheless, I know that even an entire censer of praise in my hands would only bring one of those majestic smiles upon our prima donna's lips, which seem to be saying:

"I know, I know. I sing like an angel, and I look like a princess."

And all that would be left for me to do, would be to bow humbly and whisper:

"Yes, my lady..."

I do not know why, but I would feel more confident in front of Miss Korolewiczówna, if she asked with a smile on her face:

"And how was it? Did I sing well today?"^{32]}

On 22 December 1899, Kruszelnicka sang for the last time in *The Countess*, which was being withdrawn from general release, and a day later she sang *Halka*, bidding farewell to Warsaw for the winter season. She spent it in Saint Petersburg, performing with an Italian troupe at the conservatory's theatre³³ with the bandmaster Podesti, who was always invited to Saint Petersburg for the winter. She performed the main roles in *Aida* (this role was her debut in Saint Petersburg), Boito's *Mefistofele* and Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*. As far as we know, based on Polish press sources, on 24 January local time the artist took part in a charity

³² M. Gawalewicz, *Na Kasę literacką*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1899, 15 (27) November, No. 328, p. 3.

³³ Cf.: *Dur und Moll*, "Signale für die musikalische Welt" 1899, 14 October, No. 49, p. 774.

concert in the capital of the Empire, which gathered the Russian elites and was tremendously successful³⁴, and on 6 February local time, her benefit performance was held; she performed *Aida* once more, in place of the previously planned *Halka* (in Italian) since – as the Polish-language Saint Petersburg weekly “Kraj” reported – the Italian translation of the choir parts had not been prepared in time³⁵. Kruszelnicka’s performances in Saint Petersburg were recognized as very successful by a correspondent of the Leipzig magazine “Signale für die musikalische Welt.”³⁶

A journalist of the “Kraj” magazine took advantage of Kruszelnicka’s stay in Saint Petersburg by interviewing the artist. In the interview, the artist described herself as an

włoska śpiewaczka, najwyraźniej włoska, z natury uzdolnienia, z wyboru, z metody, z zamiłowania – jak pan chce! [Italian singer, evidently Italian, by the nature of my talent, by choice, by predilection – by whatever you may want!³⁷]

She described her stay in Warsaw as a transitional stage on her path to conquer the West³⁸. The artist’s statement was immediately commented on by Warsaw journalists, who had patriotic and anti-Italian inclinations, which is discussed by, among others, Hałyna Tychobajewa and Iryna Kryworuczka in their book *Sołomija Kruszelnyćka. Mista i sława* (Lviv 2009); they concluded that the crowning argument of the Polish journalists against Kruszelnicka was the fact that she was reluctant to take part in Polish operas, especially the ones authored by Moniuszko³⁹. The argument is absurd, not only because, as we already know, Kruszelnicka gained her position in Warsaw owing to numerous performances in Moniuszko’s two operas – *Halka* and *The Countess*, but also because there were no other Polish operas with roles for dramatic soprano, except for *Goplana*, in the Grand Theatre’s repertoire at the time. The issue number 5 of the “Kraj” magazine featured an explanation, in which the journalist took responsibility for the entire “scandal” and diplomatically suggested that “the printed word did not do sufficient justice to the artist’s thought,” who:

[...] wie o tem dobrze, że gdzieindziej [tj. we Włoszech – przyp. M. Dziadek] spotkać ją może wyższe uznanie, ale serdeczniejszego niż w Warszawie nigdzie nie znajdzie. Są to rzeczy, które obowiązują i których się nie zapomina. [is well aware that she might find greater recognition elsewhere [that is in Italy – author’s note], but nowhere will it be as warm-hearted as in Warsaw. One does not forget these things and is obliged by them⁴⁰.]

³⁴ [no name], *Wiadomości bieżące*, “Kraj” 1900, 28 January (9 February), No. 4, p. 20.

³⁵ [no name], *Wiadomości bieżące*, “Kraj” 1900, 4 (16) February, No. 5, p. 19.

³⁶ Galberti, *Die italienische Opern-Saison in St. Petersburg*, “Signale für die musikalische Welt” 1900, 24 February, No. 19, p. 289–290.

³⁷ [Mat.], *U primadonny*, “Kraj” 1900, 21 January (2 February), No. 3 p. 43.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ As cited in: <http://www.maestro.net.pl/index.php/5877-genderowy-i-narodowy-dyskurs-w-biografii-salomei-kruszelnickiej?limitstart=0>, [access: 31.12. 2017].

⁴⁰ *W Petersburgu*, “Kraj” 1900, 4 (16 February), No. 5, p. 19.

Paradoxically, an argument regarding the fact that the artist wanted her name to be used in its Polish version instead of Russian on posters broke out in the Russian press at that time⁴¹. The grievances of the weekly “Swiet” and the reply of the “Sankt-Peterburgskie Novosti” newspaper on this subject were quoted by “Kraj.”⁴² The weekly published a conciliatory paragraph in its next issue:

„Incydent” z panną Kruszelnicą został zamknięty ku ogólnemu zadowoleniu. Usiłowania małego kółka, ażeby z powodu interview, zamieszczonego w „Kraju”, urządzić przeciw niej po powrocie do Warszawy demonstrację, spełzły na niczem; zwyciężył zdrowy rozsądek. Artystka nigdy się z tem nie kryła, że jest „rusinką.” To jej przywiązanie do biednej podkarpackiej narodowości należy uszanować. Nigdy zresztą nie stało ono w sprzeczności z jej polskimi sympatiami i wdzięcznością dla Warszawy. [To everyone’s satisfaction, the “incident” with Miss Kruszelnicka has been concluded. The attempts of a tiny group to organize a demonstration against the artist following her return to Warsaw because of the interview published in “Kraj” have failed; common sense has prevailed. The artist has never concealed the fact that she is “Ruthenian.” Her attachment to this poor Sub-Carpathian nationality should be respected. It never stood in contradiction to her Polish sympathies and gratitude to Warsaw⁴³.]

The group that was hostile towards Kruszelnicka (led by Antoni Sygietyński, as one might guess) was indeed small. The grievances against the artist did not find their way to any of the influential newspapers.

During Kruszelnicka’s absence from Warsaw, her roles were taken over by the Italian singer Rosini-Lunardi and a Polish woman from Lviv named Mira Heller. The latter took over several of Kruszelnicka’s roles; she was also supposed to sing the role of Balladyna in *Goplana*, yet it never came to pass. According to a commentator representing “Przegląd Tygodniowy,” Mira Heller did not receive the critical recognition (more specifically from Antoni Sygietyński) she deserved. The reason was simple:

Dwie matki w ulu być nie mogą, jedną z nich bezwarunkowo zabijają. [...] Rój nasz ma już matkę Kruszelnicą. A więc [...] [Two mothers are too many for a single beehive; the bees have to kill one of them. Our beehive already has mother Kruszelnicka. And so [...]]⁴⁴.

During the time in question, the premieres of Moniuszko’s *Widma* and Kurpiński’s *Zamek na Czorsztynie* were being prepared (20 February). Both performances were quickly taken off general release.

Kruszelnicka returned to Warsaw on 5 March. “Kurier Warszawski” celebrated the artist’s return (who greeted the Warsaw audience with *Halka*) with a paragraph that clearly alluded to the recently concluded dispute:

⁴¹ The star’s Ukrainian descent was equated with being Russian, even though the place of her birth is located in West Galicia, which belonged to Austria.

⁴² [no name], *Przegląd prasy*, “Kraj” 1900, 25 February (9 March), No. 8, p. 17.

⁴³ W. Ad., *Od Redakcji*, “Kraj” 1900, 3 (16) March, No. 9, p. 21.

⁴⁴ [no name], *Echa warszawskie*, “Przegląd Tygodniowy” 1900, 15 (27) January, No. 5, p. 39.

Od jutra więc zaczyna się nowy sezon opery. Znakomita artystka, której Warszawa zawdzięcza nawrót swoich upodobań do opery moniuszkowskiej, panna Salomea Kruszelnicka, wstrząśnie jutro słuchaczami do głębi duszy, jako Halka. [So, a new season begins tomorrow. The brilliant artist who rekindled a fondness for Moniuszko's opera in Warsaw, Miss Salomea Kruszelnicka, will move the listeners deeply as Halka⁴⁵.]

Until the beginning of May, Kruszelnicka made only occasional appearances on stage since the number of performances was limited due to another visit of the Russian theatre group and, in addition, there were more operas with roles for lyrical soprano on account of a guest visit of the Italian soprano Luisa Tetrazzini (who was already known for her performances in Saint Petersburg). As if to seal her role of a promoter of Polish opera that was assigned to her by impartial observers, Kruszelnicka sang the main role (Amelia) in another Polish first premiere – *Mazepa* by Adam Münchheimer (1 May, together with d'Orio and Didur; the performance was directed by Chodakowski and conducted by Emil Młynarski). The critics did everything to ensure the opera's success, yet it was quickly withdrawn from general release. The opera was not restaged in the twentieth century; today, it is merely a historical piece.

By the end of the winter-spring season, the authorities of the theatre gave permission for another benefit performance of Kruszelnicka. *The Countess* was staged yet again for this purpose. Among the reviews written after the performance, an anonymous text published in "Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne" is particularly noteworthy; it assured that Janina Korolewiczówna shared the audience's enthusiasm, thereby suggesting unambiguously the existence of a rivalry between the two artists⁴⁶.

On 29 May, the artist, together with the singers Janina Korolewiczówna, Mattia Battistini and Aleksander Myszuga and the pianist Maria Wąsowska-Badowska, took part in a concert organized by Władysław Żeleński – an outstanding Polish composer active in Cracow (he was the director of the local conservatory), which took place at the Grand Theatre with the participation of the opera's orchestra. She sang two pieces by Żeleński: *Pieśń Jaruhy* and *Księża pamiątek*⁴⁷.

In the summer season of 1900, the Grand Theatre was closed. During that time, Salomea Kruszelnicka most likely left Warsaw.

The autumn season of 1900 started for the artist with a return to the role of Halka. Subsequently, the audience saw her with Władysław Floriański in a new production of Wagner's *Lohengrin*. The premiere of Bellini's opera *I puritani* [*The Puritans*], which featured Luisa Tetrazzini, was being prepared at that time. She took Korolewiczówna's place, who went to Lviv and Kiev to give guest performances (she returned on 25 November). Due to Tetrazzini's indisposition,

⁴⁵ [no name], *Z teatru i muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1900, 23 February (7 March), No. 66, p. 4.

⁴⁶ [Interim], *Przegląd muzyczny*, "Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne" 1900, No. 872, p. 282.

⁴⁷ W. Bogusławski, *Na scenie i na estradzie*, "Tygodnik Ilustrowany" 1900, No. 23, p. 456.

Kruszelnicka had to take over the role of Marguerite in *Faust*, which had previously been sang by Korolewiczówna; then, she reprised her best roles in *Halka*, *La Bohème*, *Aida*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, and so on. She performed frequently since Tetrzini's illness was prolonged, forcing the Italian artist to resign from participating in the season; as a result, the theatre's authorities had to "patch the repertoire up" with unplanned performances. That is how October passed. At the beginning of November, it was Kruszelnicka who took a short holiday. The Polish press did not inform about the artist's whereabouts. Perhaps she went to Italy – a number of encyclopaedic sources list this country as Kruszelnicka's holiday destination during her Warsaw years⁴⁸. During Kruszelnicka's absence, the authorities of the theatre decided to stage *The Bartered Bride* by Smetana with Korolewiczówna, Floriański, Didur and Młynarski as the conductor⁴⁹. However, this undertaking was never completed⁵⁰. On 10 November, Battistini returned to Warsaw to give guest performances. With him in mind, the preparations for a new production of *La Gioconda* by Ponchielli were started.

Władysław Floriański was the first tenor of the Warsaw opera during the time in question; he sang the main male role in the Polish premiere of Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades*, which took place on 8 November 1900 (Floriański had previously played this role in Prague, in the presence of Tchaikovsky himself, and then in Saint Petersburg). The part of Liza was acted by Salomea Kruszelnicka and Vittorio Podesti conducted the performance. The reviews of the opera itself, as well as of Kruszelnicka's participation in it, were less enthusiastic than in the case of *Onegin*. Aleksander Poliński was most pleased with Floriański as Herman; however, with regard to Kruszelnicka, he claimed that:

nie znalazła w roli Elizy dobrej sposobności do wykazania swych niepospolitych zdolności aktorskich. [in the role of Liza, she did not find a good opportunity to show her exceptional acting skills⁵¹.]

The new production of *La Gioconda* with Floriański and Kruszelnicka in the main roles premiered on 14 November. According to Poliński, this time it was Kruszelnicka who became the central figure of the performance, outshining Battistini with "such artistry we had not expected even from her."⁵² In November,

⁴⁸ Kruszelnicka's personal entry in *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM [Encyclopaedia of Music]* by Halina Sieradz lists: Naples, Brescia, Genoa and Milan; on the other hand, Susan Blyth-Schofield, the author of Kruszelnicka's entry in the new edition of the *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* encyclopaedia informs that during the period in question, the artist performed in Parma.

⁴⁹ [Inf.], *Teatr i Muzyka*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1900, 17 (30) October, No. 300, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Sprzedana narzeczona* was staged for the first time in Warsaw in 1895 at Teatr Nowy (an operetta theatre). It did not enter the stage of the Grand Theatre until 1903. *Dalibor* was staged there a year earlier.

⁵¹ A. Poliński, *Dama pikowa*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1900, 27 October (9 November), No. 310, p. 3.

⁵² A. Pol.[iński], *Z teatru i muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1900, 2 (15) November, No. 316, p. 4.

yet another opera was restaged for Battistini – *Hamlet* by Thomas. Having returned to good health, Tetrizzini took the main female role in the performance.

On 9 December, the Grand Theatre in Warsaw held a great ceremony – the celebration of the 500th performance of *Halka*. Moniuszko's opera was staged twice on that day – in the afternoon, with Kruszelnicka and Sienkiewicz in the main roles, and in the evening, when *Halka* was played by Korolewiczówna partnered by Floriański. Before that, Kruszelnicka and her colleagues took it upon themselves to sell the tickets for the afternoon performance, whose proceeds were donated to Moniuszko's family (as "Kurier Warszawski" estimated, they collected about 5000 roubles). The event was initially planned for 2 December; it was moved a week later due to a dispute that took place behind the scenes. The 21 November issue of "Kurier Warszawski" revealed the planned female cast for both performances, which was opposite to the final one. Perhaps Korolewiczówna felt humiliated by an offer to appear in the afternoon concert. The decision to change the date of the 500th performance of *Halka* was made on 26 November, and the information about the reversal of the main female performers was released on the next day. In the meanwhile, the Governor-General of Warsaw, Alexander Imeretinsky, died unexpectedly on 30 November⁵³. In spite of that, the theatre's affairs were not affected; the performances between 30 November and 9 December took place as planned.

On the day of the anniversary, "Kurier Warszawski" published extensive materials about *Halka* and its author. It also provided detailed information about another gesture made by Salomea Kruszelnicka, whom the editorial staff called "the most talented and renowned *Halka*." The prima donna took the effort to find the first performer of the role of *Halka* (in the Vilnius premiere) – Waleria Roszkowska, who lived at a poorhouse. She invited her to the anniversary performance of the opera to her private box at the theatre and donated money to improve the 75-year-old artist's living conditions⁵⁴.

The fact that *Halka* was performed twice on 9 December by two competing stars – Kruszelnicka and Korolewiczówna – constituted an excellent opportunity to compare them. The critics, however, did not take advantage of it. Aleksander Poliński decided not to judge the singers at all, explaining that both had been heard in the role of *Halka* countless times⁵⁵. However, the general reception in the press was clear: Kruszelnicka was called the best *Halka* in Warsaw. "Echo

⁵³ M. Chertkov became the new Governor-General.

⁵⁴ [no name and title], "Kurier Warszawski" 1900, 26 November (9 December), No. 340, p. 4. One more concert was held to raise money for the impoverished singer; it was given by Kruszelnicka, Korolewiczówna, Floriański and Didur as well as Emil Młynarski and Paweł Kochański as the violinists and the cellist Antoni Cynk in the Redoubt Rooms of the Grand Theatre on 13 May 1901.

⁵⁵ A. Pol.[iński], *Jubileusz "Halki"*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1900, 27 November (10 December), No. 341, p. 2.

Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne” published a copy of a card she had written, which included the following confession:

„Halka”! najrzewniejsza rola, jaką śpiewałam. Jeżeli zrozumiałam dobrze naszego Mistrza – szczęśliwą jestem. Salomea Kruszelnicka. [“Halka”! the most wistful role I have ever sung. If I understood our Master correctly, I am glad. Salomea Kruszelnicka⁵⁶.]

It would be difficult to find a more explicit declaration of solidarity with the Polish audience than this sentence, which was also written in the Polish language.

Salomea Kruszelnicka paid for her work on the anniversary of Halka with a few days of indisposition. She did not resume her appearances until March 1901 as she had spent the winter on performing with the Italian troupe in Saint Petersburg. She came to Warsaw at the beginning of March⁵⁷, starting to perform with *The Countess* (3 March) and *Halka* (5 March) under the baton of Podesti and with the participation of Floriański.

Po dwumiesięcznej nieobecności wróciła do Warszawy p. Salomea Kruszelnicka, a wraz z powrotem artystki zjawiała się na afiszu zawsze najserdeczniej witana „Hrabina” Moniuszki. Wystarczyło to w zupełności, aby teatr Wielki zajęty został przez publiczność od góry do dołu.

Uspodobienie słuchaczy ujawniło się w najgorętszym przyjęciu dzieła i wykonawców. Bohaterką wieczoru była oczywiście p. Kruszelnicka. Powitano p. Kruszelnicką okrzykami, oklaskami i kwiatami. Kwiaty padały do stóp artystce i piętrzyły się w kilku olbrzymich koszach

[Miss Salomea Kruszelnicka returned to Warsaw after a two-month long absence, and with her arrival, “The Countess,” which is always warmly welcomed by the audience, is being staged again. It was enough to fill the Grand Theatre to the brim⁵⁸.

The listeners made their feelings known in the warm reception of the opera and the performers. Miss Kruszelnicka was obviously the central figure of the evening. She was greeted with cheers, applause and flowers. The flowers fell at her feet and piled up in a few enormous baskets]

reported Adam Dobrowolski in “Kurier Warszawski.”⁵⁹ With Kruszelnicka’s return to the stage of the Grand Theatre, a new round of performances given by a Russian theatre company (a group from the Imperial Theatre in Saint Petersburg) began; hence, the number of performances was limited. Kruszelnicka appeared in: *Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Faust*, *Aida*, *The Countess* and *Halka*⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ [no name and title], “Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne” 1900, No. 897, p. 591.

⁵⁷ She was expected to return even later, so the authorities employed the young Zofia Hepnerówna for the time of her absence. Hepnerówna was dismissed before her contract expired due to the “early return of Miss Kruszelnicka” – “Kurier Warszawski” informed (1901, 24 February / 9 March, No. 68, p. 3).

⁵⁸ The hall of the Grand Theatre housed 1165 seats.

⁵⁹ A. D.[obrowolski], *Z Teatru i Muzyki*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1901, 19 April (4 March), No. 63, p. 2.

⁶⁰ Tchaikovsky’s ballet *Swan Lake* was also performed; it premiered at the end of 1900.

A new production of *Tannhäuser* (in Italian) was prepared for Sunday, 14 April, after 18 years of its absence from the Warsaw theatre's repertoire⁶¹. Kruszelnicka performed in it with Battistini (it was his first performance in the spring season), Floriański and Korolewiczówna. The performance was conducted by Vittorio Podesti. The premiere was extremely successful. According to the critics, all the singers rose up to the challenge; Kruszelnicka, as always, was praised for the accurate and profound understanding of her character's psychology.

Panna Kruszelnicka odśpiewała partię Elżbiety z nadzwyczajnym artyzmem, a w modlitwie, w akcie trzecim, kiedy prosi o śmierć własną, za pomocą której może odkupić straconą duszę „Tannhäusera” – artystka wywołała głębokie wzruszenie wśród słuchaczy [Miss Kruszelnicka sang Elisabeth's part with exceptional artistry, and with the prayer in act three, in which she pleads for her own death to redeem Tannhäuser's lost soul, the artist deeply moved the audience]

wrote Świętochowski in “Przegląd Tygodniowy.”⁶² His thoughts were echoed by Aleksander Poliński:

Nie mniejsze zachwyty wzbudzała panna Kruszelnicka w roli Elżbiety, którą pojęła przewybornie, i wszystkie jej odcienie uwypatniła w sposób budzący zdumienie ogromem środków wykonawczych, aktorskich i śpiewaczych. [Miss Kruszelnicka in Elisabeth's role was no less impressive; she perfectly understood the character and highlighted all the aspects of her personality in a way that astonished the audience with the wealth of her performing, acting and singing techniques⁶³.]

The resonance of the performance in the press resulted from the developing “Wagnerian frenzy,” which, while delayed in relation to the same phenomenon in the West, was still connected with the ideological transformations that modernism brought in its wake. In the review quoted above, Aleksander Poliński displayed his knowledge of the newest Wagnerian writings, quoting Władysław Jabłonowski's thought⁶⁴ that the contents of Wagner's operas

[...] jest upostaciowaniem najogólniejszych, wspólnych całej ludzkości, nieśmiertelnych uczuć i pragnień, poruszeniem zagadnień takich, jak miłość, śmierć, cel życia, poświęcenie, itp. [are an embodiment of the most general feelings and desires, which are immortal and common for the entire humanity; they raise such issues as love, death, the purpose of life, devotion etc.⁶⁵]

Among the opinions expressed by the young writers who represented the generation of the so-called Young Poland movement, the following excerpt of an enthusiastic review concerning Kruszelnicka is worth quoting; it was published

⁶¹ This piece was performed by a theatre company from Lviv in Warsaw in 1899. The main role was played by Aleksander Bandrowski.

⁶² [no name], *Echa warszawskie*, “Przegląd Tygodniowy” 1901, 7 (20) April, No. 16, p. 186.

⁶³ A. Poliński, *Z muzyki*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1901, 2 (15) April, No. 103, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Formulated in his article *Ryszard Wagner (poeta i myśliciel)*, published in “Tygodnik Ilustrowany” 1898, No. 44.

⁶⁵ A. Poliński, *Z muzyki*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1901, 2 (15) April, No. 103, p. 3.

in the leading literary vehicle of the Young Poland – the elitist monthly “Chimera” – by the writer, amateur musician and museologist Feliks Jasiński

Z tą wielką artystką dalecy jesteście od wszelkich popisowań się, czy to śpiewem, czy grą, od dawania przewagi bądź pierwszemu, bądź drugiej, od wszelkiego rodzaju efektów scenicznych i choćby najlżejszego kabotynizmu. Ogromny wdzięk i subtelność, niezwykła inteligencja w pojmowaniu ról, oraz intuicja w ich wcielaniu, niezwykle wykwinny smak, zarówno w śpiewie, jak w grze, oto co cechuje tę rzadką – nawet dla znających wszystkie sceny europejskie – indywidualność i czyni z odtwarzanych przez nią ról prawdziwe, szlachetne, życiem drgające postacie. [With regard to this great artist, we are far from showing off, be it singing or acting skills, from prioritizing the former or the latter, from all kinds of stage effects and even the lightest buffoonery. The immense grace, delicacy, extraordinary intelligence in understanding roles and the intuition in performing them, the unusually sophisticated taste, both in singing and acting, define this rare – even for those familiar with all the European stages – individuality, and turn her roles into real, noble and lifelike characters⁶⁶.]

Jasiński suggested taking advantage of Kruszelnicka’s stay in Warsaw to stage *Tristan und Isolde* [*Tristan and Isolde*]. The theatre did not muster the courage to do that (the work was not performed in Warsaw until after World War I), yet in the same year, 1901, Kruszelnicka sang the part of Isolde in the scene *Death of Isolde* at a grand Friday subscription concert of the Warsaw Philharmonic under the baton of Emil Młynarski⁶⁷.

The next, and also the last, premiere at the Grand Theatre in Warsaw in the 1900/1901 season (for the time being, the authorities decided to abandon the planned premieres of Puccini’s *Tosca* and Massenet’s *Werther*) was *Ruy Blas* by Marchetti (17 May 1901) with Korolewiczówna in the main role. *Mignon* by Thomas was also restaged for the mezzo-soprano Ben Sorel, who performed as a guest. From the beginning of April to the end of May, Kruszelnicka performed several times in the popular *Tannhäuser*, as well as in *La Gioconda*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*, *The Countess*, *Halka*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *La Juive*, and so on. In May, another benefit performance of Kruszelnicka was held. The programme included *Aida*.

Sprawę z wczorajszego przedstawienia „Aidy,” danego na benefis panny Kruszelnickiej, tym razem zdaćby powinien nie sprawozdawca muzyczny, lecz ogrodnik. Ten przynajmniej obszerne znalazłby pole do popisu erudycją fachową, gdyby tylko zechciał zająć się rozgatkowaniem tych wszystkich kosztów, wieńców, bukietów i wiązanek kwiecistych, jakimi obdarzono benefisantkę [...] [This time, the account of the yesterday’s performance of “Aida,” staged at Miss Kruszelnicka’s benefit performance, should be given not by a music reporter, but a gardener. He, at least, would be able to show off his professional knowledge if he only wanted to analyze the species of flowers in all the baskets, wreaths and bouquets that were given to the artist]

⁶⁶ F. Jasiński, *Muzyka*, “Chimera” 1901, vol. 2, No. 4/5, p. 347.

⁶⁷ Cf. R. Becker, *Przegląd muzyczny*, “Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne” 1901, No. 950, p. 551.

thus began Aleksander Poliński's report from the performance⁶⁸.

The very end of the season (1 June) saw a new production of *Goplana*, in which, as before, Kruszelnicka shone in the role of Balladyna, rekindling the interest of the critics, including Aleksander Świętochowski, who wrote:

Panna Kruszelnicka zaśpiewała rolę Balladyny, w której znajduje się wiele miejsc odpowiednich dla wydobycia silnych efektów dramatycznych [...]. Jesteśmy zdania, że rola Balladyny należy do najlepszych kreacji panny Kruszelnickiej, której zarówno gatunek głosu, jak i rodzaj uzdolnienia dramatycznego nie odpowiada charakterowi słodkich oper włoskich, lecz właśnie pręcej współczesnym dramatom lirycznym, do jakich należy też „Goplana” [Miss Kruszelnicka sang the role of Balladyna, in which there are multiple opportunities to achieve strong dramatic effects [...]. We are of the opinion that the part of Balladyna is among the best roles of Miss Kruszelnicka, whose voice and dramatic capabilities do not suit the sweet character of Italian operas, but are better for contemporary lyrical dramas such as “Goplana.”⁶⁹]

On 7 June, “Kurier Warszawski” informed that Kruszelnicka would end her career at the Warsaw opera on 13 June with an appearance in *Goplana*. In fact, the artist stopped performing on 2 June, which forced the authorities to suspend further performances of the promising production. The reason was her demand for a substantial pay rise from the authorities. The conflict was temporarily defused, and Kruszelnicka sang in *The Countess* as early as on 6 June, yet the threat that the prima donna might leave the Warsaw scene was still present, which provoked vehement protests of the star's fans.

“Przegląd Tygodniowy” commented on the situation in the following way:

Idzie nam o aferę pani Kruszelnickiej. Pani Kruszelnicka jest nam zawsze miłą i jako śpiewaczka bardzo utalentowana dostarcza wiele przyjemnych wrażeń, lecz to są tylko przejściowe, przyjemne i miłe wrażenia, i nic więcej; gdy p. Kruszelnicka wyjedzie z Warszawy, a z nią owi manifestanci, którzy ogłosili wobec publiczności teatralnej wielkim napisem z kwiatów, że „gdziekolwiek będziesz śpiewać, my z tobą” – na miejscu tej prymadonny występować będzie inna artystka – może trochę gorsza, a może trochę lepsza, a opuszczone dwie łoże pierwszego piętra zajmować będą nie czciciele „idealnej sztuki” p. Kruszelnickiej, lecz może zwolennicy istotnie dobrej opery, i wówczas nie nastąpi jeszcze trzęsienie ziemi obracające w gruzy kraj cały, a z nim teatr Wielki, i nie uleczą bezpowrotnie dusze „Halki,” „Hrabiny” i „Balladyny” – opera polska trwać będzie i rozwijać się tem lepiej, im mniej będzie wydanych pieniędzy na zbytównych solistów. [With regard to the scandal involving Miss Kruszelnicka – she is always dear to us and, as a very talented singer, she provides us with numerous thrilling experiences, yet they are only fleeting and pleasant impressions, nothing more; once Miss Kruszelnicka leaves Warsaw, and with her the protesters who announced “wherever you sing, we shall follow you,” another artist will come in her place – perhaps slightly worse, perhaps slightly better – and the two vacated boxes on the first floor will be occupied not by the worshippers of Miss Kruszelnicka's “perfect art,” but perhaps by the advocates of truly good opera. And there will not be an earthquake that brings the whole country down and with it the theatre, and the spirits of “Halka,” the “Countess” and “Balladyna” will not fade away never to

⁶⁸ A. Pol.[iński], *Z teatru i muzyki*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1901, 13 (26) May, No.144, p. 5.

⁶⁹ [no name], *Echa warszawskie*, “Przegląd Tygodniowy” 1901, 26 May (8 June), No. 23, p. 272.

return – Polish opera will last and flourish better if less money is spent on extravagant soloists⁷⁰.]

The artist was paid more than 30 000 roubles per year⁷¹. According to the reports, the “fussy star” demanded even more for an engagement in the next season, thereby not giving the opera’s authorities a choice – in the face of a threatening budget deficit, they decided not to extend the singer’s contract. A group of her fans started to protest and collect signatures in her defence⁷².

Kruszelnicka concluded her third season in Warsaw by singing the role of Balladyna in *Goplana* several times and by appearing in *La Juive* and *Lohengrin*. She was reluctant, however, to sign a contract for the next season. The authorities tried to protect themselves by looking for a new soprano. They negotiated with the Lviv artist Helena Zboińska-Ruszkowska (the performer of the main role in Paderewski’s *Manru*, which premiered in Dresden in May 1901) as well as with the mezzo-soprano Margot Kaftalówna, a singer of international renown (she accepted an engagement for the autumn of 1901). Korolewiczówna took advantage of the crisis – it was her who started being named as the first star of the Warsaw scene – specifically the “lyrical prima donna” – in the press announcements from the first half of June. The title was consistently awarded to her in the future, leaving Kruszelnicka with the title of the “dramatic prima donna.” In this way, the equal status of both stars was confirmed.

Kruszelnicka improved her reputation among the Warsaw audience by taking part in performances supporting the opera’s orchestra and choir, which took place from 28–30 June (she appeared as the Countess and Halka). Finally, on 30 June, “Kurier Warszawski” reported that:

[...]po długich rokowaniach pomiędzy zarządem teatrów i p. Kruszelnicką doszło do ostatecznego porozumienia. Dyrekcja zaangażowała śpiewaczkę na październik, listopad i połowę grudnia. [after long negotiations, Miss Kruszelnicka and the theatre’s board reached a final agreement. The authorities employed the singer for October, November and a half of December⁷³.]

During the time in question, the Warsaw theatre was in a deep financial and personnel-related crisis. In the face of a significant budget deficit, only a few artists received increased pay (among others the tenor Grąbczewski, the bandmaster Podesti and the newly employed Stermich-Valcrocciata); the remaining artists were becoming increasingly dissatisfied. Once the season of Italian opera ended, the previous president of the Warsaw Theatre Directorate, Iwanow, handed in his resignation. A committee for the reform of the theatre was appointed; it started debating in mid-September under the chairmanship of general Aleksandr Puzyrevskii (the assistant of the Governor-General of Warsaw) and

⁷⁰ [no name], *Echa warszawskie*, “Przegląd Tygodniowy” 1901, 9 (22) June, No. 25, p. 296.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid, p. 297.

⁷³ [no name], *Z teatru i muzyki*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1901, 17 (30) June, No. 178, p. 5.

with the participation of leading Warsaw music and theatre journalists: Antoni Sygietyński, Marian Gawalewicz, Władysław Rabski, Aleksander Poliński, Adam Dobrowolski, Władysław Bogusławski and others. A compromise with regard to Polish native opera was not reached until the end of November 1901, when a decision was made to organize a separate season exclusively for Polish opera⁷⁴. The plan was not put into action, yet not on account of political reasons, but because the majority of Polish singers knew their roles in Italian. Regardless, starting from 1902, newspaper announcements included the language in which the opera was to be sung: Polish, Italian or, less frequently, French.

A new production of *Robert le diable* with Kruszelnicka's participation was planned for the beginning of the 1901/1902 season. Władysław Floriański was to be her partner for the first time in this opera at the Warsaw stage. However, Kruszelnicka (who was bound by her contract to appear on 25 September) delayed her arrival to the very last moment. Therefore, the authorities cobbled together an emergency performance of *Tannhäuser*, in which she appeared on 1 October with Korolewiczówna and Floriański. Afterwards, she reprised her roles in *The Countess* and *Halka*; as always, the performances gathered a full house. The new production of *Robert le diable* was finally presented on 7 October. In the next days, Kruszelnicka appeared in *La Juive*, *Halka*, *Goplana*, *Un ballo in maschera* and *Aida*, receiving, as usual, very good reviews.

On the day the season began, the press announced that the young Italian tenor Enrico Caruso was to come to Warsaw. In the next days, he performed in *Rigoletto*, *Carmen*, *La traviata*, *Mefistofele* and *Un ballo in maschera*, partnered by Kruszelnicka (in *Un ballo in maschera*), Korolewiczówna and Ben Sorel, who was invited once more. The press, as always prejudiced against the Italians, was not impressed with Caruso's voice.

The next visit of the imperial couple in Skierniewice near Warsaw was a major event of the period. A number of attractions were prepared for Nicholas II and his wife. A show consisting of solo performances and a ballet *divertissement* was held on 7 November. Amidst the performers of the concert (7 November), "Kurier Warszawski"⁷⁵ listed the following artists of the opera: Grąbczewski, Korolewiczówna, Sillich and Caruso, the conductors Podesti and Barcewicz as well as Stermicz as the accompanist. During the concert for the imperial family, the artists sang only Italian arias. The success of this undertaking prompted its organizer, Konstantin Herschelmann (who was trying to succeed Iwanow as president of the Theatre Directorate⁷⁶), to organize another concert. He took advantage of

⁷⁴ The Polish performances (that is in the Polish language) were supposed to take place in September, January, February, March and June; the Italian ones, in October, November, December, April and May.

⁷⁵ Issue No. 306 from 26 October (8 November) 1901, p. 1. The information was provided by "Warszawski Dniownik."

⁷⁶ He was nominated on 20 November 1901 after the committee adjourned.

the fact that Mattia Battistini had just arrived in Warsaw, moved the new production of *Werther* by Massenet, in which Battistini was supposed to perform, by one day to 14 November, and sent him to Skierniewice with Kruszelnicka and Barcewicz.

On 18 November, Kruszelnicka played the part of Karolina in Massenet's *Werther*, which was restaged for Battistini (the composer personally converted the tenor part into baritone for him). The reviewers forgot about the dispute that had taken place before the holidays and praised the singer – as usual – for the qualities of her voice and “great acting talent.”⁷⁷

Oboje święcili wczoraj tryumf zupełny, nie poskapiono im bowiem – zwłaszcza p. Kruszelnickiej, ani oklasków, ani wieńców [Both of them were completely successful yesterday as the audience was generous with applause and flowers, especially to Miss Kruszelnicka]

assured Aleksander Poliński in “Kurier Warszawski.”⁷⁸

Nonetheless, on the whole, Kruszelnicka's fame began to fade starting from the autumn of 1901; this was caused by some unrelated reasons as well – the capital of the “Vistula Country” was, at the time, preoccupied with the preparations for the opening of the Warsaw Philharmonic, which took place on 5 November 1901. In the next months, the concerts of the philharmonic orchestra were the most popular music events. They were organized with the participation of first-rate soloists from abroad. Another reason for the decline of Kruszelnicka's popularity was the emergence of a few young singers onto the Warsaw scene, who would become first-rate stars in the future. They included Aleksander Bandrowski (he performed with Kruszelnicka in the second half of November and in December in Wagnerian roles, for which he was famous abroad, that is *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*), Adam Didur, who returned to Warsaw from a longer stay in America, and among the ladies – Margot Kaftalówna (she took over the old roles of Korolewiczówna in *Mignon*, *Pagliacci*, *The Haunted Manor* and *Halka*⁷⁹). The Warsaw press wrote about them at length.

When Konstantin Herschelmann took up the office of president, the financial situation of the Grand Theatre became worse; trying to reduce the financial deficit, the new president dismissed a number of choir, ballet and orchestra artists as well as cut the pay of others. Severe penalties were introduced for refusing to take part in performances, losing elements of costumes and the like; the pool of free tickets for reviewers was also limited, which resulted in missing reports from theatre and opera performances. In January 1902, the Warsaw correspondent of “Kraj” (Antoni Sygietyński) reported that:

z operą [...] różnie bywa, czasem zadziwiająco pustki. [opera [...] has its ups and downs; sometimes there are astonishing blanks⁸⁰.]

⁷⁷ T. Joteyko, *Z muzyki*, “Przegląd Tygodniowy” 1901, 10 (23) November, No. 47, p. 558.

⁷⁸ A. Poliński, *Werter*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1901, 6 (19) November, No. 320, p. 3.

⁷⁹ She sang in Italian in *Halka* and in Polish in *The Haunted Manor*.

⁸⁰ Gama [A. Sygietyński], *W przelocie*, *Warsaw, 19 January*, “Kraj” 1902, 11 (24) January, No. 2, p. 20.

In order to revive the interest in performances, Herschelmann personally went to Italy to fetch new singers in the winter of 1902⁸¹.

In the autumn part of the 1901/1902 season, Kruszelnicka reprised her roles in *Halka*, *The Countess*, *La Gioconda*, *Werther*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Eugene Onegin* and *Aida*, but she gave up the part of Amelia in Münchheimer's *Mazepa*, giving it to Korolewiczówna. Kruszelnicka took part with her and a group of brilliant Warsaw artists in another fundraising concert for the Literary Fund (on 28 November, she sang one song by Schumann, one by the Polish composer Gustaw Roguski as well as "something Italian," as Poloński put it)⁸², and on 6 December, she performed with the violinist Eugène Ysaÿe at a grand Friday subscription concert of the Warsaw Philharmonic, in which she sang, as I have already mentioned, in the scene of Isolde's death. The artist spent the rest of the year on giving daily performances in the opera, participating in another charity concert for the Warsaw Merchants' Society (15 December) and appearing in a benefit performance of Battistini – a staging of *Werther* (21 December). Kruszelnicka bid the Warsaw audience farewell with this performance. This was also Battistini's last performance in Warsaw during the season in question. Both artists went to Saint Petersburg. Kruszelnicka reprised her role in *Werther* at the Imperial Theatre and presented herself as Carmen for the first time. Together with Battistini, she also performed in Donizetti's *Maria de Rohan* as part of the Italian singer's benefit performance. This time, Kruszelnicka was less fortunate, especially because she competed against another Polish artist, Adelina Bolska, who, in the meanwhile, ascended to the role of the star of the Mariinsky Theatre (she became a dangerous rival of Kruszelnicka, particularly as Elsa in *Lohengrin*).

Konstantin Herschelmann fulfilled his obligation to organize a season of Polish opera only in part, giving permission to restage Moniuszko's *Widma* and *Flis* as well as produce two new Polish operas: *Livii Quintilli* by the leading Warsaw composer Zygmunt Noskowski (the professor of composition at the local Institute of Music and the school of the Warsaw Music Society) and *Manru* by Paderewski, which, at the time, had already premiered in Dresden and New York (with the participation of the first-rate star of Polish descent Marcella Sembrich-Kochańska). Apart from them, a fairy-tale opera that had not been played in Warsaw for years – Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* – was staged during Kruszelnicka's absence. Guest artists invited for the winter season include Irena Bohuss from Lviv (later Irena Bohuss-Hellerowa) and the Italian Olimpia Boronat (countess Rzewuska after marriage). Both singers achieved considerable artistic and social success, outshining all the previous prima donnas.

The contract Kruszelnicka signed with the authorities of the Warsaw opera for the spring season of 1902 began on 1 April. However, the artist made a fleet-

⁸¹ Cf. *ibid.*

⁸² A. Poliński, *Z muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1901, 16 (29 November), No. 330, p. 4.

ing appearance in Warsaw as early as on 19 March, singing the role of the Countess at a benefit performance of Józef Chodakowski, who was leaving the position of the director⁸³. On the following day, the artist went abroad once more⁸⁴. The premiere of Smetana's *Dalibor* took place during her absence; it was conducted by Młynarski and the main roles were played by Korolewiczówna and Floriański. The beginning of Kruszelnicka's next stay in Warsaw was marked by an unusual event – Pietro Mascagni, who was visiting the city at the invitation of the authorities of the Warsaw Philharmonic, was asked to personally conduct a performance of *Cavalleria rusticana*. Kruszelnicka was supposed to appear in the role of Santuzza, yet she fell ill (the performance was held on 5 April). She was substituted by a member of the Italian troupe, Ines de Frate. The Ukrainian appeared before the audience two days later as Carmen, reprising the role she had previously learnt for the productions in Saint Petersburg, and then resumed her performances in *Halka*, which she had not sung for almost two years. "Miss Kruszelnicka was excellent" – "Kurier Warszawski" reported⁸⁵.

The first premiere of Noskowski's *Livia Quintilla* fell on 16 April. Kruszelnicka was partnered by Floriański and Didur, and the performance was conducted by Podesti. Kruszelnicka's role in this opera – which is only a historical piece now but, as befits the work of a native artist, was met with great interest in 1902 – was her last great success at the Warsaw scene.

Znakomita artystka, jaką jest w każdej prawie roli panna Kruszelnicka, i tu potrafiła stworzyć typ uroczej i dumnej rzymianki, pokonując znakomicie wokalne trudności partycy [Being a brilliant artist in almost all of her roles, Miss Kruszelnicka was able to create a charming and proud Roman woman, overcoming the vocal difficulties of the score]

wrote Aleksander Świętochowski⁸⁶.

Partję Liwji opracowała p. Kruszelnicka z mistrzostwem do *nec plus ultra*. Obok *Halki* i *Hrabiny* to trzeci nieśmiertelny djadem artystki! [Miss Kruszelnicka prepared the part of Livia in a masterful way. Apart from *Halka* and *The Countess*, this is the artist's third immortal diadem!]

enthused a young critic from Vilnius⁸⁷.

Główną bohaterką wieczoru była p. Kruszelnicka, bajecznie doskonała przedstawicielka roli tytułowej; śpiewała prześlicznie i charakter uwydatniła plastycznie. W jej też osobie skupiało się najsilniejsze zaciekawienie, jej artyzm najgłębsze wywierał wrażenie [Miss Kruszelnicka was the central figure of the evening. She was fabulously perfect in the

⁸³ He was succeeded by Władysław Floriański. Emil Młynarski was the chief conductor of the opera (until the end of June 1902).

⁸⁴ The press did not report on the artist's destination.

⁸⁵ *Z teatru i muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1902, 4 (17) April, No. 105, p. 2.

⁸⁶ H. Opieński, *Livia Quintilla*, "Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne" 1902, No. 970, p. 201.

⁸⁷ A. Miller, *Przegląd muzyczny*, "Głos" 1902, 13 (26) April, No. 17, p. 277.

eponymous role; she sang beautifully and artistically highlighted the character's personality. She was in the centre of attention, and her artistry left the most profound impression]

assured Aleksander Poliński⁸⁸.

By the end of the spring season, Kruszelnicka had given four more performances in *Livia*, which was subsequently withdrawn from general release in spite of the critics' protests. "Kurier Warszawski" reported that the singer's resignation from the part was the reason of the withdrawal⁸⁹. On 3 May, the artist left Warsaw to go on holiday. She used it to continue her foreign career. On 16 and 20 May, she performed at the Grand Opera in Paris, singing with Jean de Reszke in *Lohengrin*. It was said to be a great success⁹⁰. Prior to her departure to Paris, the artist had promised to give three more performances of *Livia* in Warsaw in June. She kept the promise and reprised some of her old roles throughout the month, including *La Juive*. During the artist's absence, the Warsaw audience was wowed by Olimpia Boronat, Irena Bohussówna and Aleksander Bandrowski. The latter was the central figure of the premiere of *Manru* by Paderewski, which took place on 24 May 1902 with the participation of Korolewiczówna and Podesti as the conductor. In subsequent performances, the role of Ulana was taken over by Helena Zboińska-Ruszkowska. Praised by the press, the singer began to perform in *Halka* as well. During that time, *The Countess* had a new performer at the Warsaw Government Theatres – Władysława Chotkowska (the artist debuted in this role in January 1902). Salomea bid the Warsaw audience farewell for the summer with the roles of Rachela in *La Juive*, the Countess and *Halka* (28 June–3 July; the proceeds from Moniuszko's operas were intended for charity). The account of the performance of *The Countess* (farewell performance of the retiring Józef Chodakowski conducted by Piotr Stermicz⁹¹) published in "Kurier Warszawski" reads:

Idealną przedstawicielkę tytułowej partii, p. Kruszelnicką, przyjmowano owacyjnie podczas całego przedstawienia. Ale bo też znakomita artystka była wczoraj w takim humorze, w takim usposobieniu, iż życie tryskało z jej interpretacji wykończonych, subtelnej i zachwycającej. Wszystkie szczegóły każdej sceny, wszystkie sytuacje były przeprowadzone szlachetnie, ze smakiem, z prawdą uczucia, zamkniętą w słowie i muzyce, a tak świetnie odtwarzaną przez naszą dzielną prymadonnę. To też publiczność entuzjastycznie oklaskiwała artystkę. W ważniejszych momentach do jej stóp padały zewsząd kwiaty i bukiety; wywołaniom zaś końca nie było.

— Do widzenia! Po wakacjach...

⁸⁸ A. Poliński, *Z muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1902, 7 (20) April, No. 108, p. 9.

⁸⁹ [no name], *Z teatru i muzyki*, "Kurier Warszawski" 1902, 21 April (4 May), No. 122, p. 4.

⁹⁰ [no name], *Notatki*, "Kraj" 1902, 9 (22) May, No. 19, p. 218; and No. 20 from 17 (30) May, p. 230. "Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne," (1902, No. 19 from 27 April / 10 May, p. 207) made a mistake in listing Édouard de Reszke as Kruszelnicka's partner in *Lohengrin*. The artist's personal entry in *Encyklopedia teatru polskiego* [*Encyclopaedia of Polish theatre*] lists 1902 as the year in which she performed in Paris, Saint Petersburg and Italy. <http://www-encyklopediateatru.pl/osoby/41322/salomea-kruszelnicka> [access: 3.01.2018].

⁹¹ Emil Młynarski did not work at the Warsaw opera since 1 July.

[The perfect performer of the eponymous part, Miss Kruszelnicka, was greeted with applause throughout the entire performance. But this was also because the brilliant artist was in such a good mood yesterday that her interpretation was vibrant, subtle and enchanting. All the details of every scene, all the situations, were acted out with refinement, taste and truthfulness to the emotion that is enclosed in the lyrics and in the music, which our brave prima donna performed so well. And so the audience enthusiastically applauded the artist. Flowers and bouquets fell to her feet from everywhere during the most important moments, and she kept being called back to the stage.

“Goodbye! See you after the holidays...!”⁹²]

The next opera season – the last one for Salomea Kruszelnicka – was opened on 14 September 1902. As promised by president Konstantin Herschelman, four new singers were acquired. The foreign performers included the tenors Giuseppe Anselmi and Giovanni Dimitrescu, the baritone Mario Ancona, the soprano Gemma Bellincioni (greeted with applause as the performer of the parts of Violetta, Nedda, Santuzza and Carmen). Furthermore, Battistini, who had an attachment to the Warsaw scene, appeared in, among others, a new production of *Wilhelm Tell* by Rossini.

The autumn part of the season began with a new production of *Fra Diavolo* by Auber and *Faust* by Gounod (the role of Margarethe was given to Władysława Chotkowska); at the same time, the preparations for the premiere of *Les dragons de Villars* by Maillart were started (Margot Kaftalówna was assigned the main role). On 20 September, Kruszelnicka inaugurated the last series of her performances in Warsaw with *The Countess* (with Didur), which, as always, was well-received by the audience and the critics. Subsequently, *Aida*, *La Juive*, *Halka*, *Manon*, *La bohème*, *Werther* and others were put back on release for her. Each of the pieces was staged several times in a row. The monotony of the repertoire was to be broken by the premiere of the opera *Ero e Leandro* by Luigi Mancinelli with Kruszelnicka in the main role (22 November). The production, however, turned out to be a complete failure.

Kruszelnicka's remaining achievements at the end of her stay in Poland include the participation in another charity concert for the Literary Fund with Floriański (19 November 1902 – she sang two waltzes by Tosti and two Polish songs: Paderewski's *Dudarz* and Noskowski's *Serce pęka mi z bólu*) and the performances with Battistini in *Eugene Onegin* and *Ernani* as well as with Anselmi in *Werther*. She was also supposed to sing in *The Countess* but had to be substituted by Chodakowska due to indisposition. Her last performance in Warsaw took place on 23 December 1902 – she sang the role of Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera*. The above-mentioned appearances took place in the atmosphere of the audience's growing admiration for the performances of Gemma Bellincioni. She dethroned Kruszelnicka with ease, even in spite of Aleksander Poliński's suggestion that:

⁹² [no name], *Opera*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1902, 21 June (4 July), No. 182, p. 1.

„chytra Włoszka” umie cieniować nie tylko śpiew na scenie, ale i swe występy w izdebce reżyserskiej [“the cunning Italian” can not only perform on stage, but also at the director’s office⁹³.]

In addition, the whole autumn season was judged by the critic as tedious.

Repertuar ustępuje w operze śpiewakom, a na afisz powracają te same od szeregu lat tytuły. Śpiewacy są pierwszorzędni: dość wymienić nazwiska Battistiniego, Anzelmięgo, Ancony, Bellincioni, Pinkiertówny [The repertoire is adjusted to the singers’ needs and the same titles have been on release for years. The singers are excellent: it is enough to mention such names as Battistini, Anselmi, Ancony, Bellincioni, Pinkiertówna⁹⁴]

claimed Władysław Bogusławski in the respected scientific journal “Biblioteka Warszawska.”⁹⁵ It was not a coincidence that Kruszelnicka was missing from his list of “excellent singers.”⁹⁶ In these circumstances, the artist began to consider leaving the Warsaw scene. At the same time, the theatre authorities started to employ artists for 1904 and plan subsequent premieres. These plans did not include Kruszelnicka – the authorities probably expected her resignation as early as in December 1902. In the meantime, the singer’s father died on 31 December, so she returned to her homeland. She stayed there for a while and renewed her relationship with the Lviv opera. In April 1903, she began a series of guest performances at Teatr Skarbowski; on the 15th day of the month, she sang the role of Manon and on 18 April, Moniuszko’s Countess, then Rachel and so on. The artist concluded the series of performances in Lviv at the beginning of May with an appearance in *Halka*. The Lviv press described Kruszelnicka as the prima donna of the Warsaw Opera. However, the singer never returned to Warsaw. She did not stay in Lviv either. She became involved in “political intrigues” – as the artist’s biographer described them⁹⁷ – and decided to go to Italy. Thus began the culmination of her career. According to the Western observers, it overshadowed all of her previous achievements. This phase of her career was not commented on in Poland, yet what remained was the favourable memory of the star as an outstanding performer of the roles of Halka and the Countess as well as of her participation in charity concerts, including the one devoted to the first Halka – Waleria Rostkowska.

⁹³ A. Poliński, *Z muzyki*, “Kurier Warszawski” 1902, 12 (25) November, No. 326, p. 3.

⁹⁴ Regina Pinkiertówna debuted in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the beginning of December 1902.

⁹⁵ W. Bogusławski, *Teatr i Muzyka*. IV, “Biblioteka Warszawska” 1903, vol. 1, z. 1, p. 136.

⁹⁶ So was Korolewiczówna, who, at that time, was staying at the Italian Opera in Berlin.

⁹⁷ Cf. Kruszelnicka’s entry in *Grosses Sänglerlexicon*, op. cit. It concerns the artist’s involvement in the Ukrainian national movement.

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Warszawskie sezony Salomei Kruszelnickiej (1898–1902)

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest poświęcony omówieniu działalności artystycznej Salomei Kruszelnickiej w latach 1898–1902. Uwzględniono przede wszystkim jej występy na scenie operowej Warszawskich Teatrów Rządowych. Relację uzupełniono sprawozdaniem na temat pozostałych działań artystki w tym okresie. Praca została napisana w oparciu o materiał źródłowy zebrany w prasie wychodzącej w ośrodkach polskich, Lipsku („Signale für die musikalische Welt”) i Petersburgu (polskojęzyczny tygodnik „Kraj”). Recenzje poświęcone występom Kruszelnickiej stanowią cenny dokument recepcji jej sztuki, a przy okazji tworzą ciekawy obraz wycinka warszawskiej kultury muzycznej przełomu XIX i XX wieku – czasu, w którym starły się ze sobą tradycyjne poglądy na sztukę z prądami modernistycznymi.

Słowa kluczowe: Salomea Kruszelnicka, wokalistyka operowa, opera warszawska, polska kultura muzyczna w czasach zaborów, polska krytyka muzyczna przełomu XIX i XX wieku.