

It's you once more!

Interview with
KRYSTYNA PROŃKO

Q: The latest issue of the "Jazz Forum" monthly magazine described you as the "Polish jewel vocalist"...

A: That's a great honour, for me, thank you...

Q: We are meeting on the eve of the 43rd Polish Song Festival in Opole which you have been closely associated with. That's where you won the highest laurels. But then in the 1990s the "Polish jewel vocalist" was rarely heard...

A: That's true. In the meantime, I also went into writing about music and I ran music features on the radio. I set up my own artistic agency, released my records and took care of my recordings. That was a very wise move on my part. I think the reason I am still functioning on the market is that I have worked hard all the time and have a lot of accomplishments to my credit. As you said, I won my first laurels at the Opole Festival but I don't appear there anymore. It has lost its high ranking. Many people think so too.

Q: You have, however, appeared many times since then at the Jazz Jamboree festivals, at music events of quite a different character, and you have been doing so to wide acclaim...

A: My music interests have always been diverse. I have been always looking for new fields of expression. When some music genre interests me more, I go into that music myself trying to find a place for me there. I have tried my hand at composing and record produc-

tion. My interests shift all the time. As of late, for example, I am listening to hip-hop. I think that Polish rap/hip-hop and that also in terms of lyrics, is exceptionally interesting.

Q: Your fascinations and searches are changing but your voice stays the same...

A: Right now I am preparing a record with standards of Polish songs and upon listening to them one of my colleagues observed: "and it's you once more". Well, that's how I should be! I won't change in terms of emotion and personality. And I won't alter the vocal, for it is ascribed to me as nothing else. The voice is like fingerprints.

Q: What makes a good song?

A: A good song is the outcome of the creative personalities of the composer; author of the lyrics and the performer. Sometimes one and the same person has all these attributes.

Q: Let me ask you then what has been your personal canon, your patterns...

A: Patterns... I had them, of course, but that was long ago. But when I was starting off my adventure with song, I had my personal canon of singers and songstresses I could listen to and look up to without end. Let me mention in particular Ella Fitzgerald, Roberta Flack and Otis Redding. And Czesław Niemen from Poland.

Q: Your teach singing. What is the most important thing you want the future vocalists to learn from you?

A: Just after graduation I was running singing classes at the Music Academy in Katowice where I studied before. But after two



years I had to resign because I was unable to find the time for teaching as well as performing. Then, from time to time I was running music workshops for vocalists in Poland as well as abroad. In 2000, I was invited to teach music at the Faculty of Arts at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. Working with young people, albeit exhausting, gives me a lot of satisfaction. For to reach them, I must learn something from them, too. And then, for instance, I discover my faults quite differently. And what do I want them to learn from me? I am trying to teach them modesty and patience. That isn't easy.

Q: In 2004, the European Forum of Women Business Owners honoured you with the title of Distinguished Woman. How did you receive that distinction?

A: I was slightly overawed. It came so unexpectedly. Naturally, I was delighted that my work and my artistic accomplishments were recognised. That distinction gave me a lot of energy. It is indeed wonderful that me, Janina Ochojska, Teresa Rosati, Krystyna Woźniak-Trzosek and Katarzyna Grochola, all of us active in different fields of endeavour, are supported by business women. And that the Forum sponsors what we are doing. My latest DVD was produced thanks to its generous funding.

Interviewer: MACIEK PROLIŃSKI

