

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who took part in the meeting of Central European countries and the President of the United States of America in Warsaw, yesterday visited Lusławice Manor to meet one of Poland's most renowned composers and conductors, Krzysztof Penderecki, in his home.

"Estonia and Poland are close allies in the European Union and NATO; we both support a strong and bold European Union; however, cultural ties between Estonia and Poland are also important," President Ilves said. Mr. Penderecki is a frequent visitor to Estonia and was promoted to the position of Honorary Doctor of Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (EAMT) in March of last year. His influence as a composer and a musician, according to the Rector of the EAMT, Peep Lassmann, exceeds ordinary limits.

"Krzysztof Penderecki is a great composer and a musician, but he is also a great citizen of Poland, who has followed well-defined principles for decades – art never tolerates compromises, false pretences, or conflicts with oneself," the Estonian Head of State said. "As a truly great creator, he has not placed himself outside the time in which he lives and creates, and he has never switched himself out of his history and present."

Mr. Penderecki has avoided something that he describes as writing or composing in emptiness, President Ilves added.

The Estonian Head of State and Mrs. Evelin Ilves planted a decorative apple tree "Professor August Vaga", which is bred in Estonia and comes from Karukäpa Nursery in Luua, in the home garden of Krzysztof Penderecki and Elzbieta Penderecka.

Mr. Penderecki's influence as a composer and musician exceeds ordinary limits, according to the Rector of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (EAMT), Peep Lassmann. In March of last year, Mr. Penderecki was made an Honorary Doctor of the EAMT. President Ilves and Mr. Penderecki met for the first time on a plane, as the well-known composer and musician was flying to attend a ceremony in Tallinn to bestow him with an Honorary Doctorate.

A young pianist, Julia Kociuban, who has also played with conductors Neeme Järvi and Eri

Klas, and with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, played for President Ilves and Mrs. Evelin Ilves in the Pendereckis's home. In the evening, the Estonian Head of State visited the concert of the Warsaw Symphonic Orchestra in the Łańcut Castle, near Rzeszów; the orchestra was conducted by Krzysztof Penderecki.

Background information

Excerpts from Krzysztof Penderecki's speech, which he gave at the ceremony to bestow him with an Honorary Doctorate of the EAMT on 28 March 2010 in the Estonia Concert Hall:

"... art can be the most marvellous mediator: a mediator of freedom – the freedom of ideas and feelings – and a mediator of truth and beauty. An artist lives and creates amidst a single specific culture and nature. Each culture has its unique nature and character, and this is influenced by the nature of one or another country, and by the nature of people living there. /---/

The twentieth century was the era of historical cataclysms, according to the words of the Polish poet and Nobel Prize winner, Czesław Miłosz: the era of imprisonment of the human mind. But it also was the era of collapsing totalitarian systems and the creation of a new – and not an easy – reality. I've always liked the idea of Theodor Ludwig Wiesengrund Adorno of responding with music to the atrocities of history and the needs of history. /---/

Trees – they have always been an important and significant symbol in my life and my music. Trees as symbols and representatives of nature will teach us to understand values and the meaning of existence. Let us look at them. They seem like a mysterious and impenetrable book of nature. Their roots reach both the earth and the sky. Listening to the sound of trees and understanding their fate – this feels like the beginning of a team of a fugue or symphony in music. /---/

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