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Crisis or Renaissance of Europe's Organ Heritage?

Kryzys czy renesans europejskiego dziedzictwa organowego?

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Introduction

The Zurich Resolution, announced to the international community in 2011, emphasizes that the organ is Europe's cultural treasure with a worldwide influence. The organ and organ music strengthen the cultural identity of Europeans, foster dialogue with other cultures, draw on the tradition, and preserve the legacy of many generations. It has been observed, however, that in times of social upheaval, organ heritage is threatened with the loss of the attention and recognition it deserves. Therefore, the authors of the resolution urge political, religious and cultural leaders, particularly the authorities of the EU, UNESCO, national governments, religious authorities and dignitaries, music schools and conservatories, concert organizers, and journalists, to take appropriate measures to preserve organ heritage and promote organ culture. For the organ is the "king of instruments" [Angster, Miklós 2017, p. 10–18].

At the same time, a debate was conducted in Europe concerning the restrictions on organ building as a result of Directive 2011/65/EU (RoHS Directive). It has been noted that traditional pipe organs, built with alloys of various metals (such as zinc, lead, brass, copper), should be subject to the Directive, which would effectively lead to an end of their construction. In consequence, based on the assessment of the possible

environmental impact and considering the exceptional cultural value of the pipe organ, it has been decided that the instrument would be exempt from the Directive [Final Report].

In 2017, organ craftsmanship and music in Germany were inscribed by UNESCO on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity because they have been shaping the "music landscape" and the manufacturing of instruments in that country for many centuries. Thus UNESCO appreciated the organ-building skills developed (and passed down to successive generations) in numerous organ-building workshops as well as the organ music created in Germany as a universal language conducive to inter-religious understanding. The knowledge and specialist skills needed to nurture this part of heritage have united craftspeople, composers and musicians working together throughout history. Usually passed on in an informal manner, they are an important marker of community identity. The inscription on the UNESCO list is an appreciation and recognition of many centuries of organ heritage of not just one country but also the entire world as well as its contribution to sustainable development [Gerner 2021, p. 285–310]. To reinforce this message, the year 2021 was celebrated in Germany as the Year of the Organ. Thanks to numerous events organized throughout the year, one could experience the diversity of organs and organ music, and thus be-

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come interested in organ building as part of world heritage that is worthy of being preserved for future generations [Šercer, Kavić 2013, p. 266–273]. It should also be noted that the late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw an increased interest in historic organs with regard to their structural characteristics determining their unique sound [Dorawa 2011, p. 7]. In western Europe (Alsace) at that time, a social movement was born that initiated comprehensive studies of old instruments and called for preserving them in their original state. This movement developed under the auspices of Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965). In 1926, many countries in western Europe gradually began to place organs under official conservation protection. In justified cases, measures were taken to restore the original sound of organs by removing later additions from the organ mechanisms and restoring original parts to bring back their historical sound. Current studies on historic organs are primarily concerned with preserving the original sound that is subject to change over time and to the influence of environmental factors on the materials that the organs are made of [Angster, Miklós 1995, p. 61–82; Chiavari et al. 2008, p. 2444–2455; Alescio, Sebastianelli 2013, p. 101–116; Urbańczyk 2011]. However, comprehensive and spatial studies of organ heritage have not been conducted so far. The publication by Urbańczyk [2011] on the preservation and conservation of historic organs in Poland against the background of the European art of organ building may be regarded as an exception. As Urbańczyk observed, topics related to the organ are rarely explored scientifically [p. 177]. Due to its complex, multi-faceted ideological meaning, complicated functional program and its dual nature—as a musical instrument and element of interior decoration, the organ is characterized by multidimensionality. Added to that is the inherent relationship of the organ with the space which it co-creates and forms part of. Urbańczyk [2011, p. 178–181] distinguishes five kinds of space related to the organ: architectural, functional, symbolic, acoustic, and sonoristic. While comprehensive approaches are adopted very rarely, the organ remains a subject of human fascination.

The objective of this paper is to examine the current situation of Europe's organ heritage, construed as the entirety of manifestations of culture, encompassing artifacts (organ building, instruments), people (organ builders, organists, listeners) as well as intangible elements (compositions, performances, improvisations, concerts, and festivals) in the individual European countries, a reflection of the various traditions and styles over the centuries. Europe's organ heritage is an important part of the European cultural heritage rooted in Christianity. In modern times, organs are present in nearly all European countries and constitute an important and characteristic element of furnishings in many historic and contemporary religious buildings and concert halls whose acoustics and décor contribute to their perception [Kearney 2020, p. 24–38]. The article presents contemporary threats and challenges for

organ heritage. Particular attention is paid to climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic ranked among the greatest threats in the modern world. This article presents a diagnosis made from the perspective of pipe organ and organ music experts. In addition, the voice of the experts was reinforced by my own observations.

Material and methods

The achievement of the study objective required the use of many sources of information and application of various research methods. First of all, it was the desk research method, i.e., analysis of the available materials (scientific publications, website resources) concerning organ heritage. Interviews with experts, conducted at the beginning of 2022 (January–February) were the main source of information on the contemporary threats and challenges to organ heritage. The experts were asked four questions:

- what are the contemporary threats to Europe's organ heritage?
- what is the influence of climate change on Europe's organ heritage?
- what is the influence of the COVID19 pandemic on Europe's organ heritage?
- what are the contemporary challenges for Europe's organ heritage?

The invitation to participate in the research was extended in early 2022 to a specially selected group of experts associated with universities conducting research on historic organs, to performing artists, organ festival organizers, and representatives of organ builders and practicing organists. All of them are based in Poland, but their activities extend to other countries in Europe and even beyond. Out of the 30 persons invited, only 9 persons accepted the invitation. All the experts listed below have agreed to participate in the survey and be identified by name. They were: Bator Zuzanna and Maciej, Poźniak Grzegorz, Presseisen Filip, Rzewuski Mateusz, Szostak Michał, Tański Adam, Trzaskalik-Wyrwa Małgorzata and Urbaniak Krzysztof.

Most of the experts above are authors of works dedicated to organ building, published in Polish and international journals. Nearly all of them have recorded albums presenting the sound of historic organs, and are participants or organizers of international organ festivals. Some of them hold or held the role of assessor of historic organs on behalf of Poland's Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Almost all of them have at least a doctoral degree and are university employees.

While the survey was concerned with the organ heritage of Europe as a whole, numerous examples were taken from Poland, a Central European country with significant organ heritage assets—from well-preserved historic organs and organ music to the rich tradition of organ building and organ festivals. This is influenced by historical, cultural and natural determi-



Fig. 1. Model of the organ in the St. Elisabeth's Church in Wrocław; all photos by S. Bernat.

Ryc. 1. Model prospektu organowego z bazyliki św. Elżbiety Węgierskiej we Wrocławiu; wszystkie fot. S. Bernat.



Fig. 2. Case of a defunct organ in Kozłówka (Lublin Voivodeship).

Ryc. 2. Prospekt nieczynnych organów w Kozłówce (województwo lubelskie).

nants. Over the course of history, the Catholic Church has played an important role within the present-day borders of Poland while in territories of the former Prussian Partition, the influence of Protestant churches was predominant. In both cases, the pipe organ has had an important function as an instrument accompanying the liturgy. Despite the communist domination in the second half of the twentieth century, religious and sites of worship have not disappeared from the landscape of Polish cities and villages, and after the fall of communism, organ tradition was reborn with great impetus.

Results

The pipe organ, as an element of the furnishings of religious sites, has attracted international attention due to some disastrous events in recent years. The fire of the Notre-Dame de Paris that broke out on April 15, 2019, raised concerns about the fate of the historic instrument inside the cathedral. Unfortunately, a similar event on July 18, 2020, caused the total destruction of the huge 400-year-old organ in Nantes Cathedral in western France even though the instrument had survived several tragic events before that. The eighteenth-century organ built by Michael Engler, burned down in a fire of St. Elisabeth's church in Wrocław on June 9, 1976, and was rebuilt in 2020–2022 thanks to the decision of the municipal government and cooper-

ation of three organ-building firms (Fig. 1). Unfortunately the valuable organ in Kozłówka, equipped with a very rare device called an organola, still requires complex reconstruction (Fig. 2.).

The organ is a “living organism,” a mechanism whose elements are subject to gradual wear [Trzaskalik-Wyrwa 2006, p. 22]. Many historic instruments lose their playability or simply cease to work due to their long-lasting use, often for several centuries, and advance of ageing processes. In such cases the organ loses its significant value as an instrument to create music. Many historic organs in Europe have ceased to exist as a result of various factors. They have been destroyed by the climate conditions and as a result of biological degradation caused by wood worms, they have been altered by organ builders who have sometimes been guilty of extensive interference with the technical and sonic aspects of organs. Urbańczyk [2011, p. 314–340] distinguishes the following kinds of damage and threats to organs: biological damage, atmospheric factors, threats caused by heating in churches, damage caused by people, and threats associated with natural disasters (fires, flooding, hurricanes). He also added wars (military operations) to this group.

Historic organs have suffered many losses during the last 100 years. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve not only the organ facades as monuments of art, but also their mechanism as sonic monuments. The criteria for recognizing an organ as a monument are very

complex and related to its historical value or special sonic value or unique technological solutions [Poźniak 2012, p. 27–35]. According to Erdman [1992, p. 92], the age and preservation in its original state should be taken into account in the assessment of an instrument. It is also important whether the organ was made by an outstanding master builder, whether it is an example of a unique technological solution, or whether its historic value stems from other reasons (e.g., when it is associated with a famous composer. According to Poźniak [2012, p. 29], it should be assumed that all pipe organs that are more than 100 years old (counting from their construction date) can be regarded as historic monuments owing to their age, even if they are not included in the register of historical monuments or any other inventory. Younger pipe organs may also be regarded as historic monuments, particularly if they are of considerable historical, musical, and scientific value, i.e., from the perspective of the study of musical instruments. The assessment of the value of an instrument absolutely requires the consultation of a specialist.

The following kinds of organ work are distinguished: conservation, repair, restoration, reconstruction, and translocation [Poźniak 2012, p. 32]. The preservation of the historic substance and maintaining documentation are important in all the work related to historic pipe organs. Furthermore, one must follow the reversibility principle, i.e., it must always be possible to reverse the effects of the work performed and return to the initial state [Erdman 1992]. In addition, all conservation measures should be designed on an individual basis depending on the kind of organ and its state of preservation [Urbańczyk 2011, p. 516]. Each and every historic instrument is different and has its own autonomous value. The preparation of the organ-building and conservation work program should be preceded by the identification and specification of the characteristic features of the historic instrument as well as a multifaceted analysis identifying its most significant values [Trzaskalik-Wyrwa 2006, p. 22].

According to J. Gembalski [1997, p. 175], Baroque organs are of particular value. This is because they are characterized by an extraordinary richness of tone. In addition, the uniqueness of the sound is visually enhanced by the architecture and artistic design of the organ prospectus. Therefore, there is growing interest in recovering the lost art of organ building with Baroque sound based on scientific research [Baretzky et al. 2007]. The organ in Oliwa, which is most famous to the public in Poland consists of several layers dating back to the Baroque, Romanticism, and modern times. While it does not have a homogeneous sonic style, it bears witness to the changes in organ building throughout history (Fig. 3). Organ concerts and seasonal organ presentations attract numerous tourists.

Interviews conducted with experts confirm the information presented above. However, they are also a source of new knowledge resulting from the individual experiences of the experts.

The following contemporary threats to Europe's organ heritage are mentioned:

- unprofessional organ-building services, lack of funds to carry out professional repairs;
- climate change; gaps in the long-term strategy for the use of organ infrastructure, incomplete inventory of instruments and incomplete stylistic and periodic classification of the existing instruments; the need to update the education profile of organists and people administering historical organs; the legal situation of historical organs in some countries (e.g., in Poland);
- organ maintenance and availability of very few specialists; lack of a strong awareness among users and administrators; an increasingly common presence of guitars and digital organs in the liturgy;
- globalization of cultural trends and opinions; lack of universal education concerning the participation in culture; low level of education of the clergy; scandals in clerical circles that drive society away from the Church as an institution and thus from the culture that was created in the service of the Church; wars and hostile ideologies;
- demographic changes—ageing population in western Europe; lack of sophisticated and art-literate listeners, which contributes to the lack of interest in the organ in Poland;
- a relatively low awareness of organists and organ builders concerning the tone of the organs; a small number of available publications describing European organ styles in a complementary way; progressing globalization, commercialization and secularization of European societies; enormous costs of restoration work when historical organ-building techniques are used; the post-war neo-Baroque way of thinking about the organ (running counter to the achievements of Alsatian organ reform); disappearance of traditional craftsmanship; inversion of the proportions of labor and material costs;
- the replacement of pipe organs in churches and even in concert halls with electronic instruments; secularization of society, which leads to a decline in the use of organs in churches (especially in Western countries); a great drop of interest in organ concerts; an uncertain geopolitical situation which has contributed to the termination of funding for new organ-building or historic organ restoration projects;
- secularization of society.

The question about the influence of climate change on Europe's organ heritage turned out to be quite difficult to answer. Only one expert unequivocally stated that this influence exists and is manifested in the increased amplitude and frequency of changes in climate conditions as well as in the stimulation of the development of biological factors (mold) that degrade the historic substance. Another expert emphasized that climate change is surely not neutral to such a complex instrument as the organ. There is no doubt that hot summers and extremely dry air do not have a benefi-



Fig. 3. Case of the most popular organ in Poland—Gdańsk-Oliwa.
Ryc. 3. Prospekt najpopularniejszych organów w Polsce – Gdańsk-Oliwa.



Fig. 4. Organ case masking the speakers of a digital organ in a church in Łęczna (Lublin Voivodeship).
Ryc. 4. Prospekt organów maskujący głośniki cyfrowych organów w kościele w Łęcznej (województwo lubelskie).

cial effect on organs. Experts observed that the organ is a sensitive instrument. Each change in temperature or humidity has an impact on how the organ works. However, the impact of contemporary climate change on organs has not been confirmed. Admitting that he does not have sufficient knowledge on climate change and its influence on Europe's organ heritage, one of the experts gave an example of the organs of the former Hansa, potentially threatened by the continuous global sea level rise. Areas forecast to be flooded abound in valuable works of historic organ building. A similar impact was observed by one expert even though he believed it was a marginal threat. According to another expert, the changing lifecycles of wood pest may be an indirect result of modern climate change. The other experts did not notice a link between climate change and organ heritage. One expert, however, noticed that a considerable increase of air temperature can hypothetically lead to the pipes collapsing under their own weight depending on the proportion of the zinc and lead alloy. Another expert stressed an indirect influence of EU regulations on the steep increase of the price of materials needed to manufacture organs or carry out repairs, which will have a negative effect on organ building in the long term. One expert, on the other hand, emphasized the very harmful effect of various types of heating installed in churches, which results from people's growing expectations of comfort rather than from climate change.

The experts had a similar difficulty assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Europe's organ heritage. This impact was unequivocally observed by only three experts. One expert pointed out the complete closing of the music market for performing organists in western Europe from March 2020 until recently. Although the number of music events was considerably greater in Poland than in western Europe, a significant decline of audiences is evident. Online concerts partially replaced live events. In most cases,

however, online broadcasts did not yield satisfactory outcomes. Another expert observed that organ music events and organ concerts disappeared for a certain period, which also reduced the care devoted to the instruments in some places. When the events moved online, the organizers felt more obliged to better prepare the instruments. One expert pointed out the closing of the borders which led to disruptions in the deliveries of raw materials and to increased costs of restoring historical organs and building new ones. Some organ-building firms were hardly making any profit. The lockdown also resulted in smaller numbers of people attending church, which often led the administrators of churches to postpone their decision to start renovation work to an indefinite future. One expert merely observed the considerably longer waiting time for high quality components needed to build new organs and renovate historic instruments. Furthermore, price increases resulted in the postponement or abandonment of organ-building work. Another expert, on the other hand, mentioned a positive effect of the pandemic as artistic projects (recordings for television) were conducted faster. One expert observed the reduced access to instruments and a decline in the number of listeners of live organ music and masterclass participants. Another expert expressed a similar observation, noting the changes caused by the pandemic in all elements of culture. One expert observed that the global economic crisis related to the pandemic had an adverse impact on the business that had been sponsoring art but, having sustained losses, had to withdraw from it. On the other hand, significant groups of sensitive people began to support art more generously. In countries where more restrictive measures were introduced, attendance at organ concerts was several times lower, which had a clear impact on organ culture in those places. Concerts around the world started to be broadcast on a larger scale, which, in many cases, proved to be a stimulating factor for the development of music activities.

The following contemporary challenges for Europe's organ heritage were mentioned:

- unprofessional organ-building services, lack of funds to carry out professional repairs;
- development of a new, long-term strategy for using the instruments, taking into consideration the phenomena occurring in churches nowadays, and development of a modern educational path for organists—a path that would put more emphasis on cultural management and cultural animation;
- preservation of organ heritage—“historic organs disappear, replaced with digital and used organs (of poor quality) from Germany. There is a lack of awareness in this respect among priests, there are two few good organ builders, doing the work ‘on the cheap,’ lack of quality control and no need for quality because organists are not always able to show this quality, and few people are discerning listeners able to appreciate the differences.” Therefore, it is necessary to promote organs, and raise the awareness of listeners, users, and administrators; good organists are needed too.
- promoting the organ, particularly among young people, as a living and performing instrument; showing the high status of the organ as an instrument with a long tradition, important from the cultural perspective; teaching people to listen to historic instruments from various epochs and to adopt good listening habits/sensitivity to tone and timbre; promoting the organ among people of other cultures and religions to increase the number of people supporting the preservation of such heritage; continuous education and training of organ building firms in Poland and skillful use of the achievements of western organ builders with regard to reconstruction, intonation, and renovation of instruments;
- broadly defined education at the levels of society, organ builders, and clergy; changing the awareness and way of thinking of most organ building firms, which have diverged from the tradition of the past and follow the Baroque Revival practice of using low-cost substitutes of older solutions; introduction of appropriate legal regulations protecting the sonic artifacts of Europe's organ culture against the activities of organ builders without proper competences in a given field (assessors should obtain certification following a specific educational program and examination);
- attempt at restoring the functioning of organ music and organ building community to the state from before the pandemic; continuation of the already started organ building or reconstruction projects; return of live cultural events to churches and philharmonic halls; academic publications that would enable audiences to understand the richness of Europe's organ heritage that should be protected.
- taking care of the instruments: strengthening a new structure that would protect historic instru-

ments centrally; popularizing organ music by expanding people's knowledge about organs and ensuring that organ music is accessible (to everyone) including children of kindergarten age; reaching out to patrons and sponsors who would support organ music.

An interesting opinion was expressed by one expert who noticed increased interest in Europe's organ heritage and greater awareness among the people in the field, which results in the restoration of the original characteristics to instruments that were altered while they were in use. Furthermore, he observed an increased participation of people in organ culture (new festivals, more listeners, more students), which is a good thing.

Discussion and conclusions

The survey also has enabled to identify the presence of numerous threats and challenges to Europe's organ heritage. As one expert rightly observed, we should take into account the country from whose perspective we perceive this heritage. Urbańczyk [2011, p. 517] notes that the preserved organs, despite protection and conservation measures, are continually impacted by unfavorable factors, mainly economic problems, acts of God, as well as carelessness and negligence resulting from ignorance or incompetence. Each instrument should be recognized for its functional, architectural, tonal, and visual function. That is why an individual approach should be taken to each instrument. Documentation and inventory-taking work should be intensified as it is a prerequisite for safeguarding this part of the European cultural heritage. Furthermore, the topics related to the preservation of organ heritage should be disseminated at various levels of society, from primary education to public discourse. Employing only technical sciences, without humanist underpinning, in the preservation of organ heritage will not yield satisfactory results.

These conclusions are validated by the opinions expressed by the experts participating in the survey. The following are mentioned as the main contemporary threats to Europe's organ heritage: unprofessional organ-building services; enormous costs of restoration work when historical organ-building techniques are used; incomplete inventories of instruments and incomplete stylistic and periodic classification of the existing instruments; globalization of cultural trends; secularization of European societies; relatively poor awareness of organ users and administrators (mainly clergy). Furthermore, electronic digital instruments, expected to imitate the sound of the authentic pipe organ, are becoming more and more widespread in churches in Poland. However, even the best electronic instrument cannot replace the real pipe organ [Kearney 2020, p. 29]. As a result of using instruments imitating the pipe organ, the music played on them is often relegated to a utilitarian role that is meant to comply with purely liturgical re-



Fig. 5. Restoration work on the organ in Olkusz (Lesser Poland Voivodeship).
Ryc. 5. Prace renowacyjne organów w Olkuszu (województwo małopolskie).



Fig. 6. Audience ovations after organ concert in Olkusz.
Ryc. 6. Owacje publiczności po koncercie organowym w Olkuszu.

quirements [Urbańczyk 2011, p. 293–296]. Thus, the aesthetic dimension of the organ and its tone as an important component of the interior, both in architectural and acoustic terms, is ignored. The sound of the electronic organ does not resound in natural space; it can be heard only via loudspeakers. After listening to such sound for a longer while, listeners find it dull and artificial. Despite the constant improvements in this type of instruments, including the use of “artificial” pipe casings (Fig. 4), the electronic organ should be regarded as an ersatz for the genuine pipe organ, even though this subject still raises public controversy. One has to agree with Urbańczyk [2011] who observed that the status of the pipe organ among instruments is not under threat. Historic organs are reconstructed in historic churches, while used pipe organs are transferred from Western Europe and can be integrated into the interiors of new churches and concert halls after being adapted to the new spatial conditions.

A late Renaissance organ in Olkusz has been saved from progressive degradation. This was possible thanks to conservation work carried out in 2015–2018 in Poland and the Netherlands and consulted by an international group of experts (Fig. 5). It should be added that the instrument in Olkusz, which is unique on a European scale, is part of the identity of the city’s residents and a source of pride, as evidenced by the activities of the Hans Hummel Historic Organ Association and the very high attendance at seasonal organ concerts (Fig. 6).

The organ in the Holy Family Church located in one of Lublin’s large residential areas was built in 1956 for St. Michael’s Church in Munich. They were transferred to Lublin in 1995 and expanded. It turned out that in the new temple could the instrument present all its possibilities (Fig. 7). Since 1997, organ festivals have been held on the instrument, gaining great public interest. A general renovation of the organ is currently underway. This example shows that younger, relocated instruments and the music played on them can also become a subject of interest for local communities.

Climate change and the pandemic do not appear to be significant factors impacting Europe’s organ heritage. The atmospheric conditions (temperature and humidity) prevailing in the building where the organ is housed are, of course, significant. The influence of the climate conditions has not been investigated yet. However, projects are under way that are aimed at developing new methods of real-time monitoring and detection of harmful environment conditions and processes with a pernicious effect on pipe organs [Bergsten et al. 2010, p. 116–25].

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to restrictions on the organization of organ festivals and concerts alongside other cultural events [Konior et al. 2020]. The number of such events became smaller, with some of them moving online. Furthermore, along with the limited availability of materials needed to build and reconstruct organs, less care was given to



Fig. 7. Case of the organ in the church of the Holy Family in Lublin
Ryc. 7. Prospekt organów w kościele św. Rodziny w Lublinie.

properly maintain the instruments in some locations. It should be noted, however, that the COVID-19 situation has also strengthened the role of the popularization of organs online. The sound of the organ along with the visual context is available to a wide spectrum of Internet users as part of musical projects and festivals. The popularity of virtual events dedicated to the organ and organ music in the difficult time of the pandemic indicates the audience's longing for a real musical experience [Kearney 2020, p. 24–38]. Despite the high audio and video quality, these online events cannot be a substitute for an authentic on-site experience enriched with a variety of stimuli (including the olfactory ones). However, online projects are an interesting alternative because they can reach countless Internet users interested in the topic regardless of where they live. They also enable looking inside the instrument. Thanks to them, organ culture becomes more easily accessible.

Among the most important challenges for the preservation of Europe's organ heritage, the experts mention education activities at several levels, aimed at increasing the awareness of the society, organ builders, organists, and clergy. These activities should include teaching the art of listening to historic instruments from different periods, the ability of organ building firms to make good use of the achievements of western organ builders with regard to renovation, intonation, and reconstruction of instruments. In addition, it

is necessary to promote the organ, particularly among young people, as a living and performing instrument; to show the high status of the organ as an instrument with a long tradition and great cultural significance. The preservation of this heritage also requires systemic solutions, the creation of a new structure that would protect historic instruments centrally, and would be responsible for developing a new, long-term concept of the use of instruments, taking into account the phenomena occurring in contemporary society. It is also necessary to ensure the funds for carrying out professional repairs, and to introduce appropriate legal regulations safeguarding the sonic artifacts of Europe's organ culture against the activities of organ builders without proper competences in a given field. There is also a special challenge of trying to restore the functioning of the organ music and organ building community to the state from before the pandemic, and to continue the already started organ building or reconstruction projects, in spite of external difficulties.

The organ is undoubtedly an important element of European heritage, requiring protection and actions aimed at popularizing it in society. Inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List is a special way of appreciating the historic value of a building or site. Some of the valuable organs in Poland and around the world are part of the furnishings in historic churches, cathedrals, and abbeys inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is commendable that the organ



Fig. 8. Invitation to an organ concert in one of the churches in Prague.

Ryc. 8. Zaproszenie na koncert organowy w jednym z kościołów w Pradze.

craftsmanship and organ music in Germany have been inscribed on one of the UNESCO world heritage lists as it may lead to an increased interest in organ heritage among the public at large. Usually, thanks to being entered on the UNESCO list, the individual objects are more easily recognized as particularly interesting and attractive to tourists [Ziarkowski 2012, p. 53–66]. The interest in the pipe organ has been fostered by organ festivals (Fig. 8) and organ trails, belonging to the category of cultural trails, whose main goal is to promote the organ and organ music as elements of cultural, material, and spiritual heritage [Bernat 2022]. Such products can enrich the tourist offering of a given country or region, and can contribute to rescuing the unique cultural heritage and sounds of the past from oblivion and destruction. The development of the European Pipe Organ Routes can be seen as a unique way to promote organ heritage. However, the commitment of small local communities (especially religious communities) to the preservation of organ heritage and its promotion should also be appreciated. The presence of numerous organ festivals indicates the need for exposure to organ music, through which the sensitivity of audiences and awareness of organ cultural heritage increases. Thanks to this, the organ's cultural heritage is still alive.

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Abstract

The organ heritage has attracted increasing interest of the international community. The objective of this paper is to examine the current situation of Europe's organ heritage. Interviews with experts on the contemporary threats and challenges to the heritage of the organ were the most important part of the study. The main contemporary threats to Europe's organ heritage are: unprofessional organ-building services; enormous costs of restoration work; incomplete inventories of instruments; secularization of European societies; relatively poor awareness of organ users and administrators (mainly clergy). Among the most important challenges for the preservation of Europe's organ heritage, the experts mention education activities at several levels. There is also a special challenge of trying to restore the functioning of the organ music and organ building community to the state from before the pandemic, and to continue the already started organ building or reconstruction projects.

Streszczenie

Dziedzictwo organowe przyciąga coraz większą uwagę społeczności międzynarodowej. Celem artykułu jest zbadanie obecnej sytuacji europejskiego dziedzictwa organowego. Wywiady z ekspertami na temat współczesnych zagrożeń i wyzwań dla europejskiego dziedzictwa organowego były najważniejszą częścią badania. Główne współczesne zagrożenia dla europejskiego dziedzictwa organowego to: nieprofesjonalne usługi budowy organów, ogromne koszty prac renowacyjnych, niepełne inwentarze instrumentów, sekularyzacja społeczeństw europejskich, relatywnie niski poziom świadomości użytkowników i administratorów organów (głównie duchowni). Wśród najważniejszych wyzwań stojących przed zachowaniem europejskiego dziedzictwa organowego eksperci wymienili wielopoziomowe działania edukacyjne. Szczególnym wyzwaniem jest też próba odbudowy funkcjonowania muzyki organowej i społeczności budowniczych organów do stanu sprzed pandemii, a także kontynuacja już rozpoczętych projektów budowy i rekonstrukcji organów.