
In Memory of Józef Pacholczyk (1938–2021)

It was truly a life experience, a pleasure and a privilege to be one of Józef Pacholczyk's PhD students in the graduate program in ethnomusicology he established in the 1980s at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, in the United States. As an expression of heartfelt respect, love, and gratitude, I chose to share memories of my mentor's unique personal and professional qualities that deserve to be made known to the broader public and can most assuredly serve as a valuable inspiration to future generations of young scholars. This tribute follows his life in A–B–A form from A, an early career as a classical concert pianist to B, his academic accomplishments in ethnomusicology, and A, a return to piano performances. When Józef's wife Talitha informed me of his death, I decided to write a somewhat unusual obituary, recalling his views, values, and accomplishments as informed by thoughts from some of his colleagues and students.

Józef Marcin Pacholczyk's main interests during his student days in his hometown of Warsaw, Poland, were philology and music. He earned his master's degree from the University of Warsaw with the thesis "Arabic Lexical Elements in Sejarah Melayu" and a piano diploma from what is now the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music. He then received fellowships in Egypt and Italy, and then moved to the United States to pursue doctoral studies in ethnomusicology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). After earning his doctorate with the dissertation "Regulative Principles in the Koran [Qur'anic] Chant of Shaikh 'Abdu'l-Bāsiṭ 'Abdu'ṣ-Ṣamad," he held various positions at UCLA and a teaching position at the University of Ottawa in Canada. In the 1980s, he founded a respectable graduate program in ethnomusicology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, which attracted a rich variety of international students, and was acknowledged for its frequent guest lecturers and local community outreach initiatives. After the program closed due to new plans by the university leadership, he joined the music faculty at the University of Maryland, College Park and taught there until his retirement. After moving to Tucson, Arizona, for health reasons, he returned to piano playing and pursued a career as an artist specializing in European classical music.

Józef Pacholczyk's areas of interest in ethnomusicology largely included the world of Islam, from Morocco and Egypt to Central Asia, Indonesia, and Indian Kashmir. He is the author of *Ṣūfyāna mūsīqī: The Classical Music of Kashmir* (1996) and other books, articles, encyclopedia entries, and conference papers. Within the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), he was

particularly active in the Study Group on Maqām. Jürgen Elsner, its founder and long-time chairman, appreciated Pacholczyk's

open-mindedness, commitment, and ability to communicate and create understanding, for which he was able to use his East-West linguistic skills. Through his research in Central Asia, he was well-established in the world of maqām and greatly expanded the scope of the study group. The musical traditions of Kashmir, which he explored through extensive fieldwork and source study, led him to far-reaching reflections on the intercontinental existence of the maqām phenomenon. I have fond memories of his honest, friendly and highly professional personality.

As Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, past president of ICTM, recalls:

I met him for the first time at the eighteenth annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in 1973. He asked me if I was related to the Egyptian composer Aziz El-Shawan. When I replied that he was my father, his face lit up and he told me about his time in Cairo in the 1960s and his meeting with Aziz El-Shawan, who was instrumental in organizing his piano concerts there. I share with many colleagues the admiration for his extraordinary human and professional qualities and am grateful for his friendship.

In the words of Cheng Te-Yuan, Józef's student from Taiwan who founded the UMBC-inspired ethnomusicology program at the Taiwan National University of the Arts (TNNUA) in 2003:

One thing I will remember all my life. Prof. Pacholczyk said to me that if I stay in America for a few more years, I will learn more about ethnomusicology, but if I return to Taiwan sooner, I will definitely be able to realize my dream. I took his advice and built the first ethnomusicology program there.

Ethnomusicology at TNNUA was strengthened by the subsequent appointments of Ted Tsung-Te Tsai and Made Mantle Hood, both linked to UMBC; hosting several international scholarly gatherings further contributed to its growing reputation. As Tsai reflects,

Dr. Pacholczyk's friendly face keeps popping up in my mind. A scholar, educator, and pianist who was strong in both theory and practice, he was always passionate about ethnomusicology and was a respectable music practitioner.

Philip Schuyler joined the UMBC faculty during my studies there and I vividly recall his outstanding courses. In his words, "Creating a program staffed by friends and colleagues was Józef's dream." Indeed, Pacholczyk brought his well-known former professor, Ki Mantle Hood, from UCLA, and later Karl Signell and Philip Schuyler (see the photo). Schuyler continues his thoughts as follows:

When that dream ended with the closing of the program at UMBC, he found solace in his gradual return to the piano. For him, collegiality was always more important than ideology. He was a devoted mentor and loyal friend. Finally, there is an interesting fact concerning his sense of smell. It was so pronounced that he could identify individual students even on the stairs to the corridor outside his office.

I remember with gratitude the warm welcome I received from my future mentor and the first few weeks in his home after I arrived in the USA in 1988 to begin my doctoral studies. I remember his eye-opening classes, Indian music events at his house, and especially his compassion and motivational power during the time when the writing of my dissertation paralleled the wars in the territories of the former Yugoslavia, including the places where I lived and where I conducted research. At the end of my doctoral studies, I asked him how I could ever repay him for his generosity. His answer still echoes in my mind and influences my actions: “If you think you have gotten something valuable from me, make sure you share your preciousness in the best possible way with your students and colleagues.”

May he rest in peace!

Svanibor Pettan



From left to right: Józef M. Pacholczyk, Karl Signell, Svanibor Pettan, Philip Schuyler, and Ki Mantle Hood celebrating the end of Pettan's doctoral studies at the Pacholczyks' home in 1992. (Photo by Hanna Pacholczyk.)