

# *Kazimierz Machala*

Kazimierz (Kaz) W. Machala, a native of Poland, is a performer, teacher, and composer. He is a truly international musician, having played and taught in Europe, Australia, and the US, and back to Poland as Visiting Professor of Horn at the Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, retiring in 2019. His compositions and arrangements have become staples of the horn literature.

Kaz grew up on a farm in central Poland, riding his bicycle through snow and mud with his accordion strapped to his back to get to music lessons. He also played drum, mandolin, two-string bass, and accordion in the village band. When he was in high school, an ethnomusicology professor heard him play accordion at a folklore competition and described the horn to him as the most noble instrument in the entire orchestra. Kaz took the advice seriously, but also played piano, guitar, and banjo to support himself while studying horn. He played banjo and piano in a Dixieland band – daring during the cold war – where he made his first attempts at composing. Acquaintance with Kirk Douglas at a film school in Lodz motivated Kaz to learn English.

Kaz studied at the Janáček Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in Brno, Czech Republic (1968-1973), attracted by its long tradition of fine horn playing and unique warm horn sound. After graduation, he played in the Cracow Radio Symphony for one year, but he wanted to learn more about orchestral playing and in 1974 was accepted at Juilliard, where he was the first horn player in the school's history to receive a DMA degree. He won Third Prize at the 1974 International Music Competition for Woodwinds and Brass in Prague.

Kaz was principal horn in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (1979-1986) and played in several chamber ensembles. He returned to the US to be closer to family and taught at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (1989-2009), now Professor Emeritus. Kaz has performed as a soloist, in various wind and brass ensembles, and with major orchestras. and has taught and performed at festivals in New Zealand, Europe, Canada, and the US. In teaching, he stresses good habits, a well-balanced playing efficiency.

Writing started with transcribing and arranging for chamber ensembles at his first teaching job. He first transcribed music of composers who didn't write solo works for horn. He wrote for the Dixieland band, songs for a rock band, a film score for a student project in Sydney, and exercises for his students. He wrote a horn quartet for his students, which the American Horn Quartet included in their concert repertoire. His arrangement of the American Folk Suite for wind quintet has been performed and recorded by the Berlin Philharmonic Woodwind Quintet. Transcribing and arranging has led to Kaz writing original compositions. He premiered his own Concerto for Horn, Winds, and Percussion with the Wind Symphony at the University of Illinois; it has received numerous performances on five continents. He received the Excellence in Composition Award at the International Brass Chamber Music Festival in Louisville, Kentucky for his Brass Quintet No. 1.

Since his retirement, Kaz has been composing and giving masterclasses. He was elected an IHS Honorary Member in 2020.

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