



EDITED BY
PROF. HENRYK SKARŻYŃSKI

Almost Everything about Hearing

in Music, Art, Prose, Medicine

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Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing
Institute of Sensory Organs
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Summary

A compendium of knowledge about hearing that goes beyond the limits of medicine. Hearing is a sense that now - like prof. Henryk Skarżyński stresses - it has a fundamental influence on the position of man in society. Even at the beginning of the 20th century, this position was mainly determined by manual skills. Currently, the possibilities of human influence are determined by the ability to communicate with the environment - how efficiently a person receives a multitude of various reports, how s/he selects them, remembers, uses and implements them in his/her daily work.

By making readers aware of the importance of hearing in the modern world, we would like to point out that hearing is the subject not only of scientific works in the field of otology and otosurgery but also of songs and poems, and an inspiration for painters and sculptors. This monograph contains, among others, a description of works that result from the artists' fascination with the phenomenon of hearing, as well as a collection of poetry and literary works, including poems written by Prof. Henryk Skarżyński, recited or sung (to music composed by Prof. Krzesimir Dębski) during the verbal and musical performance "Silence Interrupted", staged in 2016 at the National Philharmonic on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing. These works were later included in the musical script of the same title, directed by Michał Znaniecki, and staged in 2019 at the Warsaw Chamber Opera. In addition to the poems of Prof. Skarżyński, this performance also contains works about hearing written by deaf people who regained their hearing after cochlear implantation.

Patients about the miracle of returning to the world of sounds is one of the most emotional chapters of the monograph "Almost Everything about Hearing". It contains statements of people of all ages who, returning from silence to the world of sounds, try to describe as faithfully as possible the miracle of regaining their hearing. It did not happen in one day - crossing the border between the world of silence and the world of sounds was spread over time. What happened then? What was it like to learn how to hear and listen? Finally, how have patients' lives changed after this experience? Over the years, we have heard many confes-

sions, including those patients who were the first or one of the first to decide on treatment using pioneering methods. The collected statements are not only a record of their emotions and hearing experiences after cochlear implantation but also a documentation of the progress in the treatment and rehabilitation of hearing that has been made in recent decades.

How did it happen that nowadays almost every patient with hearing problems – what Prof. Henryk Skarżyński often stresses – can he get help? To answer this question, one has to go back in time to antiquity. The history of treating hearing impairment begins with Hippocrates, who was the first doctor to propose methods of diagnosing and treating hearing problems. Chapter *A brief history of hearing treatment* presents doctors and scientists who tried to treat hearing disorders, also with surgical methods, and a description of the first hearing aids from the 16th and 17th centuries. In the 19th century, many prominent Poles were fascinated by the science of hearing, including Ludwik Guranowski, who was one of the founders of the Polish Otolaryngological Review. The monograph reminds the reader of many great Polish doctors, although not always immortalized in the pages of history, whose contribution to the development of otolaryngology cannot be overestimated. At the end of the 20th century, Polish science took a leading position in the world in the field of audiology, otology and otosurgery thanks to the fact that prof. Henryk Skarżyński created the “Polish school of otology” derived from the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing (IFPS) established in 1996. It is a centre where the largest number of surgeries to improve hearing in the world has been performed for several years.

The numbers do not fully describe the idea that inspired me from the beginning of my work, nor are they the only possible summary of its effects. Equally important, and perhaps even more important, is how the results of our work are perceived by others, what our initiatives and actions have stuck in human memory, stresses Henryk Skarżyński. Therefore, he made an attempt to describe his achievements with the words of representatives of various environments who visited the World Hearing Center of the IFPS, who supported his ideas, distinguished or rewarded his activities, and who simply followed how through successive projects he tried to change the image of Polish otolaryngology and audiology and strengthen its position in world science. In the group of these excellent people, whose statements are included in this book in the chapter titled “25 years have passed – what’s left?” there were the most outstanding Polish and world specialists, including Prof. Graeme M. Clark, a pioneer in the field of cochlear implants, inventor of the first multichannel implant, Prof. David McPherson, an international expert in audiology and speech pathology from Brigham Young University, Prof. Herman A. Jenkins from the School of Medicine, University of Colorado, President of the American Otological Society, the oldest otological society in the world, whose member - as the first Pole - is prof. Henryk Skarżyński, Prof. Blake Wilson from Duke University, Prof. Christoph von Ilberg from the Menière Center in Frankfurt, Prof. Milan Profant, General Secretary of the International Federation of Otorhinolaryngological Societies, Prof. Stavros Hatzopoulos from the

Hearing Science Laboratory, University Hospital of Ferrara, Prof. Timoleon Terzis from Athens Rhinology Center, Mediterraneo Hospital, Prof. Robert Behr, a world-famous neurosurgeon, head of the Department of Neurosurgery at the Medical University of Marburg, Prof. Ad Snik, an international expert in audiology and otolaryngology from Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Center in the Netherlands, Prof. Nuri Ozgirgin, President of the Politzer Society from Bayindir Hospital Sogutozu in Turkey, Prof. Paul van de Heyning, expert of the Global Network HEARRING, President of the International Conference on Cochlear Implants and Other Implantable Technologies from Antwerp University Hospital.

The monograph also includes the memoirs of journalists who for over a quarter of a century, starting with the first cochlear implantation in a deaf person by Prof. Henryk Skarżyński in 1992, inform the public about new solutions to treat hearing impairment, while breaking stereotypes about deaf people.

Prof. Henryk Skarżyński thanked everyone who contributed to the monograph “Almost Everything about Hearing” in the form of a poem:

*Everyone wants to be talked about
and then rated better or worse.
Kindness encourages you to work hard.
Thanks, everyone who wrote something.
Thanks, everyone who read it.*