



Kraków Days

2011-04-12

For a long time, Kraków has been characterised by an extraordinarily large number of folk, artistic, cultural and religious events in the month of June. *The Lajkonik*, *Wianki (Wreaths)*, enthronement of the *Sharpshooters' King* and the *Corpus Christi* procession are the oldest but not the only ones. Considering such great richness of events, in **1936**, upon the initiative of **Jerzy Dobrzycki**, the then head of the city propaganda, **Adam Polewka**, well-known socialistic journalist, drawer and writer, and **Antoni Wasilewski**, a great June festival of art was initiated. The event under the excellent name of *Kraków Days* was a huge success. It was a festival organised with great spirit and at a great artistic level, undoubtedly the best event of this type in the Second Republic of Poland. Initially, the *Kraków Days* were intended to take place every other year. The second edition of the festival in 1938 was equally well-received in Kraków. The war's outbreak prevented from the organisation of the next edition in 1940. The tradition was revived after the war, though the festival took place with breaks (the longest one in the years 1969-1979) and at various levels. Unfortunately, the event generally bore the stamp of the cheerless communist times during which it was organised. In the 1980s the Kraków Days underwent a kind of revival. From 1980 the Festival has been held every year. It was largely thanks to the activities of the *Kraków* monthly, edited by **Z. Regucki**, which often promoted this Poland's unique event, or rather a sequence of events. At the beginning of the 1990s the *Kraków Days* name fell into disgrace. Ephemera names like *June in Kraków*, *Kraków Festival*, etc. started to emerge. What a shame. Such a readable, clear and well-sounding name as the one that 'fell' out of the animated heads of Dobrzycki, Polewka and Wasilewski is a rare thing.

Apart from many posters, folders and programmes of pre-war *Kraków Days*, the Historical Museum of Kraków also presents a little known image of the 6-metre-long panorama of Kraków painted by Zygmunt Wierciak in 1936. This painting was commissioned by Jerzy Dobrzycki, and used at the historical exhibition organised at Wawel on the occasion of the first *Kraków Days*. The huge canvas has little artistic value, but it is an interesting iconographic document picturing Kraków at the threshold of the 18th century.

text: Michał Niezabitowski