

Symphony and symphonic thinking in Polish music after 1956

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to contribute to the exploration and understanding of the development of the symphony and symphonic thinking in Polish music in the second half of the twentieth century. This was a period when Polish composers, such as Lutosławski, Górecki and Penderecki, among others, contributed profoundly into the symphonic repertoire, not only in the Polish context but worldwide. To understand the changes and developments of the genre after 1956 in Poland, it is necessary to discuss the evolution of the symphony, as well as its role and functions, both in general and in Polish music. Therefore, Chapter One deals briefly with the history and theory of the genre, from its beginnings in the eighteenth century, through its transformations in the period of Romanticism, marked by the appearance of the concert overture and the symphonic poem until its developments in the twentieth century.

Chapter Two examines the symphonic tradition in Poland from its appearance on the Polish musical scene until the middle of the 1950s in the context of trends pointed out in Chapter One. The year 1956, when the first International Festival of Contemporary Music ‘Warsaw Autumn’ was held, provides a significant caesura, as it was then that Polish music entered its avantgarde period.

Chapter Three, which is the most extended, explores the transformation of the symphony and symphonic principles in the years of the musical avantgarde, which was a time of great artistic ferment in Polish music, bringing many interesting reinterpretations of symphonic features. The symphony as a genre was almost entirely neglected, particularly in the first years of musical avantgarde (1956–65), and the

elements of symphonic thinking appeared in other orchestral works. Therefore, a considerable amount of space will be devoted to discussing the symphonic music of the period, besides symphonies as such. The avantgarde period is given special attention as the innovations made by Polish composers, both in symphonic form and, even more, in musical language and techniques (particularly sonorism), hugely influenced the later development of symphonic music in Poland.

Chapter Four, concluding the thesis, is devoted to the trends which spread over the country from the middle of the 1970s, opening the post-avantgarde era, with its recreation of the large-scale symphony, as well as the symphonic poem, referring back to the late-Romantic traditions on the one hand and aiming to synthesise the experiences of the whole century on the other. The indicated trends and functions of the symphony in this period link back to the categories marked in Chapter One. A short Postscript gives some information on symphonic activity in Poland following the death of Lutosławski in 1994.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	xv
CHAPTER ONE: Towards the symphony and symphonic thinking	1
1.1. The symphony in the Classical period	1
The origins	1
The social aspect and status of the symphony	2
Formal models and the principle of dualism	6
Beethoven	8
1.2. The symphony after Beethoven	9
The crisis of the symphony	9
Romantic developments	11
Changes in formal structure	16
Late-Romantic monumentalism and the idea of continuous development	20
Mahler and the status of the genre at the turn of the century	21
Symphonism	23
1.3. The symphony in the twentieth century	28
Post-Romanticism	30
Neo-Classicism	31
Dodecaphony	32
The symphony as a public statement	34
Spirituality and the vocal symphony	35
New tonality	36

Formal models	37
The principle of dualism	40
CHAPTER TWO: The symphonic tradition in Polish music before 1956	44
2.1. The Classical and early Romantic symphony: c. 1750– c. 1835	45
The beginnings of the symphony	45
Romantic tendencies and the rise of nationalism	51
2.2. Lack of orchestras and its effect on symphonic music	56
2.3. Late-Romantic symphonism in Polish music: c. 1870–1918	60
The concert overture and symphonic poem	61
The symphony at the turn of the century	70
2.4. Modern times in Polish symphonic music: 1918–1956	79
The inter-war years	80
The war years and post-war reconstructions	87
In the shackles of socialist realism	102
CHAPTER THREE: The symphony and symphonic thinking in the musical	
avantgarde: 1956–1974	113
3.1. Warsaw Autumn Festival and the ‘Polish School’	114
3.2. Sonorism	122
3.3. Symphonic thinking in orchestral music	129
Changing style I: Szabelski, Bacewicz and Lutosławski	131
Changing style II: Baird and Serocki	145
Powerful debuts: Penderecki and Górecki	164

3.4. The symphony in the avantgarde period	184
Between tradition and experimentation: Mycielski and Meyer	185
An avantgarde experiment: Górecki's First Symphony '1959'	189
The 'stream of consciousness': Baird	195
The synthesis of sonoristic explorations: Penderecki and Szabelski	205
Large-scale end-accented form: Lutosławski and Panufnik	215
A bipartite cosmic model: Górecki's Second Symphony	235
 CHAPTER FOUR: The symphony in post-avantgarde times: 1974–1994	250
4.1. Postmodernism	254
4.2. 'New Romanticism'	260
4.3. Spirituality and the sacred element	271
4.4. The symphony as a public statement	282
4.5. 'Pursuing the abstract'	292
 POSTSCRIPT	319
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	322

MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Ex. 2.1 Bohdanowicz, Symphony D, fourth movement, opening	48
Ex. 2.2 Dankowski, Symphony D, first movement, opening	49
Ex. 2.3 Pietrowski, Symphony D, second movement, opening	50
Ex. 2.4 Elsner, Symphony C, fourth movement, krakowiak theme of the rondo	53
Ex. 2.5 Moniuszko, <i>Bajka</i> , opening theme	61
Ex. 2.6 Żeleński, <i>W Tatrach</i> , second subject	63
Ex. 2.7 Noskowski, <i>Step</i> , opening theme of the steppes	65
Ex. 2.8 Noskowski, <i>Step</i> , Polish theme: the polonaise (Fig. E)	66
Ex. 2.9 Noskowski, Second Symphony 'Elegiac', third movement, opening	71
Ex. 2.10 Koffler, Third Symphony, second movement, opening	84
Ex. 2.11 Koffler, Third Symphony, first movement, final bar	85
Ex. 2.12 Palester, Second Symphony, first movement, opening	90
Ex. 2.13 Woytowicz, Second Symphony, first movement, beginning of the first subject	94
Ex. 2.14 Turski, Second Symphony 'Olympic', second movement, opening	96
Ex. 2.15 Lutosławski, First Symphony, second movement, opening	98
Ex. 2.16 Panufnik, <i>Sinfonia Rustica</i> , first movement, opening	100
Ex. 2.17 Baird, First Symphony, fourth movement, opening of the main theme	108
Ex. 2.18 Serocki, Second Symphony, first movement, Fig. 1.	111

Ex. 3.1 Bacewicz, <i>Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion</i> , second movement	134
Ex. 3.2 Bacewicz, <i>Pensieri notturni</i> , opening	135
Ex. 3.3 Lutosławski, <i>Funeral Music</i> , first movement, opening	138
Ex. 3.4 Lutosławski, <i>Funeral Music</i> , end of 'Metamorphoses' and beginning of 'Apogée'	140
Ex. 3.5 Lutosławski, <i>Jeux vénitiens</i> , first movement, notation, episodes B, D and F	143
Ex. 3.6 Baird, <i>Epiphany Music</i> , opening	148
Ex. 3.7 Baird, <i>Psychodrama</i> , opening	150
Ex. 3.8 Spatial set-up in orchestral works composed at the end of the 1950s	
a) Serocki, <i>Episodes</i> for strings and percussion (1959)	153
b) Lutosławski, <i>Funeral Music</i> for strings (1958)	153
c) Górecki, First Symphony for strings and percussion (1959)	154
d) Penderecki, <i>Emanations</i> for two string orchestras (1959)	154
Ex. 3.9a Serocki, <i>Episodes</i> , opening	156
Ex. 3.9b Serocki, <i>Episodes</i> , 'migrazioni'	157
Ex. 3.10 Serocki, <i>Symphonic Frescoes</i> , third movement, opening	159
Ex. 3.11 Serocki, <i>Symphonic Frescoes</i> , first movement, Fig. 30 (violins)	162
Ex. 3.12 Penderecki, <i>Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima</i> , Fig. 16	167
Ex. 3.13a Penderecki, <i>Fluorescences</i> , first musical idea	170
Ex. 3.13b Penderecki, <i>Fluorescences</i> , second musical idea	171
Ex. 3.13c Penderecki, <i>Fluorescences</i> , synthesis of both musical ideas	171
Ex. 3.14 Górecki, <i>Scontri</i> , Fig. 6	175
Ex. 3.15 Górecki, <i>Scontri</i> , Fig. 28	176

Ex. 3.16 Górecki, <i>Refrain</i> , opening	179
Ex. 3.17 Górecki, <i>Refrain</i> , middle section	181
Ex. 3.18 Mycielski, Second Symphony, second movement	186
Ex. 3.19 Meyer, Second Symphony, Fig. 33	188
Ex. 3.20 Górecki, First Symphony, entrance of string texture	191
Ex. 3.21 Górecki, First Symphony, 'Antiphon'	192
Ex. 3.22 Górecki, First Symphony, final bars	194
Ex. 3.23 Baird, <i>Sinfonia breve</i> , 'Epos', end of the movement	197
Ex. 3.24 Baird, Third Symphony, finale	201
Ex. 3.25 Baird, Third Symphony, first movement, Fig. 30-40, clarinet entrance into tutti	202
Ex. 3.26a Penderecki, First Symphony, 'Arche 1', opening musical idea	207
Ex. 3.26b Penderecki, First Symphony, 'Arche 1', second musical idea	208
Ex. 3.27 Penderecki, First Symphony, 'Dynamis 1', example of fan-like textures	209
Ex. 3.28 Penderecki, First Symphony, 'Dynamis 2', climax, Fig. 23	211
Ex. 3.29 Lutosławski, Second Symphony, refrain and the beginning of third episode	218
Ex. 3.30 Lutosławski, Second Symphony, transition between 'Hésitant' and 'Direct'	220
Ex. 3.31 Lutosławski, <i>Livre pour orchestre</i> , opening of Chapter 1	226
Ex. 3.32 Lutosławski, <i>Livre pour orchestre</i> , transition between last interlude and the final chapter	228
Ex. 3.33 Lutosławski, <i>Livre pour orchestre</i> , climax (Fig. 445-446)	229
Ex. 3.34a Panufnik, <i>Sinfonia Sacra</i> , 'Vision 1', opening	233

Ex. 3.34b Panufnik, <i>Sinfonia Sacra</i> , ‘Hymn’, final bars	234
Ex. 3.35 Górecki, Second Symphony, opening	237
Ex. 3.36 Górecki, Second Symphony, first movement, bb.115-125	240
Ex. 3.37 Górecki, Second Symphony, second movement, bb. 10-14	242
Ex. 3.38a Phrygian mode and tonal chords derived from the mode	243
Ex. 3.38b Górecki, Second Symphony, second movement, bb. 42-48 (Fig. 8)	243
Ex. 3.39 Górecki, Second Symphony, second movement, opening of the choral coda	245
Ex. 4.1 Lasoń, <i>Mountains</i> , Fig. 6	263
Ex. 4.2 Kilar, <i>Krzesany</i> (Sparkling Dance), opening of the coda	266
Ex. 4.3 Penderecki, <i>The Awakening of Jacob</i> , opening	267
Ex. 4.4 Penderecki, Second Symphony, opening	270
Ex. 4.5 Górecki, Third Symphony, first movement (Figs. 23-24)	276
Ex. 4.6 Górecki, Third Symphony, second movement, Fig. 6	278
Ex. 4.7 Penderecki, Second Symphony, <i>Silent Night</i> quote	284
Ex. 4.8 Meyer, Sixth Symphony ‘Polish’, first movement, introduction of <i>Boże coś Polskę</i>	287
Ex. 4.9 Panufnik, <i>Sinfonia Votiva</i> , composer’s diagram	289
Ex. 4.10 Panufnik, <i>Sinfonia Votiva</i> , finale	291
Ex. 4.11a Penderecki, Fourth Symphony, opening	296
Ex. 4.11b Penderecki, Fourth Symphony, opening of ‘Allegro’	297
Ex. 4.12 Penderecki, Fifth Symphony, Fig. 80, passacaglia on the Korean theme	300
Ex. 4.13 Penderecki, Fourth Symphony, Fig. 47	302

Ex.4.14 Penderecki, Third Symphony, beginning of 'Passacaglia'	
(fourth movement)	303
Ex. 4.15 Lutosławski, Third Symphony, climax	308
Ex. 4.16 Lutosławski, Third Symphony, last bars	310
Ex. 4.17 Lutosławski, Fourth Symphony, opening	312
Ex. 4.18 Lutosławski, Fourth Symphony, climax of the first section	313
Ex. 4.19 Lutosławski, Fourth Symphony, Fig. 54	315

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PREFACE

To my knowledge, there is no musical literature dealing with the symphony in Poland in a similarly synthetic way as in the present thesis. There are also not many sources devoted to the evolution of the genre in the twentieth-century music in general.

However, two publications should be indicated as the main sources and starting point for my research: Christopher Ballantine's *Twentieth Century Symphony*¹ and Mieczysław Tomaszewski's 'Sonorystyczna ekspresywność i alegoryczny symbolizm: symfonia polska 1944-94' (Sonoristic expressivity and allegoric symbolism: the Polish symphony 1944-94).² They indicated lines for possible discussion on the genre and its developments in Polish music. Many other publications, devoted to single composers, to specific stylistic trends or to the history of the genre both in Poland and abroad³ were of a great importance for exploring the subject.

The vast character of the topic caused some necessary omissions in choosing the pieces to be examined. The most obvious choice was to include works that were called symphonies as to name a piece a symphony, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, had to be the result of the composer's conscious decision, made in the light of a long and rich tradition. The other decision was to choose symphonies composed by the most significant Polish composers, not only because of their high position in musical life both at home and abroad, but also for their unquestionable contribution to the genre, marked by important formal and procedural innovations in

¹ Christopher Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1983).

² Mieczysław Tomaszewski, 'Sonorystyczna ekspresywność i alegoryczny symbolizm: symfonia polska 1944-94', *Muzyka polska 1945-95*, ed. Krzysztof Droba, Teresa Malecka and Krzysztof Sz wajgier (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 1996), pp. 13-40.

³ See Bibliography.

their musical languages, as well as for their influence on other composers. In this respect, the conservative symphonies pursuing neo-Classical or post-Romantic idioms, as well as those composed by minor figures, hence neither bringing particularly interesting transformations to the genre nor resonating in Polish musical life, were excluded. The other exclusion concerns concertante symphonies which, because of their nature, belong more to the tradition of the concerto than that of the symphony.

The variety of styles and musical languages represented by the symphonies and other orchestral works analysed for the purposes of this thesis did not permit using a single analytical method, as this was indicated each time by the musical material of a particular piece.

CHAPTER ONE

Towards the symphony and symphonic thinking

‘A term now normally taken to signify an extended work for orchestra’.¹ This definition is general and recalls some of the first impressions the word ‘symphony’ brings to people’s minds. However, one has to realise quickly that there really is no easy definition of what is ‘the symphony’. It is even more complicated considering the symphony’s long and rich tradition, with all its historical associations and developments, as well as its twentieth-century innovations and transformations. Before going to the definitions of symphony and symphonic music which will be used in this thesis, the most important information about the origins, status and development of the genre should be recalled, as they had a great impact on twentieth-century modifications of the symphony.

1.1. The symphony in the Classical period

The origins

The very nature of the symphony is rooted in the orchestra and orchestral thinking. Its origins are connected with development of instrumental music and orchestral ensembles in the late seventeenth century. That period witnessed the development of orchestral music, with the significant role of such genres as concerti grossi and sinfonia as the predecessors of the symphony. A special importance in this perspective is attached to

¹ anon., ‘Symphony’, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, eds. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 24, p. 812.

the 'sinfonia', which functioned as an orchestral section (or sections) of larger vocal works, as an opera overture or interludes between operatic acts or vocal sections of oratorios.² The role of these short instrumental pieces was mainly to give the listeners a moment of relaxation during the drama of an operatic plot or an oratorio's dramaturgy. This character was preserved in the early symphony, as has been observed by Adam Carse: 'Symphonies in the 18th century were written to please, and to please at first hearing'.³ They soon started to be performed as separate works, independent from any vocal pieces and composed especially for instrumental ensembles to present during concerts. It should be also remembered that the development of early symphonies was strongly connected with the evolution of the harmonic system and the change from the polyphony of the Baroque era to homophony, the usage of which marked the beginning of a new époque in the history of music.

The social aspect and status of the symphony

Much has already been written about the development of the symphony before it achieved its maturity in the Classical period⁴ and there is no point in bringing out here all the details and information. However, what should be stressed is the social aspect of the symphony – the element most crucial for understanding why the symphony gained such a high position in the hierarchy of musical genres in such a short period of time.

² For example, the 'Pastoral' symphony in Handel's *Messiah*; see Michael Kennedy, 'Symphony', *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*, fourth edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 2004), pp. 717-718.

³ Adam Carse, *18th Century Symphonies* (Westport: Hyperion reprint edition, 1979), p. 60.

⁴ Jan LaRue and Eugene K. Wolf, 'Symphony, I. 18th Century', *The New Grove*, vol. 24, pp. 812-833; *The Symphony*, vol. 1, ed. Robert Simpson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966); Christopher Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1983); Józef M. Chomiński and Krystyna Wilkowska-Chomińska, *Formy muzyczne*, vol. 2 'Wielkie formy instrumentalne' (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1987).

The social aspect means here the democratic and human factor of the symphony as a feature strongly connected with the history of the genre.

It should not be forgotten that the end of the eighteenth century, therefore the period when the symphony had crystallised its style and character, was a time of deep social changes in Europe, symbolised by the French Revolution and the emergence of a new, democratic society.⁵ This process found its reflection in philosophy and the arts, and its best exemplification in music became the symphony, seen as the most sophisticated and most democratic of all orchestral genres. The public tone and greater human importance of the symphony were soon recognised as the representation of 'the emotions or ideas not merely of the individual composer but of an entire community, be it a city, a state, or the whole of humanity'.⁶ This was possible thanks to new formal principles, which provided the symphony with a different type of musical discourse not present in preceding musical periods, which had been based on polyphonic textures and techniques. The evolution of the tonal system and homophony, with its clear harmonic changes and progressions, indicated a new type of musical narration and change of musical expression. All this was represented in the symphony. Hugh Ottaway sees the start of this process in works written by the composers associated with the so-called 'Mannheim' school:

[...] the early symphony, especially at Mannheim in the 1750s and 1760s, was the embodiment of far-reaching changes in musical expression. Designed to appeal to a new and growing public, it broke with the past by creating a language of dynamic contrasts: musical form, hitherto purely spatial (architectural) in conception, now became a dramatic principle of construction capable of harnessing a variety of tonal and thematic tensions and of resolving them into a higher unity [...]. The democratization of music is inseparable from the early history of the symphony. The classical

⁵ Cf. Christopher Ballantine, 'Beethoven, Hegel and Marx', *The Music Review*, vol. 33, 1972, pp. 34-46.

⁶ Mark Evan Bonds, 'Symphony, II.1: 'The essence of the genre'', *The New Grove*, vol. 24, p. 833.

symphony is a public statement, [...] it celebrates a new scale of human values and a new social vision.⁷

Many authors emphasise the democratic aspect of the symphony. Christopher Ballantine not only considers it in his book on the symphony but also devotes a separate essay to this specific matter, analysing the connection between democracy, symphony and Hegel's philosophical system.⁸ The Polish musicologist Bohdan Pociąg, while describing five main aspects of symphonism, put the social one in first place, as the most 'elementary' and 'archaic'.⁹ In his opinion, the symphony can be seen as a model of a highly developed society, while the symphony orchestra itself represents the tendency towards social integrity and organisation.¹⁰

The social aspect of the symphony is also connected with the idea of public concerts, which from the late eighteenth century onwards were organised in large European cities on a scale not seen before. This new institution of public concerts, given by public orchestras for a broad audience, outside aristocratic palaces and opera theatres, created very special needs, and the symphony soon became the best vehicle to fulfil them. The symphony's ability to unite the wide range of instruments in a way in which no-one predominates but all contribute to the whole was seen as its main value, exemplifying its democratic character.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the process of the democratization of society with its reflection in the musical world, represented by the birth of the symphony, caused a crucial change in the hierarchy of musical genres. Opera, for the last two

⁷ Hugh Ottaway, 'Prospect and Perspective', *The Symphony*, vol. 2, ed. Robert Simpson (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967), pp. 270-1.

⁸ Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*; Ballantine, 'Beethoven, Hegel and Marx', in *The Music Review*.

⁹ Bohdan Pociąg, *Szkice z późnego romantyzmu* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1978), pp. 152-155.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 153.

centuries renowned as the most prestigious musical genre, had to give place to the symphony, as a symbol of the new era of democracy.

The rising status of the symphony was confirmed around 1800 by German music theorists who started to develop the idea which was later named 'absolute music'.¹¹ Carl Dahlhaus, who analysed the subject thoroughly in a collection of his essays,¹² observed that so-called 'absolute' music, hence music without text, came to be recognised as closest to the 'absolute' and as the place where the soul was able to express itself directly. Therefore, the lack of text, previously seen as the weakness of instrumental genres, including the early-Classical symphony, came to be seen as its virtue. As Dahlhaus pointed out,

the symphony was used as a prototype for the development of the theory of absolute music around 1800, viz. Wackenroder's 'Psychology of Modern Instrumental Music', Thieck's essay 'Symphonies' [both published in 1799], or E.T.A. Hoffmann's sketch of a romantic metaphysics of music that forms the introduction to a review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony [published in 1808].¹³

Later in the study Dahlhaus recalls the widely quoted remark of E.T.A. Hoffmann that the 'symphony became like an opera of instruments', a description which appeared in his reviews from 1809 and 1810. This not only indicated the range of the symphony among instrumental genres, similar to that of an opera among vocal ones, but also emphasised the dramatic nature of the genre. Therefore, the symphony as a 'dramatic piece' performed by instruments, and in the nineteenth century often compared to the novel, achieved the reputation as the most perfect instrumental genre, able 'to incorporate broader ideas beyond the purely musical'.¹⁴ The composer who played a

¹¹ The term was first used by Richard Wagner in the programme note he wrote to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in 1846.

¹² Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, transl. Roger Lustig (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989).

¹³ Carl Dahlhaus, 'Absolute Music as an Esthetic Paradigm', *The Idea of Absolute Music*, p. 10.

¹⁴ Bonds, 'Symphony, II. 2: 'Beethoven'', *The New Grove*, vol. 24, p. 835.

crucial role in lifting the symphony to the top of the musical hierarchy was Beethoven. His symphonies are the crowning achievement of the period of Classical symphony and, at the same time, became a turning point in the history of the genre, ushering in the era of Romanticism.

Formal models and the principle of dualism

But before that happened, the Classical model of the symphony was settled by Haydn and Mozart as a four-movement structure, with a sonata allegro as the first and main movement, followed by a slow and lyrical adagio, a dance-like minuet with trio and usually a rondo finale. The principle of sonata allegro, based on the tonal polarity of two contrasted subjects, their development and final recapitulation, became one of the most important and fruitful formal structures in music and the basis for many instrumental genres since the Classical period. Its power was seen in a new type of narration, different than in Baroque forms. As observed by Walter Riezler,

[sonata allegro] is a dynamic form, which does not, like the static fugue, merely unfold what was already there, but gradually develops its own essential substance, travelling a road whose end was not to be foreseen at the beginning.¹⁵

The dynamism of the form was created thanks to the principle of dualism which determined sonata structure since its birth. The dialectical tension and its final resolution was initially realised in the simple tonal opposition between exposition and development (early symphonies did not even have a second subject) with the return of the tonic in the recapitulation. Very soon, however, dualism became clear in the exposition, which in its mature Classical form usually presented two strongly contrasted themes ('male' and 'female' expression, tonic and dominant opposition) as the basis for

¹⁵ Quoted in Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, p. 25.

later development and final recapitulation. In the Classical sonata allegro then, the tonal polarity and dualism of contrasting harmonic ideas were the most important features of the formal structure. It was to change later, as harmonic language changed, but the principle of dualism, although realised on different levels, has remained the most significant feature of the symphony.

Already in Classicism a sonata allegro started to influence other movements of the symphony, mostly the finale but sometimes also the minuet and slow movement, as was thoroughly analysed by Charles Rosen.¹⁶ This tendency not only gave birth to the mixture of sonata allegro with rondo or variations but also opened the door for further transformations and modifications of the Classical model of the symphony. Besides changes in the order of movements and their number, the most significant modification became the synthesis of the sonata principle with the four-movement cycle, where the role of slow and scherzo movements was taken by the development section and the sonata recapitulation served as the finale of the whole piece. The first and best-known example of such a synthesis is not a symphony but Liszt's Piano Sonata in B minor (1853), but soon the idea was used in the field of symphonic music. This concept of synthesising the sonata allegro with the four-movement sonata structure was also often to be used in twentieth-century symphonic works, including pieces by Polish composers, such as *Episodes* (1959) and *Symphonic Frescoes* (1964) by Kazimierz Serocki (1922–81), both using an avantgarde, sonoristic musical language (as will be discussed in Chapter Three).

¹⁶ Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1980).

Beethoven

The composer who opened the door for the most radical Romantic transformations of the genre was Beethoven. As was already indicated, he lifted the symphony to the top of instrumental genres and his symphonies played a crucial role in raising the status of the genre. However, this would not have been possible without changes in musical expression and the deepening of its emotional side. In Beethoven's hands the symphony became a dramatic piece and this change was connected with his treatment of sonata structure.

As observed by Ballantine, for Beethoven the sonata principle (with its dialectical tension) 'became [...] a means of playing out a drama of emotions'.¹⁷ What in the Classical symphony was simply the 'contrast of keys, themes, sections, and movements, in subtle and intricate dialectical syntheses, became for him a means of dramatic presentation and ultimate reconciliation of conflicting modes of experience'. Therefore for Beethoven 'the symphony became an analogue of the experience of Becoming.'¹⁸ Undoubtedly this approach and its realisation in Beethoven's symphonies (especially after the Third Symphony 'Eroica', 1803) was highly valued by critics and reviewers, who were looking for truly new symphonic music emanating ideas of freedom and democracy, concepts which anticipated the era of Romanticism.

Changes in musical expression would not have been possible without a deep transformation of symphonic structure. In other words, Beethoven 'had transformed the genre through a great expansion of means and expressive potential'.¹⁹ He increased the orchestral forces, the temporal span of the symphony (with *Eroica*), and explored

¹⁷ Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, p. 27.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Raymond Knapp, *Brahms and the Challenge of the Symphony* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1997), pp. 48-49.

alternative formal plans in the Fifth and Sixth symphonies. He had heightened his expressive potential in all relevant areas, using enriched harmonic vocabulary relying heavily on dissonance and an intensified application of motivic development. He occasionally incorporated programmatic elements, but the truly 'revolutionary procedures' he used in his Ninth Symphony (1824) were connected with the fact that 'he attacked the very basis of the genre: its abstract, *instrumental*, setting'.²⁰

As a result, Beethoven's nine symphonies have remained for following generations of composers a kind of elusive ideal of symphonic music. As Robert Layton pointed out, 'Beethoven was to the symphony what Shakespeare was to the English theatre and language. No artist escaped his shadow'.²¹ Therefore, every symphonic composer in the following decades had to think of Beethoven's achievement before writing his own symphony.

1.2. The symphony after Beethoven

The crisis of the symphony

Beethoven's structural and ideological ideas presented in the symphonies were so extraordinary that the next generation of composers soon realised how difficult it was to develop beyond them. About a decade after Beethoven's death the symphony found itself in a state of crisis. In 1835 Robert Schumann had 'almost feared that the term 'symphony' might soon become a thing of the past'.²² In 1851 Richard Wagner simply announced the death of the symphony (in *Oper und Drama*, published that year),

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *A Companion to the Symphony*, ed. Robert Layton (London: Simon & Schuster, 1993), p. 1.

²² Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, p. 32.

‘viewing the post-Beethovenian efforts as a mere epilogue with nothing substantially new to say’.²³ This view was confirmed by music reviewers, with the significant remark from 1855 that ‘the creation of a symphony nowadays is a rock on which, with only a few exceptions, most composers suffer a complete shipwreck.’²⁴ Therefore, it is not surprising that the situation has been closely analysed by authors writing on nineteenth-century music. Knapp has devoted a whole chapter to this problem before analysing Brahms’s symphonies,²⁵ as has Frisch, also in connection with Brahms’s symphonies.²⁶ The problem in the context of the further history of the genre has been taken up by Mark Evan Bonds²⁷ and Ballantine,²⁸ to mention only two of many authors.

Dahlhaus observed that Schumann’s Third Symphony, composed in 1850 and chronologically his last, is separated by almost twenty years ‘from any work of distinction that represented absolute rather than programmatic music’ (Schumann’s Third Symphony was published in 1851 and Brahms’s First in 1877). According to him, ‘instead of the symphony, it was the Lisztian symphonic poem that came to the fore in the 1850s and 1860s’, while in the 1870s and 1880s, with Bruckner, Brahms, and Dvorák within the Austro-German sphere, and with Tchaikovsky, Franck, and Borodin outside, the symphony entered the ‘second age’ of its development.²⁹ As was later analysed by Frisch, Dahlhaus’s opinion that the years between 1851 and 1877 were a

²³ quoted in Knapp, *Brahms and the Challenge of the Symphony*, p. 29, footnote.

²⁴ anonymous review of Heinrich Esser’s symphony published in the ‘Neue Zeitschrift’ in 1855; quoted in Walter Frisch *Brahms. The Four Symphonies* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), p. 11.

²⁵ Knapp, ‘Chapter Two: The Symphonic Challenge’, *Brahms and the Challenge of the Symphony*, pp. 29-59.

²⁶ Walter Frisch, *Brahms. The Four Symphonies*; Walter Frisch, ‘Echt Symphonisch’: On the Historical Context of Brahms’s Symphonies’, *Brahms Studies*, Vol. 2, ed. David Brodbeck (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), pp. 113-133.

²⁷ Mark Evan Bonds, *After Beethoven. Imperatives of Originality in the Symphony* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); Mark Evan Bonds, ‘Symphony, II. 4: ‘The crisis of the 1830s’’, *The New Grove*, vol. 24. pp. 36-37.

²⁸ Ballantine, ‘The Symphony before Mahler: a brief retrospect’, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, pp. 19-79.

²⁹ Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, transl. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 265.

dead period for the symphony is not entirely correct. Frisch listed the symphonies published in those years, 80 symphonies written by such composers as Spohr, Lachner, Gade, Riff and Anton Rubinstein, among others.³⁰ The quality of their symphonies was, however, not comparable to the achievements of Beethoven or Schumann and that was the point being made by Dahlhaus. In fact, the only recognisable piece on the list, Liszt's 'Faust' Symphony (1854–57), was not even mentioned by Dahlhaus, possibly because of its programmatic character, which did not allow him to place this work on the symphonic line between Beethoven and Brahms.

The view of the symphonic crisis after Beethoven was also deepened by Hanslick's remark that Brahms's First Symphony could be called the Beethoven's Tenth.³¹ In other words, Brahms was the first composer since Beethoven who referred to symphonic tradition in a proper way. However, it should be remembered that there indeed were composers who took up the genre after Beethoven's death and confronted his legacy. Their achievements were also important for Brahms and his symphonic ideas, as it would be hardly possible to imagine his symphonies without earlier, Romantic, developments of the genre.

Romantic developments

The composers who had to face Beethoven's achievement immediately after his death (or even before he died) were Schubert, Berlioz, Mendelssohn and Schumann. Their important position in the history of the genre remains unquestionable. Being aware of Beethoven's genius, they tried to develop (not merely imitate) the implications of his

³⁰ Frisch, *Brahms. The Four Symphonies*, Table 1, pp. 7-10.

³¹ See Maciej Negrey, 'Mendelssohn i Schumann: dwie propozycje symfonii romantycznej', *Beethoven 2. Studia i interpretacje*, eds. Mieczysław Tomaszewski and Magdalena Chrenkoff (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 2003), pp. 61-72.

music, giving their own, individual symphonic propositions and finally managing to create original and artistically convincing works. What is also significant is that their symphonies are not only evidence that it was still possible to compose symphonies after Beethoven; they also show that it was no longer possible to keep one general stylistic line in developing the genre. Beethoven's inventions in the form and content of the symphony meant that it was possible to compose them either as a purely musical, 'absolute' genre or, in contrast, as a genre involving extramusical elements, feelings and emotions. The latter tendency fitted Romantic aesthetics, according to which music (and art generally, especially literature) came to be seen as a vehicle for beauty and the mystery of nature, often carrying religious or mystical emotions and sometimes also involving supernatural feelings and expressions. Therefore, the history of the symphony in the nineteenth century is indicated by two musical traditions, both regarded as following Beethoven's ideas.

The first line is represented by symphonies of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms, and may be regarded as the Classical or conservative tendency.³² According to Ballantine, this did not follow in full Beethoven's implications and abandoned especially the achievement of his Ninth Symphony (although the vocal part is presented in Mendelssohn's symphony-cantata *Lobgesang*). Generally, this line follows the Classical principles of formal structure. The composers of the Classical attitude are more careful about the work's formal structure, such as the proportions between movements and the use of the Classical four-movement sonata outline (although modified according to the individual style of the particular composer). The content, however, is determined by purely musical means and does not follow any

³² Cf. Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*; Alfred Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1947).

literary programme. If any element of programmaticism is present it has a more general, illustrative nature (as in Mendelssohn's symphonies, which try to evoke the composer's memories from his travels).

The second and opposite line is regarded as the Romantic or progressive tendency and is represented by the works of Berlioz, Liszt, Mahler and Richard Strauss. According to Ballantine, this line did follow Beethoven's implications, mostly those indicated by his Ninth Symphony, but also by the *Pastoral*. In this tendency the content tends to be more important than form; the piece usually involves extramusical, programmatic features, describing the character of the whole work and all movements. The formal structure is then transformed by each composer according to either the literary programme or extramusical inspiration which influenced the composer. As a result, the four-movement Classical model is subjected to different modifications both in formal outline and in the structure of each movement. In fact, the idea of avoiding, deeply transforming or replacing Classical forms by new ones, significant for the Romantic tendency, has often been recognised as a purely Romantic feature, and not evident just in music.³³

However, in symphonic music, this Romantic attitude resulted in the birth and evolution of new orchestral genres, such as the concert overture and symphonic poem. They both engage a significant amount of symphonic thinking, although they are not symphonies, and their smaller scale is only one of the reasons. In Ballantine's opinion the symphonic poem was created as a form in which 'the experience of the single-movement dramatic overture, and of a century of symphonic writing, meet in a one-

³³ In Einstein's opinion being against the old forms (with symphony included) was a sign of revolutionary thinking, seen as a purely Romantic feature. He took Liszt and Wagner as the best examples, calling them the 'Romantic revolutionists', see Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, p. 144.

movement structure related to the quintessential sonata ideal, the traditional first movement.’³⁴ He also adds that ‘Liszt and Strauss made it a single-movement synthesis of the multi-movement traditional symphony’.³⁵ But as observed by Murtomäki, the more general meaning is that ‘the symphony is usually described as based on two or more themes’, whereas the symphonic poem is thought as developing ‘from a single thematic germ’.³⁶ Nevertheless, this generalization can be easily disputed, as it is possible to find symphonic poems based on more than one thematic idea (Strauss, Mieczysław Karłowicz, 1876–1909), as well as some late-Romantic symphonies which tend to develop from a single thematic germ (e.g. Sibelius’s Fifth Symphony).

What is more important when considering differences is the extramusical background of symphonic poems. In most of the pieces, thematic ideas are connected to literary characters, as in Liszt’s ‘Faust’ Symphony, Strauss’s *Don Juan* (1887–88) or *Don Quixote* (1897); or to the painting, as in Karłowicz’s *Stanisław i Anna Oświęcimowie* (1907); or they could also evoke landscapes and emotional feelings, as in Smetana’s *Ma Vlast* (1874–79) or Zygmunt Noskowski’s *Step* (1896). In most cases, however, the symphonic poem, compared to the symphony, is characterised by its smaller scale and the lack of the developed dualism and tensions essential for the symphony. Moreover, the symphonic poem tends to be more illustrative and episodic in character. This is also the case of the concert overture, often treated as an orchestral showpiece, hence colourful, illustrative and using orchestral effects to create atmosphere or to express feelings. As in a symphonic poem, the piece’s title indicates

³⁴ Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, p. 42.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 74.

³⁶ Veijo Murtomäki, ‘“Symphonic Fantasy”: A Synthesis of Symphonic Thinking in Sibelius’s Seventh Symphony and ‘Tapiola’’, *The Sibelius Companion*, ed. Glenda Dawn Goss (Westport, Connecticut & London: Greenwood Press, 1996, p. 148.

the character of music or carries some information about the story it is going to tell, even if it is not that specific, such as in Stanisław Moniuszko's *Bajka* (A Fairy Tale, 1847–48).

Liszt and Strauss saw these new genres, formally less strict than the symphony, as more appropriate for evolving purely Romantic, poetic or metaphysical ideas. This view was also connected, as Charles Rosen observed, with the feeling that 'the prestige of [symphonic] form was a conservative force in the history of Romantic and post-Romantic music, and it acted as a brake on the most revolutionary developments'.³⁷ Hence, composers following the most Romantic ideas either preferred symphonic poems to symphonies (Liszt, Smetana) or favoured musical drama (Wagner), or their essays in the genre fitted the concept of the so-called programmatic symphony (Liszt, Strauss's *Sinfonia domestica*). The character of such symphonies, determined by extramusical ideas, made them closer to the symphonic poem, while their usually multi-movement structure and large scale allowed the composers to situate such pieces in the genre of the symphony.

These two symphonic lines are characteristic of the nineteenth-century development of the genre, although it should be noted that there were composers who did not fit precisely to either of the trends but were capable of moving between the programmatic and the abstract, such as Tchaikovsky and Dvorak.³⁸ Nevertheless, the dual symphonic tradition of the nineteenth century influenced twentieth-century thinking as well.

³⁷ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, p. 293.

³⁸ Cf. Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, pp. 49-59.

Changes in formal structure

It is scarcely surprising that the dominant model for the nineteenth-century type of formal construction was 'the Beethoven finale of thematic revelations, triumphant resolutions, and a coda apotheosis'.³⁹ Rosen points out that the generation of composers born around 1810 'preferred to place the climax, the point of extreme tension, very near the end of the work'.⁴⁰ Ballantine observes, moreover, that the model of the triumphant finale could be changed into 'defeat (Mendelssohn's *Italian*), perversion (diabolic triumph in Berlioz's *Fantastique*) or even catastrophe (Tchaikovsky's Sixth)'.⁴¹ In fact, Ballantine's opinion of Mendelssohn's *Italian* finale as a representation of 'defeat' is more than surprising, as the character and expression of this movement seems to be quite the opposite – optimistic and, if not triumphal, definitely far from 'defeat'. The other examples given by Ballantine are much better chosen.

The finale could also be resolved into a hymnal or chorale coda, as in Bruckner's works or, already in the twentieth century, in some of the symphonies by Honegger and Vaughan Williams. Without a doubt, however, during Romanticism and especially in late-Romanticism, the finale became the most significant movement of the symphony, radically shifting the emphasis away from the Classical model where the most important movement was the first. In this new type of structure, with the emotional climax situated in the final stage of the piece (derived thus from Beethoven's Ninth), all the preceding movements act as a preparation for the most intense and dramaturgically most important last movement, which summarizes and resolves the musical action of the whole piece. This type of outline influenced the symphonic thinking of some twentieth-

³⁹ Ibid, p. 72.

⁴⁰ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, p. 320.

⁴¹ Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, p. 72.

century composers as well – one of the best examples is the concept of end-accented form explored by Witold Lutosławski (1913–94) in the late 1960s.⁴²

Another possibility for shifting the emphasis from the traditional first movement to others was to put it on the adagio. In Classical and even Romantic symphonies the role of the slow movement was mostly to add a lyrical element and to calm the tensions of the first movement, while, as has been observed by the Russian musicologist Irina Nikolska,⁴³ by the end of the nineteenth century, the role of the adagio had been increased. It came to be treated as a movement comparable to the opening allegro in its significance and, although usually concentrated on contemplation of some emotional state, it was able to create its own drama and tension. Therefore, the adagios of late-Romantic symphonies are much larger in scale and more complex in structure than earlier examples. This new role of the slow movement is also emphasised by Pociąg, who sees the tension between the allegro and the adagio, comparable now in significance and contrasted in character, as an important aspect of late-Romantic symphonic dualism.⁴⁴ Both Pociąg and Nikolska observe the culmination of this process in the symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler (indeed Mahler's adagios are sometimes performed as separate pieces, as is the case with the Adagietto from his Fifth Symphony). This tendency can be also connected with the trend towards monumentalism, characteristic of late-Romantic symphonies (as will be discussed below).

⁴² See Chapter Three, p. 215-216.

⁴³ Irina Nikolska, 'Z niektórych zagadnień twórczości symfonicznej lat osiemdziesiątych', *Muzyka Krzysztofa Pendereckiego. Poetyka i recepcja*, ed. Mieczysław Tomaszewski (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 1996), p. 46.

⁴⁴ Pociąg, *Szkice z późnego romantyzmu*, p. 75.

While considering the formal aspects of the nineteenth-century symphony, it should be added that Romantic composers also evolved Beethoven's example in mixing the symphony with other genres. As is analysed by Bonds:

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony opened the door to such generic crossbreeding. Outstanding examples include hybrids with the concerto (Berlioz's *Harold en Italie*, Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*); cantata (Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* [...]); opera (Berlioz's *Roméo at Juliette*); and even the symphonic poem (Liszt's *Faust-Symphonie*).⁴⁵

Moreover, Pociąg sees Mahler's Eight Symphony as the combination of the symphony (first movement) with the cantata and oratorio (second movement). For him, both genres reached their highest stage of development in this symphony,⁴⁶ and indeed, it is hard to imagine a more powerful exemplification of the two genres combined within the framework of one piece.

Besides mixing genres, the Romantic composers also used the idea of combining two formal procedures in one movement (also following Beethoven on this point), e.g. sonata with variations, scherzo, rondo or fugue, etc.. This tendency was supposed to give more unity to the overall formal structure of the symphony as such unity became one of the main issues of the symphony once tonal polarization stopped being the main factor of symphonic structure and gave way to thematic contrasts. Thematic (or material) unity, understood as using some motifs from the main theme of the first movement in later ones, was a concept used by Beethoven (the 'motto' in the Fifth Symphony is the most obvious example). The idea of the 'motto' or so-called 'idée-fixe' thematic thought was often used by the composers in the nineteenth century, mostly in symphonies belonging to the 'Romantic' line of development (e.g. Berlioz's

⁴⁵ Bonds, 'Symphony, II. 7: 'Mixtures with other genres'', *The New Grove*, p. 840.

⁴⁶ Pociąg, 'Szkice z późnego romantyzmu', p. 152.

Fantastique, Dvorak's *From the New World*), as well as in symphonic poems (e.g. Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* with its initial 'motto').

The other procedures for unifying the musical material of the symphony were connected with the order of movements (often set in different order than in the Classical model) as well as with a change in their character. The role of the adagio has been already discussed; the scherzo too could sometimes act as the turning point of the whole symphony's drama, as in Mahler's Fifth Symphony.⁴⁷ The other solution used by Romantic composers was to include some forms not previously used in the genre, such as the waltz (first used by Berlioz and reconfigured in 5/4 by Tchaikovsky), the laendler (Mahler) and other types of dances, as well as contrapuntal forms such as the fugue and the passacaglia (cf. passacaglia in the finale of Brahms's Fourth Symphony). The idea of using forms not initially associated with the symphony was adopted by twentieth-century composers, including Poles (e.g. fugue finale in Szymanowski's Second Symphony, the oberek finale in his Fourth, and the passacaglia in Penderecki's Third Symphony).

The changes in formal models of the symphony would be not possible without extending the harmonic language. In the nineteenth century the most important changes in harmony were connected with the increasing 'taste for chromaticism'.⁴⁸ The consequences of the gradual chromaticisation of musical language resulted not only in the disappearance of tonal orientation and harmonic opposition so essential for the Classical sonata form (and symphony) but in the final stage led to the collapse of the tonal system at the beginning of the twentieth century. This process made the harmonic structure of nineteenth-century symphonies more complex than in the previous century.

⁴⁷ See Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, pp. 102-103.

⁴⁸ Term used by Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, p. 327.

As is emphasised by Joseph N. Straus, for the eighteenth-century sonata the main element of the form, which generated its development and duality, was the ‘polarity of contrasting harmonic ideas’, hence the tonal polarity which determined the formal structure of the piece. For nineteenth-century composers the most important element became the contrast of themes, therefore ‘the form was determined by thematic contrast and thematic repetition’,⁴⁹ while harmonic opposition became, if not less important, then at least less precisely structured. The contrasts between themes or thematic areas instead of tonal opposition became thus the most significant sign of Romantic and late-Romantic symphonies.

Late-Romantic monumentalism and the idea of continuous development

One of the important traces of the late-Romantic symphony is its tendency towards monumentalism, evident in the ever-increasing size of the symphonic orchestra as well as the time-span of the movements. The latter is connected with the increasing role of developmental work, used now not only in the development section of the sonata allegro but elsewhere too. Symphonic themes are already subjected to transformations in the exposition, hence the structure of the musical material is extended into large ‘thematic zones’, as William Darcy called them while analysing Bruckner’s symphonies.⁵⁰ Developmental work affects then the whole movement, as after two contrasting thematic zones there was no place for the ‘Classical’ development and resolution. Bruckner’s solution was instead to complete the sonata exposition with a third, ‘closing zone, that usually reenergizes the rhythmic momentum and often

⁴⁹ Joseph N. Straus, *Remaking the Past. Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 96-97.

⁵⁰ William Darcy, ‘Bruckner’s Sonata Deformations’, *Bruckner Studies*, eds. Timothy L. Jackson and Paul Hawkshaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 257.

reinvigorates primary theme material.’⁵¹ This idea led to the formal compression of the first movement, which through the continuous development of the musical material combined the traditional functions of the development and recapitulation into one organic structure.

This was important for the structure of many late-Romantic symphonic pieces, in which the themes themselves were treated like ‘a seed, from which the composer can make a whole forest grow’.⁵² It was connected with constant development and repetitions of the main musical ideas (or one idea in the case of monothematic works, mostly symphonic poems), which resulted in the ‘rotational’, cyclic structure of the piece (the term ‘rotational’ will be explored below). This concept was continued and modified by Sibelius, who may be seen as the ultimate master of the technique of continuous development.

Mahler and the status of the genre at the turn of the century

Many of the Romantic and late-Romantic developments and innovations in the field of the symphony culminated in Mahler’s output. This contains also the tendency to see the symphony as an exemplification of cosmic and mystical ideas, as can be seen in Mahler’s ambition, described in his much-quoted statement, that ‘the symphony must be like the world. It must be all-embracing’.⁵³ Bonds comments further:

A symphony, according to Mahler at the end of the century, must have something cosmic within itself, must be inexhaustible like the world and life, if it is not to make a mockery of its name.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Mark Cooper, ‘Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)’, *The Symphony*, vol. 1, ed. Robert Simpson, p. 261.

⁵³ quoted in Howell, *Jean Sibelius. Progressive Techniques in the Symphonies and Tone Poems*, p. 21.

⁵⁴ Bonds, *After Beethoven*, p. 16

This attitude to the symphony as a genre of a very special significance was adopted by many twentieth-century composers. In his analysis of Shostakovich's symphonies, Alexander Ivashkin has pointed out the composer's connection with 'the great Romantic tradition, according to which the symphony, like the new-age novel, becomes not simply music but the process of solving particular problems by musical means'.⁵⁵ His opinion is shared by Robert Layton who, in his essay on Shostakovich, pointed out that the composer's 'view of the symphony was frankly Mahlerian: no experience is excluded; the symphony contains the whole world with all its contradictions'.⁵⁶ This view of the symphony (however exaggerated) was recalled in the last decades of the twentieth century by Krzysztof Penderecki (b.1933), who – according to his own essays – turned to the symphony 'in order to absorb and process the experience of our century' and saw the genre as 'that musical ark which would make it possible to convey to coming generations what is best in our twentieth-century tradition of the composing of sounds'.⁵⁷

From this perspective, 'each successive symphony was becoming just a new coil in the quest – for what was being written in fact was one large work, getting more or less closer to a heard ideal. Thus the symphony was something like an expanse of life and in any case a real time-reservoir and an interaction of different forces'.⁵⁸ In fact, Mahler's remark that a symphony must be 'like the world' echoes a long tradition that, since the time of Beethoven, viewed the symphony as the most cosmic of all

⁵⁵ Alexander Ivashkin, 'Shostakovich and Schnittke: The Erosion of Symphonic Syntax', *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 256.

⁵⁶ Robert Layton, 'Dmitri Shostakovich', *The Symphony*, vol. 2, ed. Robert Simpson, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 198.

⁵⁷ Krzysztof Penderecki, *Labyrinth of Time. Five Addresses for the End of the Millennium*, transl. William Brand (Chapel Hill: Hinshaw Music, 1998), p. 59.

⁵⁸ Ivashkin, 'Shostakovich and Schnittke', p. 256.

instrumental genres.⁵⁹ Regarding the evolution of the symphony, it cannot be denied that Mahler was the composer who developed the genre to the state which is recognised as the second peak in its history. Moreover, in the opinion of both Pociąg and Nikolska, the whole idea of symphonism (which will be discussed below) reached its height in Mahler's symphonies.⁶⁰

Therefore, the symphony as a genre in the nineteenth century lost nothing of its prestigious status achieved by Beethoven. Its structure did experience many important transformations in the hands of Romantic and late-Romantic composers but, despite deep changes and modifications, the genre retained its status as a vehicle of 'the sublime' as well as bearing 'moral and ethical ideas'.⁶¹ This aspect, as well as putting the symphony 'beyond the sphere of the merely sensuous into the realm of the metaphysical',⁶² and making it equal in power to literature, is extremely important as it influenced symphonic thinking in the twentieth century.

Symphonism

All kinds of symphonic music written in the nineteenth century, whether the 'absolute' symphony, its combination with other genres, or the new symphonic genres, created a broad stream of symphonism, which therefore can be seen as the most important way of composing orchestral music in the Romantic era. The role of symphonism for nineteenth-century culture is emphasised by Pociąg:

In European culture symphonism is a stream, which could appear, crystallised and matured, only at the high level of purely instrumental

⁵⁹ see Bonds, 'Symphony, II. 1: 'The essence of the genre'', *The New Grove*, vol. 24, p. 834.

⁶⁰ Nikolska, 'Z niektórych zagadnień twórczości symfonicznej lat osiemdziesiątych', p. 46; Pociąg, *Szkice z późnego romantyzmu*; see also Bohdan Pociąg, *Mahler* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1996).

⁶¹ Bonds, *After Beethoven*, p. 15.

⁶² *Ibid.*

musical consciousness, hence not earlier than in the eighteenth century. Its environment is the orchestra. Its golden age is the nineteenth century – a century of artistic, intellectual and spiritual maximalism and an already overwhelming sense of power.

[...]

Symphonism is an extremely important phenomenon in nineteenth-century European culture. The position of the symphony (and symphonic poem) in music is equal to that which the novel (and the short story) holds in literature. Without considering the symphonic stream, the picture of nineteenth-century culture would be incomplete.⁶³

The theory of symphonism was most elaborately formulated by the Russian musicologist Boris Asaf'yev in his writings from the 1920s. His theory was later analysed and translated into English by David Haas and it is worth recalling here some of the most important information, as Asaf'yev's ideas seem to influence later Russian as well as Polish writings on symphonism. They may be found in Pocij's essays as well as in the analysis of Polish symphonies made by Nikolska.⁶⁴ According to Asaf'ev,

We have symphonism when every crossed-over boundary [in the music] makes a distinct impression from the preceding, when there occurs a sensation of an unbroken musical current and a tension that pulls onward [...]. Thus, we conceive symphonism as an *unbroken stream of musical consciousness*, when no element is either conceived or perceived as independent among the remaining multitude, but when an integral creative entity in motion emerges by means of intuitive contemplation.⁶⁵

According to Asaf'ev, symphonism is also 'an artistic achievement and an expression of the world of emotions and ideas in the unbroken continuity of a musical current, in its living intensity', while the symphony (whatever its duration) 'coheres as a single entity that does not sectionalize itself into a patchwork of component tunes or textures'.⁶⁶

Asaf'yev sees the best exemplification of symphonism in the works of Beethoven and

⁶³ Pocij, *Szkice z późnego romantyzmu*, pp. 152-153.

⁶⁴ Pocij, *Szkice z późnego romantyzmu*; Nikolska, 'Z niektórych zagadnień twórczości symfonicznej lat osiemdziesiątych'.

⁶⁵ Quoted in David Haas, 'Boris Asaf'yev and Soviet Symphonic Theory', *The Musical Quarterly*, No. 76 (3), 1992, p. 416.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Tchaikovsky, and he indicates four distinctive characteristics common to their symphonies:

- a pervasive quality of enormous, suppressed tension, capable of producing sudden explosions of great force;
- a relentless development of musical motifs presented early in the work;
- the denial of full cadences and the occasional bypassing of sectional boundaries so as to avoid closure and deny repose;
- the construction of reprises that are perceived as outcomes of long-range motion and not merely variations of expositions.⁶⁷

Asaf'yev's symphonic theory was enriched by another Russian, Mark Aranovsky, who invented the concept that the four movements of the traditional symphony can be seen as the four faces of human activity: *homo agens* (man acting = allegro sonata), *homo sapiens* (man thinking = slow movement), *homo ludens* (man playing = menuet/scherzo) and *homo communis* (man socialising = finale).⁶⁸ Nikolska, while referring to this theory, has argued that in the twentieth century the elements of *homo ludens* and *homo communis* were reduced and that the symphony concentrated on the two other features. Examples may be found in Shostakovich's symphonies, which include a large amount of activity and meditation, but also in music of late-Romantic composers as this view corresponds to the idea of moving the symphony's accent to the adagio.

Nikolska continues to observe that both factors are also present in Polish symphonies by Lutosławski, Penderecki, Henryk M. Górecki (b. 1933), Bolesław

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 417; see also David Haas, *Leningrad's Modernist. Studies in Composition and Musical Thought, 1917-1932* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).

⁶⁸ Nikolska, 'Z niektórych zagadnień twórczości symfonicznej lat osiemdziesiątych', pp. 45-46.

Szabelski (1896–1979) and Krzysztof Meyer (b. 1943).⁶⁹ The elements of activity and meditation are, however, not always the same in the works of these composers. While Lutosławski seems to be the best example, Górecki keeps a balance between these two elements in his Second Symphony (1972) while the Third (1976) is purely contemplative; the symphonies by Penderecki, Szabelski and Meyer are more complex again. In fact, a composer not mentioned by Nikolska, Andrzej Panufnik (1914–91), fits this categorization perfectly, as his symphonies (as well as other works) are based on strong contrasts and tension between contemplation and activity, hence between *homo sapiens* and *homo agens*.

Following the long tradition of symphonic writing, the two types of nineteenth-century symphonism may be also indicated in twentieth-century music. Classical symphonism is characterised by sharp and strongly contrasted musical ideas, creating dualistic conflict as a basis for further development. The formal structure is clearly divided into sections and movements. This type refers to the Classical model of the symphony and symphonism, and can be therefore named also as a ‘dialectical symphonism’ because the principle of dualism is here very obvious and realised through the strong contrast between two main ideas, whether they are of a thematic, textural or harmonic nature. In Polish music this type will be seen in symphonic works by Lutosławski, Panufnik, Serocki and Górecki, among others.

Romantic symphonism is characterised by looser formal structures and the continuous development of one or more main thematic ideas. It is also marked by long-breathed passages, slow tempi, extended adagio sections, a contemplative or meditative character and a seriousness of tone and expression. This tendency originates in the symphonic poems and programmatic symphonies by Liszt, as well as the late-Romantic

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 46.

symphonies of Mahler and Bruckner. The symphonic pieces following this tendency are either single-movement or create some multi-movement structures expanding Classical models. They are often large-scale in terms of both time-span as well as form, with their structure based on one main musical idea, arising slowly and later continuously developed during the piece. Any type of dualism created is achieved through the developing of the initial material, therefore it often represents what Ballantine calls a 'latent dualism' or 'immanent dualism'.⁷⁰ The tensions are revealed during the piece through a continuous developmental work, which also results in constant repetitions of main musical ideas, however transformed. This type of symphonism may be called 'rotational symphonism', following the term introduced by James Hepokosky in his analysis of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony.⁷¹ According to Hepokosky, 'rotational structure is more of a process than an architectural formula'.⁷² In this type of structure each section of the piece is seen as the next rotation of the main musical theme, resulting in the 'rotational form' of the whole. This view corresponds with the opinion of Tim Howell, who observed that in Sibelius's symphonies and tone poems the form is treated as 'the product of a thematic continuous development technique rather than of following a predeterminal model.'⁷³ This way of symphonic thinking and building of musical structure was adopted by some late-twentieth century composers, especially those who wanted to refer to the late-Romantic symphonic tradition. In Polish symphonies, rotational symphonism is represented in the late symphonies of Penderecki and Tadeusz Baird (1928–81).

⁷⁰ Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, pp. 151-152.

⁷¹ James Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁷² Ibid, p. 25.

⁷³ Tim Howell, *Jean Sibelius. Progressive Techniques in the Symphonies and Tone Poems* (New York-London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), p. 127.

Slightly different terminology for describing both types of symphonic structure has been used by Ivashkin. While analysing symphonies by Shostakovich and Schnittke, he differentiated between the 'syntactical' and 'morphological' symphony, observing that the latter replaced the former by creating a model 'whose meaning lies in searching for new reserves of the musical material itself, and not in comparing clichéd idioms of the language in already well-known combinations'.⁷⁴ The morphological model is therefore determined by the principle of variation, which enables the composer to penetrate 'into the depths of the material itself'.⁷⁵ Naturally, the principle of variation can be understood as a synonym for developmental work and the transformation of musical ideas, terms used above in defining the two types of symphonism. Hence, Classical, dialectical symphonism can be also named syntactical, while the Romantic, rotational symphonism is also morphological. These names refer to the same type of symphonic thinking and symphonic structure. However, in the case of particular contemporary works, especially those based on the twelve-note row, the idea of the morphological development of musical material may explain better the structure of a piece, without indicating connections with late-Romantic aesthetics (e.g. Lutosławski's *Funeral Music*, 1958⁷⁶).

1.3. The symphony in the twentieth century

Twentieth-century composers cannot escape their past – it presses in on them in too many ways. [...]. They know that the lost Eden of the tonal common practice can never be regained in its original fullness. In this postlapsarian world, composition becomes a struggle for priority, a struggle to avoid being overwhelmed by a tradition that seems to gain in strength as it ages.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ivashkin, 'Shostakovich and Schnittke', p. 265.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ See Chapter Three, pp. 137-139.

⁷⁷ Straus, *Remaking the Past*, p. 185.

Straus was thinking here of the various musical genres taken up by twentieth-century composers from their predecessors. In the case of the long and rich tradition of the symphony, however, the struggle that composers had to face was one of the hardest. It would scarcely be surprising then to find confirmation that during the twentieth century symphonies were created of great importance and originality, written by composers from various countries and of a different musical orientation. In the second half of the century, for the first time in its history, Polish symphonic music furthermore found a worldwide resonance and recognition.

The diversity of the symphony and symphonic music intensified in the twentieth century, which was in general a period with a multiplicity of new stylistic trends. Therefore, despite profound changes in the musical world and its language, neither the symphony nor sonata form disappeared. As observed by Otto Deri,

[...] the fact that composers find the sonata form suitable in a completely different harmonic climate only demonstrates its deeply rooted, almost archetypal significance. The presentation of contrasting or differing musical ideas, their development, and their eventual return, however tenuous or distorted the return may be, still satisfies some very deep psychological and symbolic need.⁷⁸

Indeed the symphony and sonata structure have appeared in many different twentieth century musical streams, taking various facets and being realised in various ways. In the diversity of trends and tendencies, only the few of them seem to be fully significant for the development of the genre and they will be shortly analysed below. It should be remembered, however, that any differentiation cannot be strict as some symphonies belong to more than one trend and one piece can combine different tendencies and ideas.

⁷⁸ Otto Deri, *Exploring Twentieth-Century Music* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1968), p. 99.

Post-Romanticism

The first decades of the century still witnessed the ideas of late-Romantic symphonism, with its highest achievement in Mahler's music. Simultaneously, the concept of symphonism, seen as a broader stream of orchestral music, found its best realisation in the symphonic poems of Richard Strauss or Alexander Scriabin and – in Polish music – in the series of symphonic poems by Karłowicz. In the case of Strauss, it should be added that his named symphonies (*Sinfonia domestica*, 1903 and *Alpensinfonie*, 1915) are in fact symphonic poems because 'neither of them [is] distinguished by either compression or rigour of thought', as observed by Stephen Walsh.⁷⁹ In the United Kingdom Edward Elgar represents the composers who followed the steps of late-Romantic ideas. A significant feature of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century nationalism in music (the so-called national schools) was the searching for inspiration in national folklore, notably by such composers as Bartók, Stravinsky, Vaughan Williams, Szymanowski and Janacek.

In Scandinavia both Sibelius and Nielsen continued successfully the concept of late-Romantic symphonism, using the technique of continuous development. However, 'something decidedly anti-Romantic in their temperaments, a certain objectivity of stance, prompted them to refine and compress to the point where the fusion of contrasting elements assumed much greater importance than the insistence on their individual or picturesque nature'.⁸⁰ Therefore, they avoided monumentalism both in building extended, time-spanned formal structures and in using the orchestral forces. They also used elements of national folk music or legends.

⁷⁹ Stephen Walsh, 'Symphony, III. 1: '1901-1918: Mahler, Sibelius, Nielsen'', *The New Grove*, vol. 24, p. 841.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 842.

In Polish music, post-Romanticism can be seen in Szymanowski's early works, such as the Concert Overture (1905) and the two first symphonies (1906, 1909–10), which reveal the strong influence of Strauss, Mahler and Max Reger.

Neo-Classicism

While post-Romanticism was a natural continuation of late-Romantic tendencies, neo-Classicism stood against them. The emphasis was put on objectivity of tone and emotion, as well as on the avoiding of extended orchestration and time-span in favour of a more concise, clearly structured formal outline. The models for neo-Classical symphonies were the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, although this ideal was soon extended and composers started to look for inspiration or for technical procedures to the Baroque or even earlier musical periods. Therefore, the symphonies written by composers associated with neo-Classicism (like Stravinsky or Hindemith) did not always fit traditional models. For example, Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920) and *Symphony of Psalms* (1930) create formal outlines not comparable to any of the Classical structures, while Hindemith's works, with their rich polyphonic texture and archaic melodic themes (often based on traditional German melodies) are perfect examples of the neo-Baroque tendency (Symphony 'Mathis der Mahler', 1934; Symphony in E flat, 1940). In fact, although neo-Classicism became one of the most important trends in the first half of the twentieth century and influenced many composers in different countries (its importance for Polish music will be analysed in the following chapter), only Prokofiev's Symphony 'Classical' (1916–17) seems to deserve in full the name by using Haydn's model as its basis.⁸¹

⁸¹ See Kennedy, 'Neo-classicism', *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*, p. 510.

Dodecaphony

The opposition between Stravinsky's neo-Classicism and Schoenberg's twelve-note music was strongly emphasised by Adorno in his *Philosophy of New Music*.⁸²

Nowadays the opposition seems to be much weaker and particularly Schoenberg appears to be more traditional in his musical thinking than Adorno would ever have admitted. The two chamber essays introduced by him into the symphony genre reveal his true interest in musical tradition. Schoenberg appreciated the power of sonata form, seen by him as an 'essentially ternary structure, divided into exposition, elaboration and recapitulation'. According to his view, the 'elaboration' has the character of a contrasting middle section and is devoted to 'the working out of the rich variety of thematic material 'exposed' in the first division'. He admits that the form's

greatest merit, which enabled it to hold a commanding position over a period of 150 years, is its extraordinary flexibility in accommodating the widest variety of musical ideas, long or short, many or few, active or passive, in almost any combination. The internal details may be subjected to almost any mutation without disturbing the aesthetic validity of the structure as a whole.⁸³

Schoenberg's admiration for sonata structure is present even in the pieces written in twelve-note technique, as he treats the main row and its permutations in a similar way as theme was treated in traditional sonata form. Straus observed this technique while analysing Schoenberg's String Quartet No. 3,⁸⁴ while Ballantine, in his brief analysis of the First Chamber Symphony, op. 9, indicates parallels between its formal outline and traditional symphonic structure.⁸⁵

⁸² Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, transl., ed. and with an introduction by Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

⁸³ Quoted in Straus, *Remaking the Past*, p. 121.

⁸⁴ Straus, *Remaking the Past*, pp. 121-132.

⁸⁵ Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, pp. 116-118; see also Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, p. 320.

Anton Webern was much stricter in using twelve-note material for creating his only Symphony, op. 21. His aphoristic technique allowed him to concentrate on purely structural processes, hence the size of the piece is limited to just two, very short movements. In his treatment of the main row there can be found analogies to traditional sonata procedures in the first movement, while the second is built as a set of short variations.⁸⁶ Therefore, despite his radical innovations in musical language, he still treated the formal structure in a traditional way, adapting new musical material to the framework of the 'old' sonata allegro and variations. However, it is difficult to situate his symphony in the tradition of the genre. Webern's concept was such an extreme in its way of compressing structural processes that it is aurally barely recognisable and only through detailed analysis can all the procedures used by the composer be revealed.

However, both Schoenberg and Webern proved that it was possible to use twelve-note technique in building traditional formal frameworks. It was even possible to combine dodecaphony with neo-Classicism in a more exposed way, as in the pieces written by the Polish composer, Józef Koffler (1896–1943).⁸⁷ As is commonly known, Webern's rigorous ideas influenced a large number of composers in the second half of the century and, although in the field of symphonic writing it was hardly possible to follow Webern's example in a similarly radical way, many of his followers still used twelve-note procedures for building the structure of their pieces. In Polish music the best and in fact most radical example is Górecki's First Symphony (1959) and his *Scontri* for orchestra (1961), both belonging to the most avantgarde pieces of the time (as will be discussed in Chapter Three).

⁸⁶ See the analysis made by Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, pp. 194-201.

⁸⁷ See Chapter Two, pp. 83-86.

The symphony as a public statement

As suggested by Michael Kennedy, ‘there is more to a symphony than its title. It implies an attitude of mind, a certain mental approach by the composer [...]’.⁸⁸ This is a very important remark because for a large number of composers in the twentieth century the symphony remained a genre of very special significance, treated as an important statement of significant ‘weight’. This implies a large-scale formal outline, necessary for developing and transforming thematic ideas in a way that can reach the listener. Therefore, it means that the symphony should create some kind of dramaturgy understandable to the audience. This meaning of the symphony is emphasised by Ivashkin, who observed that

[...] the symphony cannot exist as just a musical composition, but becomes a sort of ‘meta-symphony’ and is therefore deprived of any basis as it were, outgrowing its own logical framework. All the composers are actually ‘opening’ the symphony to the world, destroying its seemingly unshakeable foundations, demolishing them in any case conventional boundaries between the music which exists primordially in Nature and what for many centuries was usually called ‘the work of art’.⁸⁹

David Fanning pointed out that ‘high ethical aspirations in the symphony did survive the death of Mahler in 1911’⁹⁰ and many composers still treated the genre as the best place for expressing the deepest feelings of humanity, carrying a substantial weight of argument. According to Ivashkin, especially in the Russian tradition, ‘pure art’ or ‘art for art’ have simply not existed, and the musical work was always connected with some symbolic meaning, encoded in music for centuries of its existence.⁹¹ Hence, the great symphonies of Shostakovich or Schnittke follow this tradition.

⁸⁸ Kennedy, ‘Symphony’, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*, p. 718.

⁸⁹ Ivashkin, ‘Shostakovich and Schnittke’, p. 258.

⁹⁰ See David Fanning, *Nielsen Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 8.

⁹¹ Ivashkin, ‘Shostakovich and Schnittke’, p. 269.

A similar ideological attitude is also represented in Polish music, in works such as Panufnik's *Sinfonia Sacra* (1963) and *Sinfonia Votiva* (1981), Penderecki's Second Symphony 'Christmas' (1980), Krzysztof Meyer's Sixth Symphony 'Polish' (1982) and even Lutosławski's Third Symphony (1983).⁹² The important role of the symphony in Polish music of the twentieth century was also stressed by Mieczysław Tomaszewski in his essay devoted to the Polish symphony in the years 1944–94.⁹³ According to him, in the twentieth century in Poland, and especially after the Second World War, the symphony became an important and representative genre because 'if one talks about Lutosławski's Third, Palester's Fifth, Penderecki's Second, about Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* or Panufnik's *Sinfonia Sacra*, it is clear that it concerns pieces of particular weight and significance'.⁹⁴

Spirituality and the vocal symphony

After Beethoven's Ninth the vocal symphony found itself a major place in symphonic music. Very often by adding text and voices the composer wanted to emphasise the very special atmosphere of a piece or its extramusical meaning. In the twentieth century, the tradition of the vocal symphony was taken up and developed by composers with various stylistic attitudes. What is important is that some symphonies created a very intense expressive power, although in their formal structures they hardly fitted into the tradition of the genre.

⁹² See Chapter Four, pp. 282–292.

⁹³ Mieczysław Tomaszewski, 'Sonorystyczna ekspresywność i alegoryczny symbolizm: symfonia polska 1944–1994', *Muzyka polska 1945–95*, eds. Krzysztof Droba, Teresa Malecka and Krzysztof Sz wajgier (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 1996), pp. 13–40.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Significantly, their expressive intensity was usually connected with some kind of spiritualism, whether of Christian provenance or influenced by other (usually Eastern) religion. For example, Eastern spirituality is present in Szymanowski's Third Symphony (1916), based on a thirteenth-century Persian poem and evoking the atmosphere of Persia. Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, referring to the Orthodox Church tradition, is renowned as a masterpiece *sui generis* (it does not follow any symphonic outline and is fully choral), as is Messiaen's later and more massive *Turangalila-symphonie* (1946–48), connected with India and the Far East not only by ideology but in its musical material. Messiaen's masterpiece is a work even harder to place in the history of the symphony, as it lacks any 'dialectical properties one instinctively associates with the genre, though [it is] by no means without development, thematic extension or indeed drama'.⁹⁵ On the same line of atypical symphonies, spiritual in character and of a very high expressive power, enriched by adding the human voice to orchestral forces, could be placed Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*, referring to the Polish Catholic tradition, particularly to the cult of the Virgin Mary.⁹⁶

New tonality

Górecki's Third Symphony brings to the discussion the aspect of new tonality (with new modality included), which became an important feature of music from the middle of the 1970s. This was connected with the rebirth of traditional orchestral genres, including the symphony. Thus, it should be remembered that for several decades (especially after 1945 until the 1970s) the symphony was seen as an old-fashioned

⁹⁵ Walsh, 'Symphony, III. 3: 'Stravinsky; France after 1930'', *The New Grove*, p. 843.

⁹⁶ See Chapter Four, pp. 271–281.

genre, associated almost exclusively with composers of more or less neo-Classical orientation or post-Romantic tendencies, such as Vaughan Williams. Paul Griffiths observes that already in the 1970s ‘composers began to see it again as a field of adventure, perhaps because of a renewed interest in long-range harmonic, if not necessarily diatonic, processes’.⁹⁷ His view is shared by Charles Wilson, who sees the turn to the symphony in the 1970s and 80s as ‘one of the most significant developments’, especially considering that the genre was taken up by a number of composers ‘hitherto identified with the avant-garde’.⁹⁸ Some of them started searching for new means of expression by reviving neo-Romantic ideas or re-establishing quasi-tonal harmony, which could generally be called new tonality. This was often connected with trying to rebuild or recreate large-scale closed form, refreshed by the experiences of the period of musical avantgarde and sound experiments of the 1950s and 1960s. In Polish music this shift was noticed around the middle of the 1970s and Górecki’s Third Symphony is one of the best examples.⁹⁹

Formal models

In the twentieth century the symphony can be still understood (with some exceptions) as a large-scale piece for orchestra with a clear line of development creating some kind of musical dramaturgy, starting with main idea(s) exposed at the beginning and through various transformations and developmental work brought to the final stage. The piece may be goal-directed or recapitulative and has to carry some magnitude and weight of

⁹⁷ Paul Griffiths, ‘Symphony’, *Thames and Hudson Encyclopaedia of 20th Century Music* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), p. 179.

⁹⁸ Charles Wilson, ‘Symphony, III. 11: ‘The survival of the symphony’’, *The New Grove*, vol. 24, p. 847.

⁹⁹ See Chapter Four, pp. 251-252.

argument. Usually, the symphony refers somehow to the structure of sonata form, the importance of which was emphasised by Rosen:

The point about sonata form was not that there was anything special about it as a surface pattern, but that it presented a kind of tonal drama. [...] the principle of recapitulation as resolution may be considered the most fundamental and radical innovation of sonata style.¹⁰⁰

However, after the decay of the tonal system, the role of the recapitulation became one of the main dilemmas to solve in the structure of the sonata allegro.

Ballantine observes that this element was often simply omitted or appeared only partly, as in the finale of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony (1937), where the second subject group is avoided (in fact, the concept of incomplete recapitulation was used occasionally even in Classical sonatas). Sometimes, instead of a recapitulation, the composer introduced a coda, completely different in character, as in Honegger's *Symphonie liturgique* (1946), where, in the last movement after the climax, all the accumulated energy finds resolution in the apotheosis of a hymnal, slow epilogue.

These types of solutions, although occasionally used by composers in the previous century, show that in the twentieth century composers stopped treating sonata structure very strictly and preferred to follow dramatic or symbolic expression, individual for each particular work. Adding also the lack of tonal need to go back to the tonic (which was the main role of the Classical recapitulation) it was logical that, after achieving dramatic climax in the development, the simple recapitulation of main ideas from the exposition could only distract from the drama of the whole movement. Hence, it was better to resolve an accumulated tension in another way. Therefore, the role of the epilogue seems to rise in importance in post-tonal symphonies. It is possible to find

¹⁰⁰ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, p. 278.

them not only in works by Honegger or Vaughan Williams but also in much later pieces, such as Lutoslawski's Third Symphony.

It should be also stressed that, in the twentieth century and especially in one-movement symphonies, the concept of the symphony as a multi-movement structure and the sonata allegro with its three main parts (exposition, development and recapitulation) were often mixed into one, hence the finale was equal to the recapitulation. The 'principle of recapitulation as resolution'¹⁰¹ then was very clear and remained valid as an architectural model also for pieces written with innovative techniques, as may be observed in the strongly recapitulative character of Serocki's sonoristic symphonic works, *Episodes* and *Symphonic Frescoes*.¹⁰² Moreover, this principle seems to be the most important in the second half of the twentieth century for that symphonic music which is written in a purely atonal musical language. This is confirmed by Tomaszewski, who, in conversation with Penderecki, indicated the principle of recapitulation as one which has survived to the present day and is also used in Penderecki's music.¹⁰³

According to tradition, the symphony should also include the principle of integration, whereby 'each element has implications that are to be fully explored and realized in the context of the whole, which is greater than the sum of the parts'.¹⁰⁴ During Classicism the integration should first deal with tonal structure, while Beethoven started developing the process of thematic integration, which influenced the structure of the symphony and helped to create its inner drama. This process was

¹⁰¹ Rosen, see the quotation on p. 38 in this Chapter.

¹⁰² See Chapter Three, pp. 155-164.

¹⁰³ Mieczysław Tomaszewski, *Krzysztof Penderecki. Rozmowy lusławickie*, vol. 1 (Olszanica: Wydawnictwo Bosz, 2005), p. 137.

¹⁰⁴ Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, pp. 20-21.

developed by later generations and was still alive in the twentieth century, as may be confirmed by Lutosławski's opinion that each symphonic work (hence not only symphony) should be 'properly shaped into a process with a perceptible *akcja* ['action']'. By 'action' the composer understood 'a purely musical 'plot' – not what is described as programme music [...]. That is to say, a chain of interrelated musical events'.¹⁰⁵ The 'plot' implies then the specific, developing character of the piece, which is strictly connected with using developmental process, based on the transformations of thematic material presented in the first stage of the piece (exposition). What is also important is that the orchestral texture is treated as one of the main devices in building the musical form. This feature played a special role particularly in the second half of the twentieth century when, after the collapse of the tonal system, both texture and sound colours started to play the main role in creating the formal structure of symphonic pieces, as in Polish sonorism.

The principle of dualism

Rosen observed that in non-tonal sonata forms the tonal polarization and resolution disappeared completely, therefore 'what remains is the thematic structure along with contrasting textures – one contrast between the relative simplicity of the outer section and the more intense center, and another within the exposition to distinguish first and second themes'.¹⁰⁶ Ballantine went even further in searching for different kinds of procedures, which could help to create the dualistic opposition necessary for symphonic

¹⁰⁵ Irina Nikolska, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski*, transl. Valeri Yerokhin (Stockholm: Melos, 1994), p. 97. The thorough analysis of Lutosławski's concept of 'action' and narrativity was given by Nicholas Reyland in his '*Akcja*' and Narrativity in the Music of Witold Lutosławski, PhD thesis, Cardiff University of Wales, 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, p. 330.

structure. He indicated several possibilities for building dialectical tension, which could facilitate the principle of dualism even in works not using sonata structure in their formal outline. In general, dualism can be achieved by using opposing tonalities, themes or rhythmic characters, within the course of a single movement as well as over a multi-movement structure. In non-tonal works the most popular methods to create symphonic tensions through contrast, as analysed by Ballantine, are, in summary:¹⁰⁷

- the conflict developed between contrapuntal lines;
- the contrast between instrumental groups;
- the contrast between solo instrument and the orchestra or orchestral groups;
- the contrast between movements or between sections of the whole work;
- the contrast between two (or more) groups of divided orchestra (e.g. symphonies for two orchestras);
- the contrast between form and texture;
- the contrast between form and content;
- the contrast between movement and stasis;
- the contrast between symmetry and asymmetry.

Each of these oppositions is able to create tension which can be developed in a symphonic way. They all concern orchestral music, as in the vocal symphonies a tension and sense of drama is often determined by the literary text. When including a solo instrument, on the other hand, the piece takes on the character of a concerto to some extent, so it is not so interesting from the point of view of symphonic structure. Thus, a slightly different situation occurs when the composer decides to use selected groups of the orchestra and create a symphonic piece basing its structure on the

¹⁰⁷ Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*.

opposition of chosen instrumental forces. This can be the opposition between two separate string orchestras, as in Tippett's *Concerto for Double String Orchestra* (1939) or between more contrasted groups, as in Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936). In Polish music this tradition is present in such works as Panufnik's *Sinfonia Rustica* for two string orchestras and winds (1948) and, over a decade later, in Górecki's First Symphony, Penderecki's *Emanations* (1959) and *Anaklasis* (1960), and Serocki's *Episodes*, all for percussion and strings. The juxtaposition of such different instrumental groups as strings and percussion may be a good starting point for creating purely symphonic discourse (whether it is realised successfully or not is a different matter, as will be discussed in Chapter Three).

The contrast between orchestral groups can be used on different levels of composition and especially in the second half of the twentieth century, in purely atonal harmonic structures, this element became one of the most important features in creating a work's tensions and drama. This means that even in completely new musical languages and sound systems the principle of dualism remained alive as the most important feature of symphonic structure.

* * *

In the twentieth century most composers, when writing a symphony, have taken into consideration the long and rich tradition of the genre. At the end of the century generic titles sometimes have seemed to be treated so broadly and individually that 'the designation of symphony is often loosely applied; and, with the occasional pieces, the risk as always is that they will fail to outline their immediate purpose'.¹⁰⁸ Therefore,

¹⁰⁸ Wilson, 'Symphony, III. 11: 'The survival of the symphony'', *The New Grove*, vol. 24, p. 848.

whether the composer wanted to refer to symphonic tradition, to disagree with it, or to experiment by trying to achieve some new results, is a matter of analysis. However, there is the fact that twentieth-century composers were able to overcome musical tradition and create symphonies. How Polish composers dealt with the genre and how they developed it during the century, using their individual ideas and innovations, will be examined in the following chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

The symphonic tradition in Polish music before 1956

The genre of the symphony appeared in Polish music in the middle of the eighteenth century, therefore more or less at the same time as in the other European countries. Its development, however, was deeply influenced by its socio-political contexts. Both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries belong to the most difficult periods in the history of Poland. In 1795, after many years of political decline, the country lost its independence and its territory was partitioned by the three neighbouring powers: Russia, Prussia and Austria. Poland disappeared from the political map of Europe for more than a hundred years, until the country regained its independence in 1918.¹

It is scarcely surprising that the partitioning of Poland impeded the development of cultural life and musical creativity. In the Prussian and Russian zones especially, any kind of patriotic activity, undertaken either by individuals or by institutions, was subjected to strong repression. According to the policy of Russification and Germanization, the cultivation of Polish language and culture was prohibited. Only in the southern zone of the country, subject to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, were citizens given more freedom, as the policy of Vienna about incorporated lands was not as strict as those of Moscow and Berlin. However, in all three zones there was a strong belief among Poles that, if the Polish nation was to survive and regain independence in the future, a great amount of work should be

¹ For more information about the history of Poland see Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

devoted to the development of education and culture. Moreover, artists soon discovered that, through music or literature of a national character, they could more easily reach people's hearts and deepen their patriotic feelings with some hope that 'Poland has not yet perished...'.² Therefore, the majority of orchestral music during the period of partition reveals some Polish elements, mostly connected with using a national folk music and dances.

It has to be acknowledged that many Polish scores from both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not survive. The numerous uprisings and wars which took place in the country caused the irreversible loss of many musical sources. What makes the situation even more dramatic is the fact that many scores discovered and analysed in the 1920s and 1930s were again lost in the turmoil of the Second World War. However, what did survive confirms not only that European tendencies had filtered into the Polish lands, but also that Polish music soon presented its individual face, filled with national elements. The same feature can also be seen in early Polish symphonies.

2.1. The Classical and early Romantic symphony: c. 1750 – c. 1835

The beginnings of the symphony

As observed by John W. Barker, 'in the seventeenth century, Poland was a land essentially peripheral to the mainstream of European cultural life, its music tending to reflect the currents of major centers (especially in Italy) at a certain time-lag'.³ This

² From the Polish National Anthem, with words by general Józef Wybicki and the anonymous melody of a mazurka, based probably on a folk tune, written in 1797 in the Polish legions camped in Italy.

³ John W. Barker, CD booklet for *Symfonie polskie. Polish Symphonies*, PRO MUSICA Camerata, PMC 002.

opinion concerns also the eighteenth century, although the musical centres moved from Italy to Germany and Austria (Mannheim and Vienna), hence closer to the Polish borders and 'more immediately available for absorption'.⁴ The absorption also included symphonies.

As in other European countries, there were two main territories for cultivating orchestral music in Poland: the court and the church. Until losing its independence in 1795, Poland was a monarchy with its royal court in Warsaw, where the cultural and musical life was concentrated. It was also the place where the first Polish symphonies were composed and performed as both operatic overtures and interludes, as well as so-called 'court symphonies'⁵ written especially for the royal court instrumental ensemble. Besides the royal court in Warsaw, the courts of the main Polish aristocratic families were also places active in keeping cultural life on a high artistic level. On the other hand, the role of the Catholic Church cannot be overestimated not only in developing symphonic music but also in preserving many priceless musical sources. The church ensembles performed not only religious but also secular music, which was allowed by the church authorities. Their repertory soon included symphonies, both foreign and those composed by local composers, usually members of the orchestra.

The records preserved in court as well as church and monastic libraries confirm that the symphony as a genre was soon adopted by musicians and composers around Poland.⁶ The composers were familiar with works written in the main European centres and it is worth noting that Western Poland (the Wielkopolska region around

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The term was used by Tadeusz Strumiłło and Alina Nowak-Romanowicz in their writings on Polish Classicism, see: Strumiłło 'Do dziejów symfonii polskiej', *Muzyka*, No.5-6, 1953, pp. 26-45; Nowak-Romanowicz, *Klasycyzm 1750-1830* (Warsaw: Sutkowski Edition, 1995).

⁶For more details about the beginnings of the symphony in Poland see Strumiłło, 'Do dziejów symfonii polskiej' and Nowak-Romanowicz, *Klasycyzm*.

Poznań) maintained good contact with Mannheim and was also acquainted with the North German and French symphony, while the chapels from Southern Poland (the Małopolska region around Kraków) were mostly influenced by the old Viennese school. This shows the natural cultural links between the neighbouring countries, although it should be added that both regions were very well acquainted with music of the great Viennese masters – Haydn and Mozart. Kraków especially, since the end of the eighteenth century a part of the Habsburg monarchy, had good contact with Vienna and regularly received new musical scores directly from the Austrian capital. Polish composers soon started writing their own works in the genre.

The earliest Polish symphonies, dating from the middle of the eighteenth century (the first Polish *Symphonia* by Jacek Szczurowski is from c. 1750), are close to the late-Baroque Italian sinfonia with its tripartite formal model, simple orchestration (strings only), short time-span (c. 10 minutes) and not yet clear sonata allegro principle. The next generation of composers, active in the late 1770s and 1780s (Jan Engel, Jakub Gołębek and Bazyli Bohdanowicz, among others), presented more developed ideas, both in terms of formal construction and in symphonic thinking. Their works are longer, often with four movements (Bohdanowicz's Symphony in D, written before 1780, has even five movements, with two dances – Menuetto and Polonese, see Ex. 2.1) and a more mature allegro sonata structure in the first. They generally reflect the style of early Haydn, although they lack developmental processes: the development is usually very short and based on thematic repetitions and limited harmonic modulations of the main themes.

Ex. 2.1 Bohdanowicz, Symphony D, fourth movement, opening

IV

Polonese

The musical score is for the opening of the fourth movement of Bohdanowicz's Symphony D. It is a Polonese in D major, 3/4 time. The instrumentation includes Oboe I & II, Horns I & II (in F), Violins I & II, Viola, and Bass. The score begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Oboe I part features a trill in the first measure. The strings play a steady eighth-note pattern. The woodwinds enter in the second measure. The score is divided into two systems by a double bar line with repeat dots.

The principle of symphonic dualism was best realised in the works of the latest generation of Polish Classical composers, active in the late 1780s and at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, such as Jan Wański (c. 1760 – post 1821) and Wojciech Dankowski (c. 1760 – post 1836). Their symphonies represent the four-movement formal outline with the sonata allegro at the beginning (Ex. 2.2 shows the

opening of Dankowski's Symphony D), followed by a lyrical slow movement and a minuet, finishing with a rondo finale.

Ex. 2.2 Dankowski, Symphony D, first movement, opening

Allegro molto WOJCIECH DANKOWSKI
opracował
JAN KRENZ

$\text{♩} = 72-76$
a2

ff ben marcato

Flauti I
Flauti II
Oboli I
Oboli II
Fagotti I
Fagotti II
Corati (D) I
Corati (D) II
Violini I
Violini II
Violi
Violoncelli e Contrabbassi

They last more than 20 minutes and their orchestration includes winds, which play an important role in creating dualistic contrast of themes and movements.

They remain, however, rather simplistic, especially in the developmental work of the musical material, as well as in the formal structure of the movements.

Therefore, the Polish symphonies of the eighteenth century can be valued more for their melodic invention than for their technical or formal quality. What is also worth noting is the fact that the genre soon showed its national face, with the forms of national dances included in the symphonic structure (mostly the polonaise, present in

almost every surviving symphony), with melodic lines based on folk or popular songs and with a specifically Polish lyricism, of a slightly melancholic and nostalgic character, as may be seen in the second movement of Karol Pietrowski's Symphony D, composed c. 1790 (Ex. 2.3). These elements provided a firm basis for the later evolution of Polish symphonic music.

Ex. 2.3 Pietrowski, Symphony D, second movement, opening

II

Andante ma non troppo

Flauti

Corn
in Fa

Violini
I
II

Alto viol
e

Bassi

5

10

PWM-5409

Romantic tendencies and the rise of nationalism

The Romantic ideas of national art found a breeding ground among those nations who had been striving against political suppressors because they helped to cultivate national traditions by reminding the national audience of the best and most important events from their history and culture. This also concerns Polish music. As observed by Henryk Swolkień:

In the special political situation that the Polish nation found itself in the 19th century, none of the Polish composers had any doubt that he should, first and foremost, compose music that was Polish in form and content.⁷

Although Swolkień's rhetoric might seem to fit more to the aesthetic of the much later socialist realism⁸ than to the context of Polish music in the nineteenth century, he was quite right. Polish art in the nineteenth century indeed concentrated on cultivating a patriotic tradition and on expressing national feelings. The political history of the century is marked by the constant struggles of Poles against their occupants, the most important of which were the Napoleonic wars, the November Uprising (1830–31) and the January Uprising (1863–64), besides several on a more local scale. It is therefore scarcely surprising that composers, as well as writers and painters, reflected this situation in their works, both created in Poland or in exile. This is evident in the music of Chopin who left his native country just before the November Uprising and was not allowed to return, as well as in the poetry and dramas of Romantic writers: Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), Juliusz Słowacki (1809–49), Zygmunt Krasiński (1812–59) and Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821–83), who also were political emigrants. They all praised the beauty, history and folk tradition of Poland in their works.

⁷ Henryk Swolkień, 'From Chopin to Szymanowski', *An Outline History of Polish Music*, ed. Tadeusz Ochlewski (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1979), p. 91.

⁸ See pp. 102–103.

For those artists who remained in the country it was important to create works which could reach the large audience of their native compatriots, to strengthen their patriotic feelings and the belief that the country would regain its independence. That was the reason why for example Stanisław Moniuszko (1819–72) was so keen to develop the idea not only of a national opera but, even more, the concept of so-called ‘home songbooks’, the collections of songs to be sung in every Polish home. Besides songs, religious music was also popular, as the Catholic Church played a crucial role in keeping the national tradition alive. Therefore, most Polish creative artists, as the nineteenth century progressed, decided to use their talent to serve their country, hence to fill their works with deeply patriotic character. This may be observed not only in music but also in literature, marked in the later decades of the century by the historical novels of the Nobel prize-winner Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916), and in painting, with the great historical frescoes of Jan Matejko (1838–93). Therefore, the difficult political situation of the country caused nationalism to become an important feature of Polish art and music throughout the nineteenth century. This also affected instrumental music, including the symphony, even if composers preferred genres with text as more directly appealing to the audience and more suitable for immediate performance.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the genre of the symphony was developed in the music of Józef Elsner (1769–1854) and Karol Kurpiński (1785–1857). Elsner’s symphonic style, according to Alina Nowak-Romanowicz, was purely Classical, although ‘the lack of talent did not let him use all the achievements of the Viennese classics’.⁹ Of his eight symphonies, only the Symphony in C Major (1805) survived and it confirms that he fully absorbed the symphonic principles of Mozart,

⁹ Nowak-Romanowicz, *Klasycyzm 1750-1830*, pp. 54-55.

maintaining also the influence of Polish folk tradition. The symphony is Classically constructed, with the Minuet based on a mazurka rhythm and the Rondo on a krakowiak dance (Ex. 2.4).¹⁰

Ex. 2.4 Elsner, Symphony C, fourth movement, krakowiak theme of the rondo



Kurpiński, on the other hand, is the author of the first Polish programmatic symphony, representing more advanced Romantic aesthetics. The piece, initially entitled *Bitwa pod Mołajskiem* (The Mołajsk Battle) was written before 1812 to commemorate one of Napoleon's battles. But after the fall of Napoleon the composer changed the title to *Wielka symfonia bitwę wyrażająca* (Great Symphony Describing the Battle). According to the programme which Kurpiński added to the score, it represents the day of the battle: the music is full of illustrative effects and ends with a triumphal march. The symphony is in one movement, divided into four large sections.

The symphonies of both Elsner and Kurpiński, although still rooted in Classicism more than representing truly Romantic ideas, can be regarded as reflections of the two stylistic trends which in the previous chapter were described as the

¹⁰ Stefan Śledziński, 'Zarys dziejów symfonii polskiej w XIX wieku', *Z dziejów polskiej kultury muzycznej*, vol. 2, ed. Elżbieta Dziębowska (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1966), pp. 414-415.

Classical and Romantic lines in the development of the nineteenth-century symphony.¹¹ From this perspective, Elsner's piece would indicate the 'Classical' line, while Kurpiński's programmatic symphony fits the 'Romantic' trend. It should be added, however, that in the later development of symphonic music in Poland this differentiation is not as clear, and it was rather the Romantic tendency which appeared to be more influential (particularly in the later part of the century), as will be discussed below.

Elsner's symphonic writing was continued by his pupil, Ignacy Dobrzyński (1807–67). He is the author of two symphonies, in B Major Op. 11 (1829) and in C minor 'Characteristic' Op. 15 (1834). His symphonic style confirms the accommodation of the mature Classical style, with some traces of Romanticism. The latter may be seen in the formal outline of the First Symphony, with a slow introduction to the first movement, the minuet placed second and the slow movement third. There are four movements in the Second Symphony. Dobrzyński also followed the already existing Polish symphonic tradition, based on national folklore (especially in his Second Symphony, using the rhythms of national dances), although now adapted to the principles of the mature Classical and early Romantic style, echoing the symphonies of Beethoven, particularly in the type of developmental processes and orchestration. Dobrzyński's symphonic talent was soon thwarted because of the lack of professional orchestras. That was the reason why Dobrzyński wrote no more symphonies and concentrated instead on chamber and piano music, songs and operas. Dobrzyński's symphonies, however, had closed the first stage of the genre's development in Polish music, at the same time taking it into the era of Romanticism.

¹¹ See Chapter One, pp. 12-13.

The symphonic crisis, which occurred in Europe after Beethoven's death¹² was in Polish music deepened by the problem with orchestras (as will be discussed below). This caused a large gap in developing the genre in Poland; after Dobrzyński's Second Symphony, premiered in 1836, the next stage came only in the late 1870s, with the works of Władysław Żeleński (1837–1921) and Zygmunt Noskowski (1846–1909). The one exception remains the concert overture *Bajka* (A Fairy Tale), composed in 1847–48 by Moniuszko, the only symphonic piece by the father of Polish opera, as he is usually entitled.¹³

While writing about Polish music in the first half of the nineteenth century, it is not possible to forget about Chopin. Although he did not write symphonies, his importance and impact on the later generations of Polish composers is undeniable, particularly in the aspect connected with the national character in music. In many later discussions about what Polish music is or should be, the name of Chopin was like a lamp showing the path ahead.¹⁴ His genius was above all other musical creativity represented in works written by his Polish contemporaries, although it has to be admitted that what they were doing in Poland, as both composers and musical entrepreneurs (e.g. thanks to Elsner's initiative Beethoven's early symphonies were performed in Warsaw in 1805–06¹⁵), was of a great importance for Polish musical life. In terms of musical values, however, there is no question that Chopin overshadowed the rest of Polish music from the period but at the same time created the richest national tradition, which remained the main source of reference and inspiration for

¹² See Chapter One, pp. 9–11.

¹³ Moniuszko is the author of the two most important Polish Romantic operas, *Halka* (1857) and *The Haunted Manor* (1864), both filled with a strongly national flavour.

¹⁴ Cf. Szymanowski's writings on Chopin; *Szymanowski on Music. Selected Writings of Karol Szymanowski*, trans. and ed. Alistair Wightman (London: Toccata Press, 1992).

¹⁵ Alina Nowak-Romanowicz, 'Elsner', *Encyklopedia Muzyczna PWM 'efg'*, ed. Elżbieta Dziębowska (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1987), pp. 19–32.

many later composers. The Nationalism in Polish music, represented by using folk music and national dances, whether quoted directly or artistically transformed, became a constant feature of Polish music for over a hundred years, until the late 1950s when it was replaced by avantgarde techniques and ideas.¹⁶

2.2. Lack of orchestras and its effect on symphonic music

As was mentioned above, the main problem which caused the most serious delay in the development of Polish symphonic music throughout the nineteenth century was connected with the lack of professional orchestras in Poland. This was a constant struggle for several generations of Polish composers. As observed by Józef Chomiński,

[...] in the second half of the nineteenth century there were undertaken momentous initiatives in the field of organising musical societies, education, choirs, periodical press, publications, the book market, and scientific research. The contacts with foreign countries were then increasing, particularly for studying in Western Europe and visits of their instrumental ensembles here [...]. Local musicians tried to organise their own ensembles [...]. Only Teatr Wielki [The Grand Theatre] had a permanent symphonic orchestra at that time.¹⁷

But this one professional orchestra in Warsaw was so heavily programmed in the regular operatic performances that it was not able to give many symphonic concerts. They were organised rarely and only on special occasions.¹⁸ During the whole century many attempts were made to create other orchestral ensembles in Warsaw but each time, after just a few concerts, their activity was stopped by financial difficulties.

¹⁶ The tendency for using folk sources reappeared in the middle of the 1970s, and especially in the difficult political situation of the 1980s, when Poland witnessed the Martial Law (see Chapter Four).

¹⁷ Józef Chomiński and Krystyna Wilkowska-Chomińska, *Historia muzyki polskiej*, vol. 2 (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1996), p. 58.

¹⁸ As with Chopin's concert in Warsaw on March 17, 1830, where he premiered his *Piano Concerto in F minor*. The orchestra of the Grand Theatre was then conducted by Kurpiński; see: Swolkień, 'From Chopin to Szymanowski', p. 76.

These efforts, however, were of great importance, as even these irregular concerts brought to the Polish audiences several premieres of Polish pieces, as well as the performances of many foreign works, including those by Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn, and later in the century also by Brahms, Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Wagner and Richard Strauss.¹⁹ This activity eventually helped to fund the Warsaw Philharmonic as the musical institution with a professional orchestra. Its opening concert on 5th November 1901 marked a new era in Polish musical life and in the development of symphonic music, including new Polish scores.

That was the situation in Warsaw, which was the largest cultural centre in the occupied Polish lands; other Polish cities were in an even worse position. In Galicia, the southern zone of Poland, the general knowledge of music was limited to operetta, songs and other kind of entertainment music performed mostly by Austrian military bands.²⁰ Only in Lwów, which was the biggest city and with a higher artistic culture than Kraków at that time, was the situation with orchestral performances not too bad. In 1838 the Galician Music Society was founded there, with the aim of giving public concerts with its small orchestra, consisting mostly of amateur musicians. Between 1858 and 1884 they performed the symphonies of Beethoven (all except the Ninth), five by Haydn, some by Mozart, three by Mendelssohn (except the First and the Second), one of Dobrzyński's symphonies (unidentified), as well as many operatic overtures and Beethoven's concert overtures.²¹ A similar Music Society was founded

¹⁹ Most of these performances took place in Dolina Szwajcarska (Swiss Valley) in Warsaw, which was a park with a concert platform. This was an important concert stage in Warsaw, particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century. For more details see Hanna Pukińska-Szepietowska, 'Muzyka w Dolinie Szwajcarskiej', *Szkice o kulturze muzycznej XIX wieku*, ed. Zofia Chechlińska (Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1971), pp. 91-155.

²⁰ For more details about musical culture in nineteenth-century Galicia see Jolanta T. Pękacz, *Music in the Culture of Polish Galicia, 1772-1914* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002).

²¹ Ibid, p. 132.

in Kraków in 1857 but this was rather to fulfil the expectations and tastes of a not highly educated audience. Hence, their concert programmes presented a mixture of repertory, combining symphonic music with arias and songs. Even this activity was limited by the lack of both public support and professional musicians who could work in orchestral ensembles.

Poznań, the largest city of the western part of the country incorporated into Prussia, did not have any professional orchestra in the nineteenth century and the more ambitious symphonic repertory was performed there only by the foreign orchestras, mostly German. Among the guest ensembles giving concerts in Poznań were not only orchestras from Berlin, which was the closest city, but also from Meiningen (conducted by Hans von Bülow in 1885, and Max Reger in 1912), and even the orchestra of the Teatro della Scala (conducted by Pietro Mascagni in 1894 and 1899).²² They were mostly invited by Germans, while Polish society concentrated on cultivating Polish vocal and religious music, possible for performance by the large community of amateurs. It was important to keep Polish culture alive in the difficult time of Prussian suppression and the Polish artists were aware that their efforts were very important in raising patriotic feelings.

The constant lack of orchestras resulted in a situation where the majority of nineteenth-century Polish composers either wrote their symphonic works while staying abroad or composed them only for special occasions, such as composers' competitions or planned foreign performances. This situation was even named by the

²² Halina Lorkowska, 'Kultura muzyczna Poznania w latach 1870–1920', *Z dziejów kultury muzycznej Poznania*, ed. Andrzej Kępiński (Poznań: Ars Nova, 1996), pp. 35–45.

Polish musicologist Stefan Śledziński the ‘symphonic disease’,²³ affecting every Polish composer after he returned from abroad (usually after completing his studies).

Dobrzyński’s First Symphony, for example, was premiered in Warsaw in 1834 but was never performed there again during the composer’s lifetime. His Second Symphony was composed for a competition announced by the Friends of the Music Society in Vienna, where it won the Second Prize and was premiered in the Austrian capital in 1836.²⁴ Later that year it was performed in Warsaw and repeated in Berlin and Poznań but the next performance of the symphony in Warsaw did not take place until 1857. Moniuszko’s overture *Bajka* (A Fairy Tale) was written especially for a concert in St Petersburg, where it was premiered in 1849, while the Polish premiere of the piece did not take place (in the Swiss Valley in Warsaw) until twenty years later, in 1869. Żeleński’s overture *W Tatrach* (In the Tatra Mountains) was composed in 1870 in Paris and Noskowski’s overture *Morskie Oko* (The Eye of the Sea) was written in 1875 in Berlin. Noskowski wrote his two symphonies, in A Major (1874–75) and the ‘Elegiac’ (1875–79), during his studies in Berlin. The First Symphony was premiered in Berlin in 1875 and later that year performed in Warsaw, while the Second was premiered in Warsaw in 1880. In the 1880s and 1890s, Noskowski himself tried to organise some orchestral performances in Warsaw but, although he wrote his symphonic poem *Step* (The Steppe) in 1896, his Third Symphony was not composed until 1903, two years after the professional Warsaw Philharmonic orchestra was founded.

²³ Śledziński, ‘Zarys dziejów symfonii polskiej w XIX wieku’, p. 433.

²⁴ It is worth noting that at the same competition Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique* passed unnoticed; see Swolkień, ‘From Chopin to Szymanowski’, p. 92.

The problems with orchestral performances across the Polish lands meant that composers often resigned from their more ambitious attempts in favour of composing music which was more accessible to a broader audience and which could also support them in the difficult times of occupation (songs, chamber music, choral music, opera). Therefore, it is scarcely surprising that, in such circumstances, the development of symphonic music in Poland was rather slow and delayed in comparison to other European countries.

2.3. Late-Romantic symphonism in Polish music: c. 1870–1918

Jan Kott's opinion that 'the nineteenth century had started late in Poland, not earlier than after the January Uprising', is particularly accurate in the case of music. Only in the early 1870s in Warsaw and Lwów (Kraków was behind them for much longer) were there more serious attempts to recreate musical schools, publishing possibilities, and raise performing standards (especially in opera); also some singing and music societies were founded then.²⁵

In the field of symphonic music, the 1870s marked the beginning of a new era. After the years of stagnation, the last decades of the nineteenth century brought some animation into Polish music, marked by the appearance of works which can be linked with Germanic late-Romanticism. The turn of the century especially became a period where finally Polish music started not only to achieve a European level but also contributed with truly modern and original musical ideas, as confirmed particularly in music of Mieczysław Karłowicz (1876–1909) and Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937).

²⁵ Quoted in Teresa Chylińska, 'Młoda Polska w muzyce – mit czy rzeczywistość', *Muzyka polska a modernism*, ed. Jadwiga Ilnicka (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1981), p. 42.

The concert overture and symphonic poem

The first sign of more advanced musical thinking in nineteenth-century Polish music may be seen in the appearance of the typically Romantic symphonic genres, such as the concert overture and symphonic poem.

The first concert overture in Polish music is Moniuszko's already mentioned *Bajka* (A Fairy Tale). Its brilliant orchestration and vivid character, created by the clear thematic ideas and richness of melodic invention, made it a popular orchestral showpiece, which is still in the repertory of many Polish orchestras (Ex. 2.5 shows the opening theme of the piece). Moniuszko showed in this work his great skills in writing for the orchestra and he definitely would have been able to contribute significantly to the development of symphonic music in Poland had the lack of orchestras not stopped him from continuing this line. That is also the reason why the concert overtures did not appear again in Polish music for more than two decades.

Ex. 2.5 Moniuszko, *Bajka*, opening theme

The image shows a musical score for the opening theme of Moniuszko's *Bajka*. The score is written for five parts: Violini I, Violini II, Violo, Violoncelli, and Contrabassi. The time signature is 4/4, and the tempo is Moderato, with a metronome marking of 100-120. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. The Violini I part starts with a melodic line, while the other parts provide harmonic support. The Violoncelli and Contrabassi parts are written in the bass clef. The score is presented in a standard musical notation format with staves and notes.

The two Polish concert overtures written in the 1870s both refer to the landscapes of the Tatra Mountains, the region which was soon to influence many Polish creative artists, composers, writers, poets and painters. These are Żeleński's *W Tatrach* (In the Tatra Mountains, 1870) and Noskowski's *Morskie Oko* (*The Eye of the Sea*, 1875), dedicated to the famous Tatra lake. Żeleński's overture refers to Moniuszko with its operatic type of melody (Żeleński composed several operas), with many solo phrases for oboe and clarinet, as well as with its orchestration and the delicate national flavour of the musical material. However, Żeleński's piece lacks the clarity of formal construction as well as the freshness and melodic beauty of Moniuszko's *Bajka*. Despite the title, Żeleński was not much inspired by the authentic folk music of the mountaineers but tried to evoke the picture of the mountains, with their pastoral calm and beauty on one hand, and of a dramatic storm (the fugue in the second part of the piece) on the other. The only reference to the folk music of the region are the repeated chords at the opening of the second subject, which echo the performance practice of the local folk bands (Ex. 2.6). But, in fact, as in Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture* (1833), a reference to the specific geographical place is made mostly by the title.

The connection between these pieces is not made idly as Żeleński followed the Mendelssohnian model, both in the formal aspect (an allegro sonata with slow introduction) and in the general aesthetic idea. It may be seen to be very conservative to follow the Mendelssohn's example in the 1870s, but the dependence on early Romantic music indeed lasted a very long time in Polish music.

Ex. 2.6 Żeleński, *W Tatrach*, second subject

The musical score is for the second subject of 'W Tatrach' by Żeleński. It is a full orchestral score with parts for Flute I, Oboe I, Clarinet I, Flute II, Cor Anglais, Trombone, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The music is in 3/4 time and features a melodic theme in the woodwinds and strings, with a prominent solo in the Flute I part. The score is marked with 'p dolce' and 'dolce' throughout. A circled '4' is placed above the Flute I staff and below the Double Bass staff.

As observed by Swolkień:

Polish symphonic music composers all took Mendelssohn as their example, which in the second half of the 19th century testified to considerable backwardness. The developments in the domain of technique, contributions made by Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner, did not attract the attention of Polish composers. Besides, the work of these great composers was then considered to be extremely modernistic, and it was accepted slowly even in Western Europe.²⁶

Swolkień's view, however, might be contested as the pieces composed from the late 1870s did confirm that some late-Romantic ideas filtered into the Polish lands, replacing the Mendelssohnian model. For example, Żeleński's way of using the solo

²⁶ Swolkień, *From Chopin to Szymanowski*, p. 92.

motifs on oboe and clarinet in his overture, despite the generally conservative style of the piece, is reminiscent of the leitmotif technique developed by Liszt and Wagner.

Compared to Żeleński, Noskowski presented a more advanced musical language, fully reflecting the late-Romantic tendencies. Thanks to his studies in Berlin (1872–75) and contacts with musical life in Germany (he spent four years in Constanza, 1876–80, and also visited Liszt in Weimar) he managed to abandon the Mendelssohnian model in favour of more recent trends. In his overture *Morskie Oko* he tried to evoke the beauty of the Polish mountains, drawing a musical picture of the Tatra lake he remembered from his visits to that part of the country. In this piece, the composer confirmed his talent for orchestration, presented also in his two symphonies written at the same period (they will be discussed later).

The genre of concert overture, already old-fashioned in the late-nineteenth century, reappeared at the beginning of the twentieth century in the music of Szymanowski. His Concert Overture in E Major (1905) refers to Richard Strauss's symphonic poems in both character and musical style. It was soon overshadowed by Szymanowski's later orchestral pieces, although it still remains alive, presenting a high level of orchestral writing and the melodic inventiveness of a young composer.

The symphonic poem appeared in Polish music very late, as the first work in the genre is Noskowski's *Step* (The Steppe) composed in 1896. The inspiration for the piece came this time from literature, as it refers to the first part of Sienkiewicz's *Trylogia* (The Trilogy), the novel *Ogniem i mieczem* (With Fire and Sword), describing the fights between Poles and Ukrainian Cossacks in the seventeenth

century.²⁷ The composer published in the score a poetic programme referring to the atmosphere of Sienkiewicz's book and praising the beauty of the Ukrainian steppe.²⁸ According to the principles of the genre, the musical material follows the programme and is marked on the one hand by long-breathing lyrical phrases, referring to the landscape of the Ukrainian steppes, as in the opening theme (Ex. 2.7), and on the other by dramatic music evoking a battle.

Ex. 2.7 Noskowski, *Step*, opening theme of the steppes

The image shows a page from a musical score for Z. Noskowski's Op. 66. The title at the top right is 'Z. NOSKOWSKI op. 66'. The tempo marking at the top left is 'Andante con moto (Andante tranquillo) A so - so'. The score is for a large orchestra, with parts for Flute, Flute piccolo, Oboe, Clarinet in B, Bassoon, Cor Anglais, Trumpet in B, Trombone, Tuba, Horn in E-flat, Saxophone, Flute, Arpa, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The score shows the first few measures of the piece, with various instruments playing in harmony. The bottom of the page has the tempo marking 'Andante con moto'.

²⁷ The choice of Sienkiewicz's popular novel corresponds with the idea of composing patriotic works, which were intended to remind the audience of the past times of glory and to strengthen their national feelings.

²⁸ 'Magnificent steppes, I greet you with a song! In your vast expanses the rustle of the hussars' wings could be heard and hoof-beats of the cavalry, the pipe of a shepherd boy and a melancholy Cossack song accompanied on theorbos and tabors, and war-cries and the sounds of crossed swords. The fights

One of the main themes is the magnificent polonaise (Ex. 2.8) which, together with echoes of folk melodies elsewhere, assured the piece a deeply national character corresponding both with the atmosphere of Sienkiewicz's book and with the atmosphere of Moniuszko's opera *The Haunted Manor*.

Ex. 2.8 Noskowski, *Step*, Polish theme: the polonaise (Fig. E)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The top system contains measures 1 through 4, with a circled 'E' above the fifth measure. The bottom system contains measures 5 through 8. The score is written for a large orchestra, including parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba, Snare Drum, Cymbals, and Bass Drum. There are also vocal parts for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The music is in 3/4 time and features a variety of musical notations, including treble and bass clefs, key signatures, and various musical symbols.

and weary struggle are over. The warriors lie in their graves. And only you, great steppes, remain eternally beautiful and calm.' Quoted in Swolkień, *From Chopin to Szymanowski*, p. 91.

The piece soon became one of the most popular Polish symphonic works. Due to its lively musical themes, filled with national flavour, as well as its brilliant orchestration and the precision of its formal structure (an extended sonata allegro), *Step* can be placed alongside other Slavonic symphonic poems praising national beauty and tradition, such as those written by Smetana, Borodin or Mussorgsky. Noskowski's role in late-Romantic Polish music and musical life was significant, hence in every sense he may be seen as 'a liaison patrol between the époque of Moniuszko and that of musical Young Poland', as pointed out by Jerzy Młodziejowski in 1936.²⁹

The genre of the symphonic poem was in Polish music best developed by Karłowicz, the composer who not only assimilated recent Western trends in his own music but also had a great and original talent. His music confirms that he was well acquainted with the most recent musical achievements of late-Romantic European music, including the symphonic poems of Strauss and the music of Wagner and Bruckner, as well as that of Tchaikovsky and Scriabin. Alistair Wightman has pointed out that Karłowicz's music is 'of significance beyond the frontiers of Poland for its intense, idiosyncratic response to the fin-de-siècle atmosphere discernible in much European literature and music of the age'.³⁰ This concerns particularly the series of his symphonic poems: *Returning Waves* Op. 9 (1903), *Eternal Songs* Op. 10 (1906, in three movements: 'Song of Everlasting Yearning', 'Song of Love and Death' and

²⁹ Quoted in Magdalena Dziadek, 'Europejczycy kontra... Europejczycy. Estetyczne i ideologiczne uwarunkowania dyskusji o muzyce narodowej w latach 1890–1914', *Wokół kategorii narodowości, wielokulturowości i uniwersalizmu w muzyce polskiej*, ed. Alicja Matracka-Kościelny (Warszawa – Podkowa Leśna: Związek Kompozytorów Polskich, Stowarzyszenie Ogród Sztuk i Nauk, 2002), p. 92. This opinion concerns also Noskowski's teaching activity. Since returning to Warsaw in 1881, he had taught composition, first in private and then as a Professor at the Music Institute in Warsaw. He educated a whole generation of Polish composers, Szymanowski included.

³⁰ Alistair Wightman, *Karłowicz, Young Poland and Musical Fin-de-siècle* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996), p.1.

‘Song of Eternal Being’), *Lithuanian Rhapsody* Op.11 (1906), *Stanisław and Anna Oświęcim* Op. 12 (1907), *A Sad Story* Op. 13 (1908) and *Episode at a Masquerade* Op. 14 (1908–09, completed by Grzegorz Fitelberg in 1913).

Their musical style, i.e. both their expression and form, depend every time on a literary programme written by Karłowicz himself. In terms of formal construction, these poems follow the principle of the sonata allegro or the multi-movement symphony (the three-movement *Eternal Songs*), although Karłowicz was far from keeping very strictly to the model. Rather, he preferred the natural flow of musical themes, continuously developed and transformed, hence close to the idea of so-called rotational form, used by the late-Romantic and post-Romantic composers.³¹ Karłowicz was also a master of orchestration, treating the orchestra as the main device in building not only the formal structure of the piece but, most importantly, its inner drama and emotional expression. His harmonic language is purely late-Romantic with advanced modulations and rich polyphonic textures, being a result of superimposed layers of instrumental groups. Special attention is paid to musical motifs: Karłowicz undoubtedly follows the Wagnerian idea of leitmotifs, as his musical themes possess a symbolic significance and their reappearances mark the important points of the musical drama. As was analysed by Leszek Polony, some of Karłowicz’s themes are closely connected with thematic ideas from specific pieces by Wagner and Richard Strauss.³²

In its type of expression and emotional atmosphere Karłowicz’s music corresponds with the pessimism and nihilism characteristic of the literature of the

³¹ See Chapter One, p. 27.

³² The connections concern Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* and *Wakiria*, as well as Strauss’s *Tod und Verklärung*; see Leszek Polony, ‘Program literacki i symbolika muzyczna w twórczości Karłowicza’, *Muzyka polska a modernizm*, pp. 147-153.

period, represented in Poland by the poets connected with the so-called 'Young Poland' poetic group, active in Kraków at the beginning of the twentieth century.³³

The artistic attitude of this group was influenced by the philosophic ideas of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and that was also close to Karłowicz's personality. In his case, moreover, these inspirations were combined with his natural inclination to introversion, deepened by the mystical power of nature that he was able to admire during his climbing in the Tatra Mountains. Hence, his search for eternal beauty and fulfilment became a constant feature of his music.

Karłowicz's artistic ambitions were definitely much more cosmopolitan than those of his predecessors. He was not interested in making any connections with Polish folk tradition (the only exception is his *Lithuanian Rhapsody*, using folk tunes from Lithuania and Belarus, where the composer spent his childhood). Instead, he searched for inspiration in Berlin and Vienna, which were at that time considered as the centres of modern musical life. His great musical talent allowed him to incorporate and transform the most recent tendencies into his individual musical language, influenced also by the beauty of the Polish mountains. Therefore, his music remains

[...] a distinctive contribution to the late-Romantic flowering of European music at the turn of the century. It investigates areas of experience largely untouched by other composers of the period, and though pessimistic by its very nature offers some consolation in the form of that eternal hope of dissolution throughout the universe.³⁴

³³The leader of the group was Stanisław Przybyszewski. The other members included Jan Kasprówicz, Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer and Tadeusz Miciński, whose poetry deeply influenced Szymanowski, who composed songs to texts by all three. Furthermore, his First Violin Concerto was inspired by Miciński's poem *A May Night*. For more details about 'Young Poland' see Jim Samson, *The Music of Szymanowski* (London: Kahn and Averill, 1980), pp. 34-44.

³⁴Wightman, *Karłowicz*, p. 101. Karłowicz's music has recently become better known to international audience, thanks to Wightman's book and the recordings, made by BBC Philharmonic under Yan-Pascal Tortellier and Gianandrea Noseda, released on the Chandos label.

Karłowicz was, then, the first Polish composer who managed to raise his compositional language to the best standards of the European music of his time and only his tragic death in an avalanche stopped his further artistic development. However, his artistic attitude was continued by Szymanowski, whose aim to create music on the best European level was achieved in full.

The symphony at the turn of the century

The last decades of the nineteenth century were marked in Polish music not only by the appearance of concert overtures and symphonic poems but also by the development of the symphony. As was already mentioned, the genre reappeared in Polish music thanks to the symphonic talent of Noskowski.

As was already indicated, Noskowski wrote his two symphonies, in A Major and the 'Elegiac', during his studies in Berlin.³⁵ The First Symphony was his diploma piece.³⁶ It is Classically constructed in four movements, while the national character of the piece is emphasised by using Polish dances in the Scherzo (oberek and kujawiak) and final Allegro con fuoco (krakowiak). In his Second Symphony Noskowski treated the overall formal structure more freely, moving the main climax to the final movement, according to late-Romantic tendencies. Special attention was also given to the third movement, an Elegy, which gave the title to the whole piece. It is characterised by slowly evolving, broad musical phrases, bringing an atmosphere of nostalgia and melancholy (see Ex. 2.9).

³⁵ See p. 59.

³⁶ In 1893, the symphony won First Prize with distinction at the competition of the Carillon Association in Brussels.

Ex. 2.9 Noskowski, Second Symphony 'Elegiac', third movement, opening

III Elegia

Andante molto sostenuto

Flauto

Oboe

Clarinetti
in B

Fagotti

Coro

Cornia F

Tramite B

Tramite 1/2

Tramite 3

Tramite

Timpani
C-F

Andante molto sostenuto

Violini

Viola

Cello

Basso

The late-Romantic tone is introduced in the first movement, *Allegro molto*, with its dark mood emphasised by the deep sounds of horns and lower strings. The main theme evolves in the brass and is developed and repeated in various orchestral colours. The rather serious character of the first movement foreshadows the elegy of the third movement as well as the solemn atmosphere of the finale. Only the second part of the symphony, a joyful Scherzo, brings a different climate, being a neat stylisation of the *krakowiak*, with a contrasting, chorale-like middle section. Noskowski's style in this symphony reveals many features which link the piece with late-Romantic symphonism, such as monumentalism of form and time-span (37 minutes), similarity of themes and atmosphere of the movements (except the Scherzo, which creates a dualistic contrast within the overall structure), continuous development of the main theme (*Allegro*), orchestration (large orchestra with a significant role for the brass), polyphony (fugal opening of the finale), special attention to the slow movement (*Elegy*) and putting the dramaturgical climax in the last movement of the piece.

These features confirm that Noskowski was well aware of the Romantic trends in German music, including composers most contemporary to him, such as Brahms. He also referred to the national tradition of Dobrzyński and Moniuszko, marked by incorporating a stylised national dance (the *krakowiak* in the Scherzo). Perhaps more remarkably, in the last movement the composer used a quote from the *Dąbrowski Mazurka*, one of the most patriotic Polish songs, which was to become the national anthem after Poland regained its independence in 1918. The initial motif of the song appears only once in the brass in the final climax of the last movement. The subtlety of this allusion implies that the composer hoped for performances of the symphony in

Poland (it was indeed premiered in Warsaw in 1880). As will be discussed below, such oblique references to this national song were expanded in a more sophisticated way in the finale of the Symphony in B minor Op. 24 'Polonia' (1907) by Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941).

Noskowski followed then his predecessors in building the national character of symphonic music, at the same time adopting the most recent late-Romantic stylistic tendencies. His Second Symphony is a piece composed with great talent for orchestral writing: the music flows easily and naturally, the themes are thoroughly developed and the overall musical drama of the symphony is well structured and in good formal proportions, combined also with a certain depth of expression. It is difficult to understand why this symphony, even if not extremely original or innovative, remains forgotten.³⁷ By including it in the panorama of Polish symphonic music, the modern Polish symphonic tradition becomes richer, proving, against received wisdom, that it began long before Szymanowski.

This view contains also Karłowicz's only Symphony Op. 7 (1900–02) as well as Paderewski's monumental Symphony 'Polonia'. Karłowicz's symphony is an early piece and a product of his compositional studies in Berlin (1895–1900). It is programmatically entitled 'Rebirth', with the programme describing the sufferings of a harried soul and its later rebirth.³⁸ Its formal structure follows the traditional symphonic outline with four movements, while its character and musical language remain close to Tchaikovsky's musical world although anticipating Karłowicz's later symphonic poems. The symphony was the composer's first attempt to write a

³⁷ The performance of this symphony at the Festival of Polish Music in Kraków in 2006 was probably the first in over a century and confirmed its high artistic level.

³⁸ For the full text of the programme see Wightman, *Karłowicz*, pp. 29-31.

symphonic piece, but he soon realised that the strict formal structure did not allow him to follow his creative imagination. He decided then to abandon the symphony as a genre and moved to the symphonic poem (as discussed above).

Paderewski's Symphony 'Polonia' was written in exile. The composer, recognised internationally as a great pianist, tried also to organise political help for his native Poland in the United States, while he had lived permanently in Switzerland since 1899.³⁹ The symphony remains a personal expression of his patriotic feelings, although in its extramusical programme it refers to the January Uprising (1863–64). It is a massive, late-Romantic symphony, monumental in both orchestration and time-span (it lasts over 60 minutes). Its musical language is also characterised by the continuous development of main thematic ideas, as in a major number of the symphonies composed at the turn of the century. Paderewski attempted to create a symphony of national character but, in contrast to his predecessors, he did not use folk melodies or national dances as a basis for his thematic motifs. Nevertheless, such elements as the solo organ passages at the end of the first movement, echoing the atmosphere of a church, the battle-like brass fanfares in the last movement, and especially the melody of the *Dąbrowski Mazurka* appearing in the finale, filled the piece with deeply emotional, patriotic expression.

In the panorama of Polish symphonic music, Paderewski's Symphony 'Polonia' occupies a significant position, confirming that its author was not only aware of the achievements of Wagner and Richard Strauss, but also managed to create an original large-scale composition, fitting well to the late-Romantic symphonic trends. Despite its perhaps over-stretched dimensions (the downside of some late-Romantic

³⁹ His political activity gave him in 1919 a position of the Prime Minister and Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the first Polish government after Poland regained its independence in 1918.

works), the piece's orchestration as well as thematic work and musical drama remain on a high artistic level. Moreover, Paderewski used the melody of *Dąbrowski Mazurka* in a different way from than Noskowski in his 'Elegiac' Symphony, where the initial motif of the anthem appeared only once. In Paderewski's symphony the melody of *Dąbrowski Mazurka* was incorporated into the material of the last movement of the piece, becoming a part of the extended musical process of the finale. As a result, the main melodic phrase of the patriotic song is not quoted once and briefly (as in Noskowski) but appears transformed in tone and metrically to form the main lyrical theme of the movement.

In the Symphony 'Polonia' Paderewski wanted both to show his personal feelings about his native country and to interest Western audiences in the situation of Poland. This attitude corresponded with his other, extramusical activities connected with organising political support for his partitioned homeland. It is worth adding that his efforts found a reflection in the music of Sir Edward Elgar, whose symphonic prelude *Polonia* (1915) is dedicated to Paderewski.⁴⁰

However, the composer who outgrew the significance of all Polish composers from the beginning of the twentieth century, not only in creating a deeply original musical style but also by showing the way forward for later generations, was Szymanowski. Only six years younger than Karłowicz, he too was strongly influenced by late-Romantic German music, mixed with that of Chopin and Scriabin (especially in his piano music). Considering the symphonic activity of his predecessors, the view of Thomas that 'the symphony as a genre in Poland had had virtually no pedigree in

⁴⁰ The Polish fight for independence during the nineteenth century also inspired other foreign composers, including Wagner (Overture 'Polonia', 1832–36) and Liszt (oratorio *St Stanislaus*, 1874–75, with the interlude *Salve Polonia*; St Stanislaus is the patron saint of Poland).

the nineteenth century’⁴¹ may be disputed; however, he is right to point out that Szymanowski followed ‘his own instincts’ in symphonic writing.⁴² Although he must have been acquainted at least with the symphonies of his Professor (Noskowski), Szymanowski preferred to follow in the steps of foreign composers. His four symphonies give four different models of symphonic structure.

The First Symphony in F minor Op. 15 (1906) remains under the strong influence of Strauss and Wagner, mixed with Max Reger’s complex polyphonic language. Szymanowski himself was not satisfied with this piece, calling it ‘a kind of contrapuntal-harmonic-orchestral monster’.⁴³ After its premiere (Warsaw, 1909), he decided to withdraw the symphony from the catalogue of his works, but it has survived and is now available both in score and as a recording. The symphony does reveal a heavy orchestration, a lack of structural clarity, and not yet original musical language.

The Second Symphony in B flat Major Op. 19 (1909–10) was much more successful. Szymanowski paid attention to the musical language, trying to make it less dependent on late-Romantic German music, with more transparent harmony and orchestration. In its formal outline the symphony is a two-movement modification of the traditional model with a sonata allegro at the beginning and variations as the second movement. The structure of the variations refers, however, to the middle movements of a traditional symphony: No. 3 is a scherzo and No. 5 a tempo di minuetto (No. 4 is a tempo di gavotte, hence one more dance), and the whole set of

⁴¹ Adrian Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 36.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ From the letter to Anna Klechniowska dated on 11.07.1906; quoted in Tadeusz Zieliński, *Szymanowski. Liryka i ekstaza* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1997), p. 45.

variations is ended with an extended fugue. Therefore, the final fugue not only closes the variations but also plays the role of the powerful and climaxing finale of the whole piece, following the tradition of the Romantic symphony with the accent on the final movement. Szymanowski's idea to end the symphony with the fugue influenced many Polish composers of the later generations to follow his example, as may be observed in Palester's Second Symphony (1941–42) and Bolesław Szabelski's Fifth Symphony (1968), among others.

Szymanowski's Third Symphony 'Song of the Night' Op. 27 (1914–16) gives a completely different symphonic model. The piece was inspired by the composer's fascination with Mediterranean and Near-Eastern culture, strengthened during his journeys to South Italy and North Africa (1914). It is rather a symphony-cantata or vocal-instrumental poem, using as its literary basis a poem by the thirteenth-century Persian poet, Mevlana Djalal al'Din Rumi (1207–73), translated into Polish (from German) by Tadeusz Miciński. The mystical character of Rumi's text, the pantheistic admiration of the night's beauty, where the feeling of God or of the soul of the night is so realistic, determined the atmosphere and the formal structure of the piece. Scored for tenor solo, mixed choir and large symphonic orchestra with organ, the symphony is in one movement but with a clear tripartite construction within the overall outline. The outer sections include the solo tenor and are an evocation of the night, with its mystical and contemplative atmosphere, while the central section, with the choir's vocalises, has a more lively, dance-like character with a strongly oriental blend. The character of the middle section was described by Wightman as a 'divine cosmic dance'.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Alistair Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski. His Life and Work* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p. 176.

The symphony's musical language marks a significant shift in Szymanowski's musical style, which took place in the years of the First World War. He moved from a late-Romantic harmonic language and a Wagnerian orchestral apparatus towards an impressionistic richness of sound colours, although combined with an extremely intense expressive power. The composer created in this piece an original musical world, free of major-minor connections in favour of local tonal centres, different for each section. He also incorporated the whole-tone scale, as in the exposition of the first subject, whereas the middle, dance-like section refers to the spirit of Arabian music that he had heard in North Africa (rhythmical structure, melodic ornamentation, chromaticisation).

Szymanowski's Third Symphony may be situated among vocal symphonies rooted in the finale of Beethoven's Ninth, although definitely closer to the late-Romantic ideas of vocal symphonic works, as represented in Mahler's music (*Das Lied von der Erde* particularly). However, the musical language of Szymanowski's piece, with its intense oriental atmosphere and richness of orchestral colours, resulted in a different, non-Germanic world of emotions, closer to the music of Scriabin on the one hand (due the ecstatic atmosphere) and of the French impressionists on the other (the instrumental colours and timbral effects). Both the mastery of compositional technique and the spiritual power of the piece place the Third Symphony among the few twentieth-century vocal symphonies which do not quite fit the principles of the genre, although their significance remains unquestionable. Other, later symphonies of a similar range, also deeply spiritual in character, are Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* and Messiaen's *Turangalila-symphonie*.⁴⁵ In Polish music this line was taken

⁴⁵ See the section devoted to spirituality and vocal symphony in Chapter One, pp. 35-36.

up with the greatest success several decades later by Górecki in his *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*, much more ascetic in its musical language but of a similar expressive intensity and spiritual power.⁴⁶

Szymanowski's last symphonic essay, the *Symphony Concertante* for piano and orchestra Op. 60 (1932), remains closer to the tradition of the piano concerto and concertante symphonies, which are not the subject of the present discussion. Moreover, the musical language of the piece belongs to a new period in Szymanowski's music, when he abandoned his post-Romantic style in favour of a more neo-Classical outline, with the musical material based on national motifs. This last period of Szymanowski's life and music (from 1919) is already a part of the modern times in the history of Poland, marked by the reappearance of the country on the political map of Europe as a consequence of the First World War.

2.4. Modern times in Polish symphonic music: 1918–1956

The regaining of independence for Poland in 1918 was of huge importance. This date indicates the beginning of modern times in Polish history and in Polish music. Compared to the previous century where, Chopin aside, Poland did not contribute greatly to European music, the situation in independent Poland witnessed the appearance of a large group of talented composers who managed to make their names both at home and abroad. Many of them took Szymanowski as their patron, for his 'stand on musical principles', as observed by Thomas,⁴⁷ rather than for his musical idiom. Szymanowski's musical style, despite its modern language and structure, remained in its character deeply rooted in the late-Romantic world of ideas and in the

⁴⁶ See the section devoted to spirituality and the sacred element in Chapter Four, pp. 271-281.

⁴⁷ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 11.

belief that music is always an expression of the deepest human feelings. Even his last works, the Second String Quartet Op. 56 (1927), the Symphony Concertante and the Second Violin Concerto Op. 61 (1933), although using Classical formal structures, in their expression are far from the objectivity of neo-Classicism, the trend which started to dominate Polish music in the last years of Szymanowski's life.

The inter-war years

Comparing what Szymanowski left in Polish music with what he found when he began composing, one is struck by the enormous effort – his achievement as a composer, his personal example and the sharp journalistic polemic in which he engaged – by which he was able to make up the losses caused by the years of partition and to lift Polish music to a world standard while investing it, particularly in his last period, with a national character.⁴⁸

One of the most significant achievements of Szymanowski in his teaching career was his strong encouragement of young composers to develop their studies in Paris. He felt that Paris in the 1920s and 1930s had become a real centre of modern ideas in art and music, replacing Berlin. Therefore, most of the Warsaw Academy graduates (where Szymanowski was a rector between 1930 and 1932⁴⁹) continued their musical studies abroad, and the majority of them went to Paris to take lessons from such composers as Paul Dukas, Charles Koechlin, Vincent d'Indy, Albert Roussel and, above all, Nadia Boulanger.

The significance of Boulanger's teaching is difficult to overestimate as she had students from all over Europe and the United States, among them a succession of Polish composers. Boulanger was known for her deep admiration for Stravinsky, as well as for being the passionate promoter of the ideas of neo-Classicism. Therefore, through the intense

⁴⁸ Stefan Śledziński, 'Polish Music Composition in the Period of the Second Republic 1918–1939', *Polish Music, Polnische Musik* (Warsaw), No. 1-2 (52-53), 1979, p. 6.

⁴⁹ Earlier, in 1927-29 Szymanowski had been the director of the Music Conservatory in Warsaw. When in 1930 the institution was changed into the Music Academy he agreed to become its rector.

contact with her, Polish composers transplanted the ideas of neo-Classicism onto Polish soil, together with the principles of French aesthetics and composing techniques. This admiration for the neo-Classical style was connected with its treatment of music as an autonomous art, free from any illustrative and programmatic elements, and, in terms of musical expression, following the Classical principles of moderation, cheerfulness and emotional balance (*serenité*), as well as emphasising the role of musical structure and the perfection of craftsmanship. These ideas were in strong opposition to Romantic and post-Romantic tendencies, still present particularly in the music of the older generation, which was now considered deeply conservative and old-fashioned.

Neo-Classical ideas were connected with the restitution of Classical forms, the symphony included, and this tendency helped to develop the genre in Polish music. The situation was moreover supported by better possibilities for orchestral performances in the country as besides the Warsaw Philharmonic, other new orchestras were established, including the Polish Radio Orchestra in Warsaw conducted by Grzegorz Fitelberg (1879–1953) who passionately promoted contemporary Polish works. Also, thanks to the activity of composers studying in Paris, both in composing and in the field of concert organisation,⁵⁰ Polish music started to be performed regularly in France, as well as around Europe. This all resulted in a real flow of orchestral pieces written by such composers as Aleksander Tansman (1897–1986), Michał Spisak (1914–65), Antoni Szałowski (1907–73), Piotr Perkowski (1901–90), Bolesław Woytowicz (1899–1980), Grażyna Bacewicz (1909–69) and

⁵⁰ In the 1920s Polish musicians studying in Paris launched the Society of Young Polish Musicians, whose aim was to make Polish music known in France as well as to work 'toward perfecting the contemporary manner of composition', see: Lidia Rappaport-Gelfand, *Musical Life in Poland. The Postwar Years 1945–1977* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1991), introduction; Grzegorz Michalski, 'New Music', *An Outline History of Polish Music*, pp. 134–135.

Roman Palester (1907–89) whose pre-war successes assured him the leading position among Polish composers, which continued in the first years after the Second World War.⁵¹

In general, the music of Polish composers of a neo-Classical orientation followed the ideas of French neo-Classicism, with its predilection for using Classical and Baroque formal models, with polyphonic textures and contrapuntal techniques, as well as for basing the harmonic language on bi- or polytonality and putting the emphasis on rhythmical structures. However, not all the musical ideas present in France found their reflection in Polish music. For example, neither everyday life nor futuristic and mechanistic concepts reflecting the progress of the civilisation and sport (as seen in the music of Satie and Honegger) were of much interest to Polish composers. Moreover, the representatives of Polish neo-Classicism soon showed their individual faces, creating an original Polish version of this stylistic trend. This was connected with a special type of lyricism and expressive subjectivity, often combined with the elements of Polish folk music, which was still a very important source of inspiration for Polish composers. Zofia Helman has even suggested that ‘the folk atmosphere and lyrical melodiousness, typical of some Polish works, were the individual contribution of Polish composers to the universal language of neo-Classicism’.⁵²

This trend can be seen in many Polish pieces of the inter-war period, such as Tansman’s Fourth Symphony (1939) which combines the witty and vigorous character of the outer movements (especially the finale) with the depth of expression and lyricism of the slow introduction and central adagio. Tansman remains one of the major figures on the map of Polish neo-Classicism. In his music he followed both the example of Stravinsky, with the

⁵¹ Palester’s *Symphonic Music* (1930) was performed at the ISCM Festival in London in 1931, *Dance from Osmołoda* was performed in Barcelona in 1936 (conducted by Ernest Ansermet), the Second String quartet was played by Le Quatuor de l’Ecole Normale in Paris in 1938 and his ballet *Chant de la terre* was premierrd in Paris in 1937.

⁵² Zofia Helman, ‘Muzyka polska między dwiema wojnami’, *Muzyka*, No. 3, 1978, p. 29.

emphasis on sharp, syncopated rhythms (with elements of jazz), and Hindemith, with his predilection for contrapuntal structures (presented not only in Tansman's symphonies but also in *Variations sur un thème de Frescobaldi* for orchestra, 1937, among other pieces). He often used folk music, not only Polish but also Jewish, gipsy and Spanish. After the Second World War the composer decided to stay in France (where he had lived since the 1930s) and his music was not often performed in Poland, therefore he is still little known in his native country. Similarly Spisak, as well as Szałowski, whose brilliant Overture for orchestra (1936) became one of the most popular Polish works in the late 1930s, both remained in Paris for good and their role in Polish music after the war was negligible.⁵³

The youngest generation of composers debuting before the war was marked by two significant names: Andrzej Panufnik (1914–91) and Witold Lutosławski (1913–94). Their talent was already evident in their first pieces, premiered in the 1930s: Panufnik in his Piano Trio (1934) and Lutosławski in his diploma piece, the Symphonic Variations (1937). They both were to play an extremely significant role in the development of Polish symphony and symphonic music after the Second World War.

Although dominant, neo-Classicism was not the only trend represented in Polish music before the Second World War. Józef Koffler (1896–1943) was a lonely figure developing Schoenbergian twelve-note technique (Koffler was a student of Schoenberg in Vienna). Among his four symphonies, the Third, Op. 21 (1935), scored for winds, brass and pitched percussion, was performed at the ISCM festival in London in 1938. In Maciej Gołąb's opinion, Koffler's symphony is one of the best Polish symphonies of the period.⁵⁴ Indeed, its dodecaphonic language, inspired by the pieces of the composers of the Second

⁵³ Tansman, however, was the most successful of them and while his music is available on recordings, both Spisak and, even more, Szałowski remain almost completely forgotten.

⁵⁴ Maciej Gołąb, *Józef Koffler* (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 1995); published in English as *Józef Koffler. Compositional Style and Source Documents* (Los Angeles: Polish Music Center, 2004).

Viennese School, is originally mixed with neo-Classical procedures and traditional formal solutions, such as sonata allegro (second movement, see Ex. 2.10) and rondo (finale).

Ex. 2.10 Koffler, Third Symphony, second movement, opening

II Allegro moderato [5]

Flauto piccolo
Flauti grandi I e II
Oboi I e II
Corno inglese
Clarinetti I e II in Si b
Clarinetto basso in Si b
Fagotti I e II
Contrafagotto
Corni in Fa I e II
Corni in Re III e IV
Trombe I e II
Tromba III
Tromboni I e II
Trombone III e Tuba
Timpani
Cassa e piatti
Tamburi piccolo
Tamburino
Triangolo, Tom-tom
Xilofono Campanelli e Gong
Arpa

The first movement is a slow and rather static Adagio, with the attention placed on the harmonic language based on the combinations of twelve-note chords (Ex. 2.11 shows the end of this process).

Ex. 2.11 Koffler, Third Symphony, first movement, final bars

Handwritten musical score for the final bars of the first movement of Koffler's Third Symphony. The score is written on 18 staves, grouped into three systems of six staves each. The instruments listed on the left are: Flauto piccolo, Flauti grandi I e II, Oboi I e II, Corno inglese, Clarinetti I e II, Clarinetto basso, Fagotti I e II, Contrafagotto, Corni in F# I e II, Corni in F# III e IV, Trombe I e II, Trombe III, Tromboni I e II, Trombone III e Tuba, Timpani, Percussion (Gong, piatti, Tom-tom, Tom-tom, Tom-tom, Tom-tom), Xylophone, Campanelli e glasses, and Arpa. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'pp' and 'p'. The score ends with a double bar line and the word 'facc' written below the final staff.

A similar harmonic idea was developed later by Lutosławski in his *Funeral Music* (1958) but with no connection to Koffler's work, as the composer's influence on Polish musical life was very little, even during his lifetime. Living in Lwów, he was far away from the centre of musical life in Poland, which was in Warsaw. Therefore, despite the international success of his symphony, his music and compositional ideas remained almost completely unknown to Polish audiences, as well as to later generations of Polish composers (Koffler was killed by Nazis during the Second World War and most of his music was lost⁵⁵).

Besides the activity of neo-Classical composers on the one hand and the dodecaphonic ideas of Koffler on the other, the more conservative orientation, continuing the ideas of late-Romanticism, was still present in the symphonies of an older generation of composers. Among them was Witold Maliszewski (1873–1939), whose artistic thinking was strongly influenced by Russian musical tradition as he studied with Rimsky-Korsakov in St Petersburg and lived in Odessa before moving to Warsaw in 1921. Therefore, his four symphonies belong more to the Russian symphonic tradition and are free from any significant Polish traces. Only the last, Fourth Symphony in D Major Op. 21 (1925), the only one composed in Poland and subtitled *Odrodzonej i odnalezionej ojczyźnie* (To the newborn and recovered homeland), involves elements of Polish dances, the mazurka and krakowiak, although the composer used rather the metrical and rhythmical aspect of both dances than any particular melodic motifs. According to Ludomira Stawowy, the melodic aspect of the piece does not reveal any connection with Polish folk music, which in the context of the rhythmical models that he used sounds rather odd.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Some of his scores, as well as more details about his life, were discovered by Gołąb during the 1990s.

⁵⁶ Ludomira Stawowy, 'Wczesna twórczość symfoniczna Witolda Maliszewskiego', *Muzyka polska a modernizm*, p. 179.

Maliszewski's symphonies refer to the non-programmatic type of symphony, represented by both the Classical masters, as well as Brahms, and continued in Russia by Glazunov. This traditional attitude, with a special care for the mastery of formal proportions and intellectual discipline controlling emotional impulses, influenced the symphonic thinking of Maliszewski's students at the Warsaw Conservatory, as may be observed in the music of Lutosławski (who was in his composing class) and Panufnik (who attended his course of formal analysis).⁵⁷ However, in terms of musical language Maliszewski's works were considered very conservative and it is scarcely surprising that his students preferred to follow the path indicated by the ideas of neo-Classicism instead.

Neo-Classicism, so strong in the inter-war years, dominated Polish music for over three decades, as the most successful innovations made by Polish composers during and immediately after the Second World War were still connected with the neo-Classical approach. The role of this stylistic trend in lifting up Polish music and in the development of the symphony and symphonic music was huge. The strong influence of neo-Classicism lasted until the middle of the 1950s, when the appearance of avantgarde trends and techniques started a new era in Polish music.

The war years and post-war reconstructions

The outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 and the following six years of Nazi occupation in Poland stopped in the most dramatic way the intense development of musical life and compositional activity that Poland had witnessed in the inter-war years. The horrors of the German occupation, as well as that of the Soviets in the Eastern part of the country, caused a large number of the irreversible losses. Many composers lost their lives,

⁵⁷ See Chapter Three, pp. 231-232.

including Koffler, and many of those who had survived lost all their pre-war output, as in the case of Panufnik, who managed to rewrite three of his early pieces from memory after the war ended.⁵⁸ For obvious reasons, war was not a time for the development of symphonic music. However, two pieces deserve attention: Panufnik's *Tragic Overture* (1942) and Palester's Second Symphony (1941–42).

Panufnik's *Tragic Overture* is a short orchestral piece (c. 10 minutes), in which the composer combined an extremely precise structure, based on an obsessive repetition of the initial, constantly transformed, four-note motif, with a highly emotional intensity of musical expression. As a result the atmosphere of the piece may be seen to be a strong reflecting of the horrors of war. The composer himself was surprised how much the piece was connected with current reality:

Once the work was finished, [...] I could not help sardonically smiling at myself; though ostensibly I had kept to my rules, I realised that my intellectual disciplines had failed to control my unconscious, that the overture was interspersed with startlingly onomatopoeic passages – for example, the sound of falling bomb (percussion); the soft engine noise of an aeroplane disappearing in the distance (trombones' glissando); a volley of machine guns (the burst of percussion in the final bars); the final chord shrieked out by the full orchestra, an agonising wail of despair.⁵⁹

This contrast between disciplined structure and expressive intensity created a dualistic conflict in the piece. The first performance of *Tragic Overture* in the occupied Warsaw in 1943, at a charity concert conducted by Panufnik himself, made a huge impact on the audience.⁶⁰ The immediate success of the piece not only confirmed Panufnik's talent for both composition and for conducting but also anticipated the role he was to play in rebuilding Polish music after the Second World War's devastations.

⁵⁸ Piano Trio (1934), *Five Polish Peasant Songs* (1940) and *Tragic Overture* (1942).

⁵⁹ Andrzej Panufnik, *Composing Myself* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 120.

⁶⁰ See Beata Bolesławska, *Panufnik* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 2001), p. 82.

Palester's Second Symphony, although composed during the Nazi occupation, was not performed until the end of the war. In a counterbalance to prevailing trends, the style of this monumental, 37-minute work reveals more references to the aesthetic of late-Romantic symphonism and its continuation as seen in Szymanowski's music than to the clarity and objectiveness of French neo-Classicism, characteristic of Palester's pre-war compositions (Ex. 2.12 shows the opening of the symphony). That was also the reason why the symphony was criticised by Boulanger (after its performance in Paris in December 1946), in whose opinion the overtly complex texture of the piece made the main musical idea unclear.⁶¹

The Romantic traces may be observed not only in the depth of the emotional expression and complexity of the musical language but also in the treatment of the movements, with the emphasis put on the finale, climaxing and resolving the dualistic conflict initiated in the sonata allegro of the first movement (the symphony has four movements). The reference to Szymanowski is also made in the form of the finale which is a combination of a double fugue with the sonata principle (the two themes of the fugue are contrasted and developed as in a sonata exposition). In Palester's symphony, which is full of dramatic fusillades from the timpani and brass fanfares, the dramas of war and Nazi occupation found their reflection, as they did in Panufnik's *Tragic Overture*. Even the Scherzo is rather intense and close to the grotesque character of Shostakovich's works (with the march-like phrases of trumpets mixed with string pizzicato). The premiere of Palester's symphony took place after the war, at the First Festival of Contemporary Polish Music in Kraków (September, 1945), where the piece was received with great acclaim.⁶²

⁶¹ See Zofia Helman, *Roman Palester. Twórca i dzieło* (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 1999), p. 122.

⁶² Helman, *Roman Palester*, p. 119.

Ex. 2.12 Palester, Second Symphony, first movement, opening

ROMAN PALESTER

The musical score is for the opening of the first movement of Roman Palester's Second Symphony. It is a full orchestral score with the following parts:

- Woodwinds:** 2 Flauti (Flutes), 2 Flauti piccoli (Piccolo Flutes), 3 Oboi (Oboes), 1 Clarinetto Mi♭ (B-flat Clarinet), 2 Clarinetti Si♭ (B-flat Clarinets), 2 Fagotti (Bassoons), and Contrafagotto (Contrabassoon).
- Brass:** 4 Corni Fa (F Horns), Trombe Do (Trumpets D), Tromboni (Trombones), Tubi (Tuba), and Eufonie (Euphonium).
- Percussion:** Timpani (Timpani) and Batteria (Percussion).
- Strings:** Violini I (Violins I), Violini II (Violins II), Violoncelli (Violoncellos), and Contrabbassi (Contrabasses).

The tempo marking is **Allegro non troppo ma molto brillante e vigoroso**. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and dynamic markings such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *ff* (fortissimo).

After the end of the Second World War Poland was included in the zone controlled by the Soviet Union and communism became the obligatory political system. Soon the results of new dogmas were to reflect on the cultural life of the country. As observed by Krzysztof Baculewski:

Culture, music included, found itself in the sphere of the direct interest of the state. This was connected with two ideas: one – ideological – was about the general access and democracy of culture postulated by the communist government, while the second was concerned with the utilitarian inclusion of culture into the sphere of political propaganda.⁶³

However, for the time being, the surviving musical society wanted to use the new situation to rebuild cultural life in Poland, especially because, in the first post-war years, political pressure was not yet an issue (this came with socialist realism in 1949) and composers were still able to enjoy some artistic freedom. Many musical institutions were established or re-established soon after the Second World War, such as the Polish Composers' Union (ZKP), Polish Radio, the Polish Music Publishers (PWM), several Philharmonic Halls and orchestras in various cities, as well as new music conservatories, called Higher State Music Schools.⁶⁴

For the development of symphonic music, the foundation of new symphonic orchestras was of particular significance as it encouraged composers to write for orchestra, giving them a real possibility for the immediate performance of their works. The second important reason was the connection of many composers with the neo-Classical style, still the most fruitful trend in Polish music, including symphonic music. All this resulted in a situation where, for the first time in Polish history,

⁶³ Krzysztof Baculewski, *Współczesność, część I: 1945-1974* (Warsaw: Sutkowski Edition, 1996), p. 52.

⁶⁴ For more details see: Mieczysław Drobner, *Wspomnienia o początkach życia muzycznego w Polsce Ludowej 1944-1946* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1985).

orchestral music of all kinds and genres seemed to be in full bloom, composed by the three generations of composers active in Poland in the first years after the war.

The oldest and most conservative, represented by Piotr Rytel (1884–1970), Ludomir Różycki (1884–1953) and Apolinary Szeluto (1884–1966), among others, remembered the times of the ‘Young Poland in Music’ and continued its late-Romantic style. A younger generation had already experienced the ideas of French neo-Classicism, mostly during their studies in Paris, as well as the influence of Szymanowski. This generation included Woytowicz, Palester, Bacewicz, Bolesław Szabelski (1896–1979), Zygmunt Mycielski (1907–87), Stefan Kisielewski (1911–91) and Zbigniew Turski (1908–79). The youngest generation was represented by composers who were just a few years younger, like Lutosławski and Panufnik. They all took part in rebuilding musical life in Poland and in developing the symphony and symphonic music.

The trauma of the Second World War and Nazi occupation had a strong influence on artistic creativity in many countries, not only in Poland. However, the tragic situation of Warsaw, which was almost completely destroyed during and after the Warsaw Uprising (1944), was even more dramatic. For many composers it was, therefore, natural to express their war experiences in an artistic way. In the field of the symphony, the reflection of wartime found its most appealing realisation in two works: Woytowicz’s Second Symphony ‘Warsaw’ (1945) and Turski’s Second Symphony ‘Olympic’ (1948). Thomas added to this line of so-called ‘war symphonies’ also Palester’s Second and Lutosławski’s First Symphony (1941–47),

although they seem to reflect war horrors in a less explicit way compared to the symphonies of Woytowicz and Turski.⁶⁵

Woytowicz's symphony, which is his second by number but first surviving essay in the genre (all his pre-war scores, including the First Symphony, were destroyed during the war), was composed in 1945 and is dedicated to the memory of 'Andrzej, who was killed in the Warsaw Uprising'.⁶⁶ Its title 'Warsaw' refers not only to the capital city of Poland but also to the patriotic song *Warszawianka* (The Song of Warsaw) sung by Poles fighting the tsarist Russian army during the November Uprising (1830–31). Since then *Warszawianka* has remained one of the most popular patriotic songs, another symbol of Polish struggle for freedom and independence. Therefore, by including its melody in the symphony, Woytowicz emphasised the patriotic character of his piece, referring to the Polish symphonic tradition of Noskowski and Paderewski, as well as paying tribute to the heroic behaviour of the Polish nation suppressed by the Germans during the Nazi occupation.

The neo-Classical style of the symphony is seen in its formal aspect, with a sonata allegro in the first movement, scherzo in the second, extended fugue in the third and the dance-like, energetic finale. The character of the first movement, Sinfonia, is dominated by solemnity, seriousness and sadness; the most tragic movement of the symphony, it is a dramatic mourning for war victims (the first subject is an extended funeral march, see Ex. 2.13).

⁶⁵ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, pp. 30–31. The group of Polish 'war' symphonies is also indicated by Rappaport, who also included in this group the few-years later symphonies by Krenz, Baird, Malawski and Bacewicz; see Rappaport, *Musical Life in Poland*, p. 21.

⁶⁶ The similar dedication may be found in Panufnik's *Tragic Overture*, which is dedicated to his brother Mirosław, killed during the Warsaw Uprising.

Ex. 2.13 Woytowicz, Second Symphony, first movement, beginning of the first subject

③ 4 Moderato (Lugubre) ♩-63-72

Cl. II
Cl. b. I
Fg. I
Tmb.
Or. c.

con sord.
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.
pizz.

4 Moderato (Lugubre) ♩-63-72

Vni. I
Vni. II
Vle.
Vc. tutti
Cb.

③

In this context the following movements are more optimistic, as they refer rather to the struggle for liberation, emphasised by including the quotation of *Warszawianka*, which is clearly heard in the Scherzo. The third movement of the symphony is more extended and dramaturgically intense than the fast and straightforward finale. It is also intensely polyphonic as the composer based it on a double fugue mixed with the sonata principle, which may be considered as influenced by Szymanowski and his inclusion of a fugue in his Second Symphony (though here it is in the third movement). Moreover, Szymanowski's inspiration may also be found in the finale of Woytowicz's symphony, where the composer uses the rhythms of two Polish dances: *krakowiak* and *oberek*. The dance-like character of the finale gives it a glimpse of optimism, especially in its later part, which is also emphasised by including the quotation of Woytowicz's own war-time underground song, *Pieśń Braci*

Pancernych (Song of the Armoured Brothers),⁶⁷ presented straightforwardly by the orchestral tutti just before the final coda. This may be interpreted as a reflection of a victory ending the war.⁶⁸

The other symphony of a similar character is Turski's Symphony 'Olympic', composed in 1948. Its title is purely occasional, as the piece was written for the Olympic Games' composing competition in 1948, where it won the Gold Medal. The piece is rooted in the war experiences of the composer, reflected in the symphony's dark colours and serious expression, marked by the use of low instruments and descending melodic motifs. Compared to Woytowicz's symphony, Turski's piece is more advanced in its harmonic language, which is atonal and strongly chromatic, giving the symphony a much more modern tone. The musical themes are not as memorable as Woytowicz's, because instead of clearly constructed subjects or thematic groups Turski developed the structure of his symphony from short motifs, repeated and interwoven through the instrumental lines. The symphony has some sections of strongly original and interesting timbres, such as the ethereal beginning of the central Larghetto (see Ex. 2.14).

Formally, the piece is divided into three movements (played attacca): Andante ma con moto – Larghetto – Presto. The first movement is a kind of subtle funeral march, as in Woytowicz's symphony, although more delicate in character. The central Larghetto evokes feelings of sadness and melancholy recalling the pessimism of Karłowicz's music, deepened by using the technique of continuous development of the

⁶⁷ See Jan Patrick Lee, *Musical Life and Sociopolitical Change in Warsaw, Poland: 1944–1960*, PhD thesis, The University of North Carolina, 1979, p. 252.

⁶⁸ The composer removed this direct quotation some time later as it does not exist in the score published by PWM in 1958. It is possible that after the experiences of socialist realism, with its imposed idea of the 'optimistic finale', he did not like this fragment any more. This seems to be perfectly possible considering that the 'Warsaw' Symphony was approved as a piece that fitted the aesthetic line of socialist realism.



main musical idea. The final Presto is again a kind of march, but now of a typically military character, with clear thematic phrases in the brass.

Ex. 2.14 Turski, Second Symphony 'Olympic', second movement, opening

(260) **Larghetto** ♩ ca 56

Fl. I
Fl. II
Cor. I
Fg. I
Trgl.
Cel.
Ar. I
Vni div.
Vle
Vc.
Cb.

Larghetto ♩ ca 56

con sordini
(pizz.)
arco div.
pp (pizz.)
pp (pizz.)

(260)

The dissonant harmony of the final march made it far less optimistic than the finale of Woytowicz's symphony and this is a significant difference, as at the meeting of composers in Łagów Lubuski (1949), where socialist realism was proclaimed (as will be discussed below), Turski's symphony was the piece which met the strongest criticism. The more pessimistic nature of Turski's symphony, in comparison to Woytowicz's, as well as its more advanced harmonic language, were the main reasons why this piece was less accessible for audiences and therefore condemned. Political interpretations aside, it should be emphasised that both symphonies continued the neo-Classical stylistic line in Polish music, although enriched and deepened with some

Romantic features, such as the presence of programmatic elements (especially Woytowicz), depth of expression and tone of solemnity. In this sense, they would rather fit the stylistic line of Shostakovich than that of Stravinsky.

A different perspective was given by Lutosławski in his First Symphony (1941–47). It does not reflect the wartime years as explicitly as Woytowicz and Turski, although it remains a product of the war and involves some programmatic associations (such as the slow opening of the second movement, with the dark timbre of low strings). The symphony is Classically shaped in four movements: Allegro giusto – Poco adagio – Allegretto misterioso – Allegro vivace. They function in a traditional way, hence the first movement is a sonata allegro, followed by a lyrical (but dramatic rather than relaxed) slow movement, then a scherzo with a contrasting trio and a fast finale.

The character of Lutosławski's piece is different from that of the symphonies of both Woytowicz and Turski. Instead of direct mourning and sadness he proposed a more ironic and sarcastic musical language, referring to the style of both Prokofiev (especially the second subject of the slow movement) and Bartók, mixed with the influences of Stravinsky and Roussel (whose symphonies Lutosławski greatly admired⁶⁹). Instead of monumentality and solemnity, Lutosławski showed a talent for building concise musical structures, filled with musical language free of programmatic contents. He did not want to express the war's turmoil in a direct way, preferring allusions, as in the atmosphere of the second movement (Ex. 2.15).

⁶⁹ See Charles Bodman Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, third edition (London: Omnibus Press, 1999), p. 28.

Ex. 2.15 Lutosławski, First Symphony, second movement, opening

4/8 Poco adagio (♩ = 42) 3/8 4/8 3/8

Clarinetto in si b
Clarinetto basso in si b
Corno in fa
Arpa
Viole div.
Violoncelli
Contrabbassi

39

Lutosławski's sharp, dissonant harmonic language, similar to Bartók and Prokofiev, as well as his brilliant orchestration and precise formal construction, enabled him to create an interesting and fresh piece, greatly admired by both audience and critics and still performed today. It should be also remembered that this is the First Symphony of a composer who was soon to play an enormously significant role in Polish musical life and to gain a worldwide recognition. His First Symphony is his first attempt to compose a large-scale symphonic work and therefore is of special importance in the context of the development of both his own symphonic writing and the genre of the symphony in Polish music. It is also a very successful example of neo-Classicism in Polish music and even may be interpreted as a representative of the 'pure' form of neo-Classicism, while the symphonies of Palester, Woytowicz and

Turski remain much more Romantic in their character and musical language, despite their more or less Classical formal outline.

A few years after the war some other ideas came to the fore in Polish symphonic music. Among them was Polish folklore. In pre-war times, this line was deepened by the example of Szymanowski and his congenial transformation of original Podhale and Kurpie music into his own artistic language, exemplifying the modern type of national music. Therefore, it is not surprising that after the Second World War many composers continued this line, contributing with their own ideas. The piece that shows a new treatment of folk material within the framework of the symphony is Panufnik's *Sinfonia Rustica* (1948).

In its formal outline, *Sinfonia Rustica* follows the Classical rules and consists of four movements: 'Con tenerazza' (a sonata allegro with two subjects), 'Con grazia' (a freely built rondo), 'Con espressione' (lyrical variations) and 'Con vigore' (a sonata allegro with two subjects). The symphony was composed for a competition organised in 1949 on the occasion of the centenary of Chopin's death and that was the main reason why Panufnik decided to use folk material. However, he did not use any Mazovian folklore (as Chopin did) but some of the Kurpian melodies he found in the book of Father Skierkowski, the same source which Szymanowski used for his *Kurpian Songs* in the 1930s.⁷⁰

In Panufnik's symphony the folk melodies are quoted almost unchanged, but enriched with interesting, harmonic and timbral musical backgrounds, slightly dissonant and purely atonal (although with some centralization built around certain

⁷⁰ Władysław Skierkowski, *Puszcza Kurpiowska w pieśni*, 3 vols, Płock 1929.

notes). The spatial set-up of the orchestra divided into two groups of strings and a group of winds placed in the middle of the platform, and usually treated in a soloist way, allowed the composer to create dialogues between the orchestral groups, like two folk ensembles playing together (Ex. 2.16). This feature could also show the influence of Bartók, as Panufnik was familiar with his music.⁷¹ Panufnik referred to the style of folk bands also by using in the orchestration some ostinato notes in the low register of strings (cellos and double basses) which reflect the basses of Polish folk ensembles.

Ex. 2.16 Panufnik, *Sinfonia Rustica*, first movement, opening

con tenerezza
(I)

ANDRZEJ PANUFNIK

2/2 ♩ = c. 80 (allegro moderato)

Flauto

1 Oboe

2 Fagotto

1 Corni-Pa

2 Trombe in Re

I con sordini

1 Violini

2 Viola

Violoncelli

Contrabbassi

II (senz sordini)

1 Violini

2 Viola

Violoncelli

Contrabbassi

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⁷¹ The performance of Bartók's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion in Paris in 1938 made a great impression on Panufnik; see Panufnik, *Composing Myself*, p. 86.

The whole symphony, with its folk melodies coloured by slightly dissonant harmonies, has a melodic, lyrical and joyful character and is one of the most relaxed of Panufnik's works. The composer's individual treatment of folk material, incorporated into an innovative harmonic language, helped to create an original musical world with new sound qualities and it assured the symphony a freshness and individuality of tone and compositional technique. These aspects of *Sinfonia Rustica* were appreciated by both critics and also Panufnik's compatriots, who referred to his ideas in their own works (e.g. Serocki in his *Symphony of Songs*, 1952).

It should be added that Panufnik's *Sinfonia Rustica* was preceded by two shorter orchestral pieces, *Lullaby* and *Nocturne* (both written in 1947), where Panufnik showed his inventiveness in creating a modern musical language, especially in terms of musical timbres. He was one of the first Polish composers to use quarter-tones to create a subtle sound world, marked by layered thematic lines (*Lullaby*). The combination of a precise formal structure and a consciously limited musical language, either with the imaginative and original artistic vision of the night (*Nocturne*) or with a folk atmosphere (*Lullaby*, *Sinfonia Rustica*), assured him his position as the most avantgarde of Polish composers of the period. As observed by Thomas:

He avoided monumentality and conventional musical discourse, concentrating on textural matters and allusion rather than declamation. In combining a cool classicism with folk materials, he was seemingly providing a new model of Polishness, a timely successor to Szymanowski's pre-war example.⁷²

However, Panufnik's position in Polish musical life was soon to put him in serious trouble and created artistic dilemmas connected with the epoch of socialist realism.

⁷² Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 38.

In the shackles of socialist realism

Changes in the treatment of art and music in Poland began to appear in 1948 and were directly connected to the resolutions passed at the Soviet Composers' Conference in Moscow in January 1948, as well as at the Second International Conference of Composers and Musicologists in Prague in May 1948. The official direction in music that was proclaimed then was termed 'socialist realism', which was to be the current of music that would be obligatory for composers and other artists who lived in countries ruled by so-called People's Democracies.

According to the principles of the style called socialist realism, the content was supposed to be the fundamental expression of a musical work. Thus, forms that were closely connected to text were moved into the foreground: operas, cantatas, and especially songs for the masses. The music that realised the new content was supposed to be emotional, mobilising, optimistic, and 'ideologically active'.⁷³

In a word, the music of the new era of socialism was to serve the construction of that system and reach broad masses. Composers were required to write simple and uncomplicated music, using tonal language and referring as frequently as possible to local folk music, which was ostensibly supposed to lead to the creation of music of national content. All compositional attempts to search for a new musical language that belonged to the twentieth century, such as experiments in terms of sound, harmony and form were immediately met with accusations of formalism (the antithesis of realism) and an alliance with the decadent art of the West, and immediately condemned to artistic non-existence. Such works simply disappeared from concert programmes and the radio.

⁷³ Helman, *Neoklasycyzm w muzyce polskiej XX wieku*, pp. 73-74.

The era of socialist realism in Polish music started with the National Conference of Composers and Music Critics, which took place 5-8 August, 1949 in Łagów Lubuski.⁷⁴ This meant that, after the Russians (the problems of Shostakovich and Prokofiev, accused of being formalist, are commonly known), it came to Polish composers to be subjected to the pressures of creating an engaged art, 'national in content and socialist in form'. Ironically, nationalism, which had been an important feature of Polish music from the end of the eighteenth century, now became a political issue connected closely with praising the new, communist Poland in the most accessible way. Therefore, while writing national music was in the nineteenth century a natural need for composers and a way to raise patriotic feelings and cultivate national tradition, now the idea was imposed by the Soviet ideology and had nothing in common with real patriotism.

Facing the new reality of socialist realism, Polish composers had to find their own ways to deal with the present situation. After his 'Olimpic' Symphony was condemned in Łagów as formalist and not suitable for the new era of socialist realism,⁷⁵ Turski never fully recovered artistically and concentrated on composing incidental music. Palester decided to remain in exile in Paris (as a result, the Board of the ZKP cancelled his membership of the union and his pieces were included in the censors' index). Panufnik decided to concentrate on re-arranging some early Polish music, while his more ambitious works from the early 1950s, such as the *Symphony of Peace* (1951)⁷⁶ and *Heroic Overture* (1952), despite their much simplified musical language, compared to *Nocturne*, *Lullaby* and *Sinfonia Rustica*, still met accusations of

⁷⁴ A broad study of both the genesis and effects of the socialist realism in Polish music is presented by Thomas in *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, pp. 40-79.

⁷⁵ See 'Ruch Muzyczny', No. 5/14, 1949, and Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, pp. 46-49.

⁷⁶ The symphony was later withdrawn by the composer, though he used its musical material for his *Sinfonia Elegiaca* (1957).

being formalist. The dilemmas of the period eventually led Panufnik to both an artistic and a psychological crisis. Finally, in 1954, he escaped Poland and asked for political asylum in Great Britain, where he stayed until the end of his life.⁷⁷

Lutosławski focused on writing incidental music for radio, film and theatre, and on adapting folk music and writing children's music. His *Little Suite* for chamber orchestra (1950, also re-scored for full orchestra) and *Silesian Triptych* for soprano and orchestra (1951) are interesting arrangements of Polish folk melodies (from the Rzeszów region and Silesia respectively), full of energy and vividness in the fast movements and sweet lyricism in the slow ones. From an artistic point of view they are not especially important, although the composer worked out some new ideas especially in his orchestral palette as well as in the field of 'extrapolating symphonic motifs from folk music' (*Little Suite*).⁷⁸

Lutosławski's significance rose a few years later, after he completed and presented his Concerto for Orchestra (1950–54). This powerful piece develops the musical language from the First Symphony and both *Little Suite* and *Silesian Triptych*. It refers again to folk melodies, which serve as the basis for most of the thematic material, including cyclic references in the finale to themes introduced in the opening 'Intrada'. They are interwoven in dense instrumental textures, transformed and repeated within different orchestral colouring. The composer referred also to Baroque forms and techniques, especially in the last and most extended movement, 'Passacaglia, Toccata e Corale'. The two preceding movements – the initial 'Intrada' and the scherzo-like 'Capriccio' – serve in the overall structure as preparatory

⁷⁷ For more details about Panufnik's situation and reasons of his escape from Poland see Beata Bolesławska, 'Andrzej Panufnik – the Leading Composer under the Pressures of Stalinism in Post-War Poland', *Tempo*, No. 220, 2002, pp. 14–19.

⁷⁸ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 76.

movements to the finale, which is the most important part of the piece's dramaturgy and twice as long as both previous movements put together. Thus, although in terms of musical language the Concerto can be interpreted as the summing-up and closure of the post-war period in Lutosławski's music, its formal outline looks forward, anticipating the composer's idea of end-accented form, developed by him in the 1960s.

Similar ideas of combining a neo-Classical formal outline with neo-Baroque techniques in treating the musical material, sometimes inspired also by folk melodies, were used in the symphonies of Bacewicz (Third Symphony, 1951; Fourth Symphony, 1952) and Szabelski (Third Symphony, 1951; Fourth Symphony, 1957). Szabelski, however, showed a tendency to build very dense polyphonic textures, while Bacewicz preferred a clearer harmonic language and fast musical motion based on motoric rhythms, although her Fourth Symphony, which was performed in Warsaw in May 2009 for the first time since the 1950s,⁷⁹ reveals the stronger influence of a Romantic musical idiom, with its solid orchestration and clear reminiscences of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Both Bacewicz and Szabelski demonstrated a high level of compositional technique and ability in symphonic writing, with an emphasis on building a precise formal structure and a feeling for symphonic dramaturgy. However, Bacewicz gained her recognition thanks to her solo concertos and chamber music (she was a violinist as well) rather than her symphonies, and Szabelski concentrated on his teaching activity in Katowice and stayed apart from the main stream of Polish musical life of that decade. This was to change in the late 1950s, together with his radical stylistic shift (as will be discussed in Chapter Three).

⁷⁹ May 10, 2009, Witold Lutosławski Polish Radio Concert Studio, within the framework of the festival Warsaw Musical Encounters organised by the Polish Composers' Union.

The composers who explicitly decided to take up and follow the new doctrine of socialist realism were those associated with so-called 'Group '49'. The group was proclaimed during the Łagów conference and consisted of Tadeusz Baird (1928–81), Kazimierz Serocki (1922–81) and Jan Krenz (b. 1927).⁸⁰ The credo of the group was edited by the musicologist Stefan Jarociński and printed in the programme of their concert in 1950:

Three young composers have come together in 'Group 49', joined by their intention to support each other in solving problems, which, in their opinion, are posited by a new social reality in Poland [...]. The young musicians ardently desire to re-establish contact with that listener, who, today, is becoming the chief consumer of culture. Their music, anti-elitist in spirit, is not meant to flatter cheap bourgeois taste. Therefore, in the pursuit of their goals, the young musicians do not wish to forego the use of any of the innovations of modern harmony.⁸¹

As it soon appeared, however, the acceptance of the new guidelines was rather a clever tactic than musical reality, as under the facade of abiding by the new rules these composers continued with a neo-Classical idiom. Thus, by proclaiming their group, they tried to escape any accusations of being formalist and find a possibility for presenting their music to the listeners. Indeed, they made strong artistic entrance soon after the Łagów conference, where Baird's youthful *Sinfonietta* (1948) was premiered with great success, as in the following years (1950–52) they all produced their first symphonies. These three symphonies confirmed the basically neo-Classical attitude of the composers and, despite many similarities to the musical language of Turski (especially in Krenz's First Symphony, dedicated to the memory of his mother and deeply sad in character), they did not meet any criticism from the political authorities.

⁸⁰ Cf. Tadeusz Marek, 'Grupa 49. Próba charakterystyki', *Muzyka*, No. 5-6, 1953, pp. 45-57.

⁸¹ Quoted in Rappaport, *Musical Life in Poland*, p. 2.

This shows how much the system of political control was inconsistent and depended on the explicitly exposed context of a particular work or the attitude of its author.

Baird's First Symphony reveals a significant depth of musical expression characteristic of his later music. The symphony was written in 1950 and is a large-scale, five-movement piece, lasting almost 30 minutes and scored for full symphonic orchestra. The first movement is a sonata allegro with two contrasted subjects, the second is slow and lyrical, with a tone of mourning, while the third has the character of a scherzo with a more nostalgic and quiet trio (the atmosphere of the trio recalls that of the second movement). The fourth movement is yet another funeral march (after the symphonies of Turski and Woytowicz), with some short and more joyful passages in the middle section, and the whole symphony ends with a fast and optimistic finale. The spirit of Romanticism is most evident in the fourth movement and is indicated by the annotation 'misterioso' on the score. The composer used here a solo horn (an instrument usually associated with the Romantic tradition) to introduce the first theme (see Ex. 2.17). Moreover, the funeral march, growing from the first bars to several climaxes marked by the powerful sound of *tamburo militaire*, substituted later by timpani, assures this movement a feeling of continuously increasing musical drama. By the end of the movement, the accumulated tension is resolved by reducing the orchestration and dynamic level until the reappearance of the initial theme of horn and clarinet, leading to a calm end. The last, fifth movement of the symphony is completely contrasted in character, fitting accurately to the idea of an optimistic finale as expected by the principles of socialist realism.

Ex. 2.17 Baird, First Symphony, fourth movement, opening of the main theme

[illegible]

Baird's connection with Romanticism is present not only in the type of expression he created in his symphony but also in the density of texture and harmonic language, which recall late-Romantic symphonies, particularly those of Mahler (who was one of Baird's favourite composers). Moreover, his way of developing the musical material, based more on the continuous development of initial themes than on the strong dualistic contrast between consecutive sections, facilitates its inclusion in the Romantic, rotational type of symphonism. This type of symphonic thinking became the characteristic trait of Baird's later music, as is revealed not only in his Second Symphony 'Quasi una fantasia' (1952), with its Romantically lyrical opening of the first movement,⁸² but also in his most avantgarde works from the 1960s and 1970s, including *Sinfonia breve* (1968) and the Third Symphony (1969).

Serocki's artistic temperament was quite different from that of Baird. His music was more deeply rooted in neo-Classical ideas and its dialectical symphonism, with the main attention paid to form and structure. Serocki enriched this line with his special interest in texture and timbre, the element which would remain the main feature of all his later artistic explorations. Like many of his colleagues, the composer also showed an interest in Polish folk music, revealing the influence of both Szymanowski and Panufnik in this field. This may be observed in his *Three Kurpian Melodies* (1949) for choir, soprano, tenors and chamber orchestra, as well as in the First Symphony (1952), particularly in its second movement, based on the oberek.

The symphony is traditionally shaped into four movements, with the scherzo second and the lyrical, slightly melancholic slow movement third. The symphony's concise formal structure, significant melodic themes, clear rhythmical pulsation and

⁸² Baird withdrew his Second Symphony after its premiere and only the manuscript of the piece survived.

bright orchestration, shows the maturity of Serocki's symphonic writing. On the other hand, the symphony's finale is characterised by exaggerated dynamics emphasised by the thunderous orchestra with fanfare motives, dominated by brass and percussion of a march-like character, which allowed Rappaport to point out that 'the composer's choice of style calls to mind revolutionary posters and can be faulted for its superficially illustrational elements'.⁸³ As in the case of Baird's First Symphony, this type of 'mobilising' finale was most certainly written to please the political authorities as it fitted perfectly the principles of socialist realism. However, the orchestral technique and symphonic thinking presented in the symphony announced the appearance of a very talented composer, anticipating the role Serocki was to play in Polish musical life during the following decades.

Serocki's Second Symphony 'Symphony of Songs' (1953) presents a quite different musical world. Scored for soprano, baritone, choir and orchestra, it is based on folk texts describing several scenes from country life. Formally, the symphony is again divided into four movements but their order is not typical: first is a slow, lyrical arioso, then comes a fast and energetic, dance-like scherzo, followed by a rather slow quasi variazioni and the whole symphony ends with a fast, powerful finale. The structure and atmosphere of the piece is closer to the cantata than the traditional symphony and undoubtedly recalls Szymanowski's Third Symphony 'Song of the Night', although the intense folk character of Serocki's work is closer to other Szymanowski pieces: *Harnasie* (1923–31) and *Kurpian Songs* (1927–29; 1930–32⁸⁴). Moreover, some of the purely orchestral passages in the symphony follow the more recent example of Panufnik's *Sinfonia Rustica*.

⁸³ Rappaport, *Musical Life in Poland*, p. 32.

⁸⁴ *Six Kurpian Songs* for choir a cappella and *12 Kurpian Songs* for soprano and piano.

Although Serocki's ambition in his Second Symphony was to follow the path of both Szymanowski and Panufnik in creating music based on folk motifs, the symphony may be interpreted as the embodiment of the socialist-realist principles. The melodies for the solo voices are simple and rather monotonous, and the musical language, being more a stylisation than transformation of folk material, is easily accessible (see Ex. 2.18). Moreover, the piece lacks the dramaturgy so well shaped in Serocki's previous symphony. However, especially in the orchestral parts, as well as in the choir, the composer showed his ability to create original and interesting sound colours, serving in this piece to evoke an atmosphere of the countryside.

Ex. 2.18 Serocki, Second Symphony, first movement, Fig. 1.

* * *

The ideology of socialist realism did not bring any spectacular artistic effects. Quite the opposite: it constrained the composers' imagination and creativity. When soon after the Second World War Polish composers showed an interest in searching for a new, modern musical language (Panufnik, Lutosławski, Turski), this modernist line was stopped by the cultural policy of the communist government. On the other hand, the post-war decade was very important for the later development of the symphony and symphonic music in Poland as it was the period when the material basis for such evolution was created (orchestras, commissions, publishing, broadcasting). Nevertheless, the demands of socialist realism did not allow the composers to take full advantage of this situation as it was neither possible to explore new musical ideas nor to enjoy a truly creative atmosphere. As a result, musical life in Poland in the early 1950s found itself in a state of complete stagnation. The death of Stalin in 1953 gave rise to some expectation that there might be a chance for some change in this state of artistic life, but it took few years until the efforts taken by musical society brought tangible results.

CHAPTER THREE

The symphony and symphonic thinking in the musical avantgarde: 1956–1974

The natural link that Polish culture had maintained with the West before the Second World War and in the first post-war years collapsed during the socialist-realist period. The older and middle generations of Polish composers (including Mycielski, Bacewicz, Lutosławski, Panufnik) remembered the years of artistic freedom and suffered the present entrapment even more. But the youngest generation, who graduated during the war (including Baird, Serocki and Krenz) and who had no chance to hear the majority of Western European and American music composed in the first half of the twentieth century, also dreamed about listening to the works of composers whom they knew, at best, only by name. However, during the Stalinist years this was impossible. When Stalin died (5 March 1953), the political situation started changing slowly. Censorship relaxed and, about a year later, some information about Western music and musical life began filtering into Poland. This process proceeded very slowly, as observed by Mycielski in 1955:

I must admit emphatically that unfortunately we live in a world that is closed – and practically speaking – isolated from the artistic life surrounding us. Even numerous official visits, congresses or conventions, which only a few, usually the same, artists and virtuosos attend, do not help here. That is not true artistic contact. Artistic contact means a concert life and concert programs on which one can find the best achievements of music from around the world; it means easy access to publications, an exchange of the finest soloists and conductors. [...] We are becoming a provincial land, in which we cannot imagine either how or what is being played or produced in other places. We do not know what the level of an orchestra, violinist, or oboist is, or how a conductor interprets a particular

work. Here in Poland the majority of musicians are not acquainted with Prokofiev's symphony for cello and orchestra; we do not know all of Shostakovich's symphonies, or even the compositions of Janáček or Bartók, or the current works of Honegger, Stravinsky, Britten, or Messiaen. [...] Such is the state of things. Ignorance of what is happening in our field elsewhere increases every year; this is more than dangerous.¹

The situation was really frustrating for Polish composers and it is not surprising that the whole of society wanted to use any chance to change it. Composers felt that:

A continuation of this period of stagnation could have badly threatened Polish music: art can indeed exist (or rather vegetate), but it cannot develop without a flow of information, without new impulses, without mutual influences, without confrontations, otherwise it is threatened by inevitable sterility and decay. Thus, it was an urgent issue, in the name of the very preservation of Polish music, to counteract the existing situation.²

The solution taken up by the Polish Composers Union was to establish a festival of contemporary music.

3.1. Warsaw Autumn Festival and the 'Polish School'

In the mid-1950s only one international festival existed in Eastern Europe. This was the 'Prague Spring', where, it should be noted, Polish delegates had been regularly sent by the Ministry of Culture and Art. This festival, however, presented music from various periods and new works constituted only a small percentage of its programme. A festival devoted exclusively to contemporary music was held in Donaueschingen in West Germany, but Polish composers were not allowed to go there, just as, since the early 1950s, they had not attended ISCM festivals. In 1955, when the idea of launching an international festival in Warsaw was being discussed, the Polish Composers' Union had

¹ Zygmunt Mycielski, 'O twórczości muzycznej dziesięciolecia', *Muzyka*, No. 7-8, 1955, quoted in English in Cynthia Bylander, *The Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music 1956-61: Its Goals, Structures, Programs and People*, PhD thesis, Ohio State University, 1989, pp. 79-80.

² Tadeusz Baird; Tadeusz Baird and Izabella Grzenkowicz, *Rozmowy, szkice, refleksje* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1982), pp. 98-99.

already organised two festivals of Polish music: in 1951 and 1955.³ Although they both presented exclusively Polish music, the organisational experience definitely helped in planning a festival on a much larger, international scale. The idea was approved by the Ministry of Culture and Art and, as a result, the first Warsaw Autumn festival took place in October 1956.⁴ It should be emphasised that the establishment of this festival was possible thanks only to the political thaw which started filtering into Poland after the death of Stalin. As pointed out by Thomas:

The Party leadership had activated discussions at the Council of Culture and Art partly, it would seem, because composers and other artists were becoming less malleable. Indeed, despite the Party's attempts to shore up its central control, the history of the years between Stalin's death and the Polish confrontation with Stalin's successor, Khrushchev, in Warsaw in October 1956 is one of increasing dissent both within and outside the Party. It was a slow, piecemeal process, with no guaranteed outcome.⁵

The thaw referred to the significant change which occurred in Polish political life in 1956. The process had started with the death of Stalin in 1953 but reached its height three years later. It was connected with the situation in the Soviet Union, emphasised by Nikita Khrushchev's speech, *On the Personality Cult and its Consequences*, given in Moscow in February 1956. Its strong criticism of Stalin and his policies had wide implications for both the Soviet Union and the other communist countries. In Poland, the situation was deepened by the unexpected death of Bolesław Bierut, the First Secretary of Polish Workers' Party (PZPR), who was invited to Moscow and died there in March 1956 (two weeks after Khrushchev's speech). These events weakened the hardline politics of Stalinism in Poland and, together with the protests of the Polish workers which took place in Poznań in June 1956, resulted in the reformers' faction of

³ The festival in 1951 was discussed by Adrian Thomas in his 'File 750: Composers, Politics, and the Festival of Polish Music (1951)', *Polish Music Journal*, 5/1 (Summer 2002): http://www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/PMJ/issues.html. (accessed 25 May 2005).

⁴ At that time the festival did not yet have the official name Warsaw Autumn, which appeared in 1958.

⁵ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 84.

the party, led by Władysław Gomułka (interned during Stalinist years), taking control. The main goal of Gomułka and his comrades was to assure Poland took a more national course of socialism, less dependent on the Soviet Union. After brief but tense negotiations, the Soviets gave permission for Gomułka to stay in power. This meant the temporary liberalization of life in Poland and the end of the Stalinist era in the country.

The last stage of Gomułka's negotiations with the Soviet hierarchy (which included Khrushchev, who unexpectedly came to Warsaw) took place in October 1956 and coincided with the closing concerts of the new-established Warsaw Autumn festival. It sounds almost legendary now, but the festival audience after leaving the Warsaw Philharmonic concert hall went straight into the large square by the Palace of Culture and Science, where Gomułka was giving his speech, announcing the beginning of a new era of socialism in Poland. Even if Gomułka's regime within few years appeared to be more conservative than people expected, October 1956 marked a significant change in Polish history, named the Polish thaw or Polish October (it should be remembered that a similar process in Hungary resulted in a bloody revolution)

For cultural life in Poland, the political thaw meant that the communist authorities wanted to show a new face to the rest of the world. By giving their approval for a contemporary music festival, they aimed to be seen as the promoter of new art and to prove that music in Poland was free from political restrictions. Even if it was only a political game, it was an important gesture after the years of the strict policy of socialist realism and there is no doubt that the establishment of the Warsaw Autumn festival gave birth to a new situation in Polish music. Hence, the date 1956, when the first festival took place, is crucial in the history of Polish music and musical life as well as in Polish political history.

The success of the Warsaw Autumn opened up possibilities for contacts with Western musical culture. In 1957 a delegation of the Polish Composers Union for the first time went to Darmstadt to attend the Summer Courses in New Music. It included Serocki, as well as his two younger colleagues, Włodzimierz Kotoński (b. 1925) and Andrzej Dobrowolski (1921–90). During their stay in Darmstadt, they had the possibility of listening to music by the most avantgarde composers of the time, including Nono, Boulez and Stockhausen. Stockhausen was particularly influential; he was invited to Warsaw Autumn festival in 1958 to present his electronic music and since then his music appeared at the festival regularly.

The first Warsaw Autumn festivals had a great impact on the musical life in Poland. As analysed by Danuta Mirka:

Issues and problems in contemporary music started to be engaged also by the musical press, particularly by the quarterly *Muzyka* and the biweekly *Ruch Muzyczny*, the latter revived in 1957. Bogusław Schaeffer's *Nowa Muzyka* (1957), which was a compendium of current compositional techniques, became the 'Bible' of young Polish composers. The return to contemporary musical life was made more formal by the admission of Poland to the Musical Council of UNESCO in the decisive year of 1956. The following year the Polish division of SIMC [ISCM], previously dissolved by communist authorities, was reactivated.⁶

As a result of this activity, the cultural isolation was broken and Poland renewed its participation in European cultural life, and this resulted in the appearance of new Polish music on the international scene. Knowledge of the newest musical trends allowed Polish composers to change their musical language and develop their innovative musical ideas, as will be discussed later in this chapter. The Warsaw Autumn festival very soon became a symbol of the new state of freedom in art. The wish of composers

⁶ Danuta Mirka, *The Sonoristic Structuralism of Krzysztof Penderecki* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Akademii Muzycznej, 1997), p. 3.

to explore new ideas gave birth to many original and innovative works and caused the European musical world to turn its attention to what was happening in Poland.

The first editions of the Warsaw Autumn brought not only new works by older generations of Polish composers, including Lutosławski, Baird and Sierocki. By the end of the 1950s, the festival also witnessed the powerful debuts of the youngest Polish composers, born in the 1930s, including Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (b. 1933; his *Epitaph* was premiered in 1958) and Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933; his *Strophes* was premiered in 1959). Their boldness in using the most advanced musical techniques, as well as their imaginative innovations, caught the attention of the Western critics (mostly from West Germany). In the case of Penderecki especially, his Warsaw Autumn debut immediately introduced him to international musical life, as reported by Bylander:

At the 1959 Festival Józef Patkowski had introduced the composer to German publisher Herman Moeck. After hearing *Strophes*, Moeck brought the score of the piece to Heinrich Strobel, the director of Donaueschingen festival. Strobel responded with the commission; *Anaklasis* was premiered at Donaueschingen in 1960. Penderecki's international recognition began to blossom after that premiere. By deciding to have his Western European company publish Penderecki's compositions, Moeck created what Ludwik Erhardt later described as 'an unprecedented step in the post-war history of Polish music'. Strobel commissioned another piece to be performed at the 1962 Donaueschingen festival; that work was *Fluorescences*. Moreover, while in West Germany in the fall of 1960, Penderecki received a commission from Herbert Huebner, the director of the contemporary music department at Norddeutsche Rundfunks in Hamburg; *Polymorphia* was the result. *Anaklasis* was recorded in the fall of 1960. In 1961, *Emanations* was performed at the Darmstadt Summer Courses, *Psalmus* was premiered in Stockholm, *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* was presented in Paris and Palermo.⁷

⁷ Bylander, pp. 533-534; see also: Wolfram Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki: his life and work* (London: Schott, 1989), p. 27.

Besides Penderecki, the names of other Polish composers also started to appear in the programmes of the Summer Courses in Darmstadt and the festival in Donaueschingen.⁸ Their pieces were broadcast and recorded in many European countries as, from 1959 onwards, Polish compositions were regularly awarded prizes at the UNESCO International Tribune of Composers in Paris.⁹ All of this was possible thanks to the Warsaw Autumn and its concert platform. Therefore, the role of this festival in promoting Polish contemporary music was central.

It was not only the youngest generation of Polish composers, debuting in the late 1950s, that adopted so quickly the most avantgarde musical techniques and ideas of the time. Some composers of the older generations also joined this tendency, while trying to adapt it to their existing musical style. Changes in a language rooted in neo-Classicism may be observed in music of Szabelski, Bacewicz and Lutosławski, as well as in that of the younger Baird and Serocki. Lutosławski had been searching for new harmonic and melodic ideas based on the twelve-note technique for a few years before he presented them in his *Funeral Music* (1958). Later on, he went further in exploring the more innovative aspects of both form and musical language, which led him to the ideas of so-called 'controlled aleatoricism', used for the first time in *Jeux vénitiens* (1961). Bacewicz, who tried to modernise her neo-Classical language, especially in broadening her timbral palette (*Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion*, 1958; *Pensieri notturni*, 1961; *Musica sinfonica in tre movimenti*, 1965), in fact did not manage to

⁸ Serocki's *Musica concertante* was performed in Darmstadt in 1958, Kotoński's *Music en relief* had its premiere there in 1960, Penderecki's *Emanations* and Kotoński's *Canto* were performed in Darmstadt in 1961, while Donaueschingen witnessed a performance of Penderecki's *Fluorescences* in 1962.

⁹ 1959: Lutosławski's *Funeral Music*, Baird's *Four Essays* and Serocki's *Sinfonietta*; 1960: Bacewicz's *Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion*; 1961: Penderecki's *Threnody*; 1962: Lutosławski's *Jeux vénitiens*; 1963: Baird's *Variations without Theme* and Romuald Twardowski's *Antiphones*; 1964: Lutosławski's *Trois Poèmes d'Henri Michaux*; and so on. For more information about the awards given to Polish composers and musicians in the late 1950s and the 1960s, and about the foreign performances of Polish music see Ludwik Erhardt, *Music in Poland* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1975).

regain either the power and vividness or the formal mastery of her best neo-Classical pieces. Szabelski remains one of the most interesting cases: he was over sixty in 1956 but this did not stop him from giving up his neo-Classical style (presented most recently in his Fourth Symphony, 1957) and adopting elements of the most avantgarde techniques, with pointillism to the fore, in new works such as *Sonnets* (1958) and *Aphorisms '9'* (1962). Serocki and Baird also did not hesitate to give up their neo-Classical preoccupations and soon joined the youngest generation in exploring new musical territories. Baird, fascinated by the music of Alban Berg, tried to make his own version of Berg's expressively lyrical sound world, while Serocki devoted himself to experimentation with sound colours, contributing in full to the ideas of so-called 'sonorism' (the term will be explained below).

With the new works of these and other Polish composers, the special quality of Polish music was quickly noted by foreign critics and publishers. They soon started writing about the 'Polish School' of composers, despite differences between the individual styles of its 'members'. As pointed out by Detlef Gojowy in 1975,

composers such as Witold Lutosławski, Tadeusz Baird, Kazimierz Serocki, and Krzysztof Penderecki were perceived as a group right from the beginning. This perception was in part due to historical and cultural-political preconditions, which remain to be investigated. In 1956 Poland, which until then had been cut off from world-recognition, came to the fore suddenly and unexpectedly, with evidence of its rich intellectual life, of which one had had no inkling before that point in time. In the wake of this sudden appearance, even areas of diversity may have taken on the appearance of belonging together.¹⁰

Besides the fact that there was indeed a whole group of Polish composers appearing at the same time on the international scene,¹¹ foreign commentators recognised a common

¹⁰ Quoted in Mirka, *The Sonoristic Structuralism of Krzysztof Penderecki*, p. 4.

¹¹ The other composers belonged to this group were Andrzej Dobrowolski (1921–1990), Witold Szalonek (1927–2001), Włodzimierz Kotoński (b. 1925), Bogusław Schaeffer (b. 1929) and Wojciech Kilar (b. 1932).

element in their music. It was a special type of expression, not observed in the music of Western post-war avantgarde composers. As analysed by Mirka,

the unifying features of this music were sought chiefly on the aesthetic plane, in its strong, ardent expression and the dynamism of its formal processes. Both of these qualities were equally strange to the experimental 'asceticism' of Western music in the 1950s and hence were all the more noticeable in the music coming from Poland.¹²

Therefore, in contrast to the majority of Western avantgarde composers (particularly from the Darmstadt circle), Polish composers in the late 1950s and the 1960s still continued to explore the human or spiritual aspect of music and this element was where the power of their music lay. This was recognised and indicated both by musicologists and by the composers themselves.¹³

The Polish musicologist, Józef Chomiński, connected this tendency of Polish music with the great tragedies caused by the Second World War, which resulted in seeking ethical aspects of humankind and expressing them in music. Whether it was the main reason or not is not easy to answer (in fact, the Western anti-emotional avantgarde music of Boulez and Stockhausen was also often interpreted as a reaction to the horrors of the World War Two). Other explanations connected this special expression of Polish music with the feeling of freedom, very strong in the first years of Warsaw Autumn and the music of 'Polish School', as observed many years later by the Polish composer Roman Berger (b. 1930):

For me, taking part in the process of New Music but *via facti* living outside Polish borders, the existence of the 'Polish School', a phenomenon of the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, was not merely a fact but a fact of a great significance, which influenced my life deeply. Musicology usually

¹² Mirka, *The Sonoristic Structuralism of Krzysztof Penderecki*, p. 4.

¹³ Cf. Bacewicz's opinion quoted in Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, 'Szkoła polska – koniec historii?', *Duchowość Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej w muzyce końca XX wieku*, eds. Krzysztof Droba, Teresa Malecka and Krzysztof Sz wajgier (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 2004), p. 131; see also Józef M. Chomiński, 'Muzyka polska po 1956 roku', *Polska współczesna kultura muzyczna 1944-64*, ed. Elżbieta Dziębowska (Kraków: PWM, 1968), pp. 63-64.

describes the 'Polish School' with such terms as sonoristics (*sonorystyka*) or little aleatorics (*mała aleatoryka*). But was it possible for such technical phenomena to cause the Warsaw Autumn, so closely bound to the 'Polish School', to become the 'Mecca' for musicians from all over the world, and Poland to achieve the position of the 'Promised Land', the myth, among the countries from the East Block? Thus, what was this magnet which forced us often to have to overcome many practical difficulties to get to Poland? This magnet was freedom: Polish new art and music were enlightened by the idea of freedom; Poland was the place where one could strongly feel the power of the Spirit of that Time.¹⁴

One of the main characteristics of Polish music of this period, related to the issue of musical expression and freedom of artistic exploration, was the trend called 'sonorism'.

3.2. Sonorism

The expressive power and special spirit of music created by the 'Polish School' was strictly connected with both the musical language and the formal structures used by composers. Indeed, the majority of Polish works from the late 1950s and early 1960s brought many innovations in these respects. The most significant and fruitful were sonorism, controlled aleatoricism and the idea of end-accented form. Whereas the last two were defined by Lutosławski in his music in the 1960s (although in nascent version they appeared earlier) and will be discussed later, sonorism was applied more broadly to the music of the 'Polish School' and was recognised as one of its main features. The term itself may cause many misunderstandings, as it has been often used in different meanings and contexts, and it is hardly possible to find any strict definition of it. Therefore, it is necessary to devote some time to this issue, as it remains crucial for an understanding of the nature of the many changes which occurred in Polish music at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s. As pointed out by Mirka,

¹⁴ Roman Berger, 'Polska Szkoła Kompozytorska Fakt? Mit? Wizja? Projekt?', *Dysonanse*, No. 2, 1998, p. 24.

the trend of sonorism in twentieth-century music was a highly confined phenomenon, both geographically and historically. If some musical currents of the post-war avant-garde lasted for decades in great international centres such as Paris and Darmstadt, sonorism was restricted exclusively to Polish music of the early 1960s. The identification of this style with Poland was so explicit for foreign reviewers that, as the eminent critic Krzysztof Droba noted, 'the sonoristic acted then in the West and East as [defining what is] Polish'.¹⁵

The term was invented by Józef Chomiński, who used it as early as 1956.¹⁶ Derived from the French verb *sonner* ('to sound'), it indicated the importance of timbre and sound value in music, which became the primary means of musical structure. Initially, the term was understood more broadly and not connected exclusively to the most recent music. On the contrary,

Chomiński's intention was to discuss music on the basis not of traditional parametric approaches but of its qualities as sound; he wanted to open up a debate on music from Debussy and Stravinsky to the *Klangfarben* of the Second Viennese School and beyond without having to be hamstrung by the quantifiable technical aspects of the composer's craft.¹⁷

Some Polish musicologists went even further, writing essays about sonorism in the music of Szymanowski and even Chopin.¹⁸ Chomiński himself explored the subject in the context of music by Wagner and Beethoven.¹⁹ It is therefore not surprising that Penderecki, who made his début in 1959 and soon became recognised as the most radical and innovative composer and the main representative of sonorism in Polish music, admitted a few years later:

The emancipation of sound colour as an equal element of the composition has a long tradition behind it. Listen to any of Tchaikovsky's symphonies, forgetting their harmonic evolution and the specific pitch of the various sounds, and concentrating only on the development of the instrumental

¹⁵ Mirka, *The Sonoristic Structuralism of Krzysztof Penderecki*, p. 3.

¹⁶ Józef Chomiński, 'Z zagadnień techniki kompozytorskiej XX wieku', *Muzyka*, No. 3, 1956, pp. 23-48.

¹⁷ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 160.

¹⁸ Władysław Malinowski, 'Problem sonorystyki w *Mitach* K. Szymanowskiego', *Muzyka*, No. 4, 1957, pp. 31-44; Antoni Prosnak, 'Zagadnienia sonorystyki na przykładzie etiud Chopina', *Muzyka*, No. 1-2, 1958, pp. 14-32.

¹⁹ Zbigniew Granat, 'The Concept of Transfromation as a Sonoristic Paradigm', *Muzyka*, No. 1, 2008, pp. 31-46.

sound, its colour, dynamics, register, the duration of each sound, [...] the kinds of figuration in the strings, etc. [...]. Take, for instance, the magnificent ending of the *Pathétique*, with its gradual muting of the strings, down to cellos and double-basses in *pppp*. The choice of intervals is insignificant here, the important thing is the very effect of the softness of the strings gradually dissolving into a murmur. [...] To me as a composer, this element of the composition, enriched with new sounds by new means of articulation, is what matters most.²⁰

Therefore, the broader meaning of sonorism could be referred to many different historical periods, indicating the aspects of timbre and sound colour as the most significant in a musical piece. However, such vast meaning seems too general and Chomiński himself limited it soon to the music of Polish composers after 1956; he also created the analytical theory of sonology (*sonologia*), which he applied to the most recent music of Polish composers.²¹ For him, sonoristic technique concerned problems and issues connected with the most contemporary musical language, which moved ‘to the fore the sound itself as the main means of expression and thereby a factor of construction’.²² In this role, sound quality replaced traditional melody, harmony, rhythm and metre, elements treated now more as the result of primarily sonoristic material.

In sonoristic music, composers dealt rather with large sound shapes or sound blocks than with single notes; this kind of music was also labelled ‘sound-mass music’ or *Klangflächenmusik*.²³ Hence the role of instrumentation, texture and timbre increased as they were included in the process of building a new musical sound world. This was also connected with untypical ways of playing instruments. As pointed out by Mirka, ‘traditional instruments are employed in sonoristic regulation in a new way. One enriches the ways of sound production by means of various touch-effects hitherto not

²⁰ Interview for *Nutida Musik*, No. 1, 1963–64, quoted in Erhardt, *Music in Poland*, pp. 125–6.

²¹ Józef M. Chomiński, ‘Muzyka polska po 1956 roku’, pp. 61–119.

²² Quoted in Iwona Lindstedt, ‘On Methods of Analysing Sonoristic Music in the Context of Musical Sonology of Józef M. Chomiński’, *Musicology Today*, 2006, p. 94; see also Maciej Gołąb, ‘The Evolution of Józef Chomiński’s Theory of Sonology: An Assessment’, *Muzyka*, No. 1, 2008, pp. 17–30.

²³ See Thomas, *Polish Music Since Szymanowski*, p. 161.

used nor even foreseen.²⁴ The inventiveness of Polish composers not merely contained unorthodox ways of treating traditional instruments, as may be observed in early scores by Penderecki and Serocki, among others, but also involved objects from daily life, such as the typewriter, siren, saw, pieces of wood, glass, etc. In this respect, it may be seen as following some ideas of the early twentieth-century Futurists and Dadaists, as well as those developed in the 1920s in Soviet Russia (e.g. Mossolov). Other sources might be seen in the sound explorations of Polish composers from the late 1940s, particularly those of Panufnik as in his *Lullaby and Nocturne*,²⁵ and in the more contemporary experiences with electronic music, which opened up entirely new sound possibilities for composers (the first Polish electroacoustic studio was established in 1958 in the Polish Radio, Warsaw). As analysed by Lindstedt,

This fascination with timbre was the consequence of assigning equal value to sounds of a particular pitch and to noise, sounds produced by traditional musical instruments in new articulations, and those generated using electroacoustic apparatus.²⁶

The issue of sonorism appears often in the discussions devoted to Polish music of the early 1960s.²⁷ It is also extremely important for the understanding of changes in symphonic music in those years, as, besides pointillism and aleatoricism, sonorism influenced composers' musical techniques deeply. Although the connection of sonorism with music of the 'Polish School' is not denied (very often they are treated synonymously), both the period of its domination as well as possible types of sonoristic music are still the matter of debate. To understand the issue it is necessary to remember that there is a difference between the broader meaning of sonorism, which includes

²⁴ Mirka, *The Sonoristic Structuralism of Krzysztof Penderecki*, p. 8.

²⁵ Nigel Osborne called Panufnik a 'protomodernist', underlying his significant role for the later development of the Polish School; see Osborne, 'Panufnik at 70', *Tempo*, No. 150, 1984, pp. 2-10.

²⁶ Lindstedt, 'On Methods of Analysing Sonoristic Music', p. 93.

²⁷ Cf. *Muzyka*, No. 1, 2008, fully devoted to the subject.

works with some sonoristic qualities, and the music which was defined by the Polish musicologist, Krzysztof Droba, as 'total sonorism'.²⁸

According to Droba, 'total sonorism' as a trend appeared in 1960 and dominated in Polish music until the middle of the 1960s, while as an element of composers' technique it persisted into the 1970s and even into the 1980s.²⁹ It is represented by such works as Penderecki's *Threnody for Victims of Hiroshima* (1960), String Quartet (1960), *Polymorphia* (1961) and *Fluorescences* (1962); Górecki's *Genesis* (1962–63) and *Choros I* (1964); Serocki's *Symphonic Frescoes* (1963); as well as Schaeffer's *Little Symphony – Scultura* (1960), Kilar's *Riff 62* (1962), *Générique* (1963) and *Diphthongos* (1964), and Szalonek's *Les Sons* (1965).³⁰ This view corresponds with Thomas's idea of 'high sonorism'³¹ and Malecka's label 'classic sonorism', which she applied to seven works composed by Penderecki in 1960–62.³² The main principle of the music of 'total sonorism' is texture, which is treated as the main element of both structure and musical drama. Sonoristic ideas are, therefore, 'integral, form-building, rather than incidental or decorative'.³³ Following this, the terms 'total sonorism', 'high sonorism' and 'classic sonorism' may be associated only with those works fulfilling this description.

Sonorism and particularly 'total sonorism' were therefore mainly represented in the music of Penderecki, Górecki and Serocki, although many of their compatriots also

²⁸ Krzysztof Droba, 'Sonoryzm polski', *Kompozytorzy polscy 1918-2000*, vol. 1. 'Essays', ed. Marek Podhajski (Gdańsk-Warszawa: Akademia Muzyczna w Gdańsku and Akademia Muzyczna w Warszawie, 2005), pp. 277-281.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 280.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 279.

³¹ Adrian Thomas, 'Boundaries and Definitions: The Compositional Realities of Polish Sonorism', *Muzyka*, No. 1, 2008, pp. 7-16.

³² Teresa Malecka, 'I Symfonia Krzysztofa Pendereckiego', *Współczesność i tradycja w muzyce Krzysztofa Pendereckiego*, eds. Regina Chłopicka and Krzysztof Sz wajgier (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 1983), pp. 176-186. The pieces indicated by her are: *Anaklasis* (1959-60), *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960), First String Quartet (1960), *Dimensions of Time and Silence* (1960), *Fonogrammi* (1961), *Polymorphia* (1961) and *Fluorescences* (1962).

³³ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 162.

presented their own innovations, broadening the palette of musical language. Szalonek contributed with new ways of playing woodwind instruments (including multiphonics), Schaeffer experimented with open and graphic forms and with music theatre, while Kotoński developed electronic means on tape³⁴ and Dobrowolski combined taped tracks with traditional live instrumentation. It should be noted, however, that there are many pieces composed from the late 1950s until mid-1970s which used sonoristic qualities as some of the means of musical expression while the majority of the structure was based on more traditional elements, like harmony, melody and rhythm. These are pieces, such as Górecki's First Symphony (1959), Serocki's *Episodes* (1959), Bacewicz's *Pensieri notturni*, Baird's *Epiphany Music* (1963), Lutosławski's *Trois Poèmes d'Henri Michaux* (1963) and Second Symphony (1965–67), which 'share some of the textural and timbral concerns' with sonoristic works but their rationale 'is still based on the play of melody, harmony, metre and rhythm'.³⁵ They belong to the broader meaning of sonorism that allowed commentators to introduce more labels connected with the topic.

Tomaszewski defined Górecki's First Symphony and *Scontri*, both based on serial procedures, as representing 'serial sonorism'.³⁶ This association, however, seems too narrow as Tomaszewski did not mention that serial procedures were also used, although not so strictly, in some of Penderecki's works, such as *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* and String Quartet.³⁷ This was most probably caused by the fact that in Penderecki's works the serial procedures are not the main principle of musical structure (this is texture), while in Górecki's case the sonoristic effects are the result of

³⁴ Kotoński is the author of the first Polish electronic piece *Etiuda na jedno uderzenie w talerz* (Study on One Cymbal Stroke), composed in 1959.

³⁵ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 162.

³⁶ Tomaszewski, 'Sonorystyczna ekspresywność i alegoryczny symbolizm: symfonia polska 1944–1994', p. 24.

³⁷ Krzysztof Bilica, 'Pozaekspresyjne porządki w Kwartecie smyczkowym', *Współczesność i tradycja w muzyce Krzysztofa Pendereckiego*, eds. Regina Chłopicka and Krzysztof Sz wajgier (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 1983), pp. 72–77.

basically serial material. Following this categorization, Tomaszewski also referred to 'aleatory sonorism' represented in works using so-called controlled aleatoricism, such as Lutosławski's Second Symphony and Penderecki's First Symphony (1973).³⁸

The broader view of sonorism contains also the term 'lyrical sonorism', used by Gąsiorowska in her analysis of Bacewicz's music.³⁹ This label is connected with the expression of the piece rather than with any particular technique used by the composer. The model is *Pensieri notturni* with its subtle sound world, evoking the atmosphere of the night. This kind of textural effect, rooted more in the world of impressionism than in that of 'total sonorism', had already been initiated in the second movement of her earlier *Music for Trumpets, Strings and Percussion*, and she continued it partly in the *Musica sinfonica in tre movimenti*.⁴⁰

There are also other categories which try to describe different aspects of sonoristic techniques used by various composers. Droba, while discussing Górecki, introduced the terms 'catalogue sonorism', which meant the way of building sonoristic pieces from sections of various and usually contrasting types of sounds (as in *Scontri* and *Genesis*), and 'reduced sonorism', which was connected with the reduction or limitation of sound qualities to the most elementary contrasts, as seen in Górecki's music in the second half of the 1960s (from *Refrain*, 1965).⁴¹ Lidia Rappaport indicated two types of sonorism but she connected them with the music of only two composers. According to her, the 'dynamic progression' type of sonorism was represented in works by Penderecki while the 'static duration' type was to be found in the music of Górecki.

³⁸ Tomaszewski, 'Sonorystyczna ekspresywność i alegoryczny symbolizm: symfonia polska 1944–1994', p. 25.

³⁹ Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1999).

⁴⁰ See pp. 132–136.

⁴¹ Krzysztof Droba, 'Droga do sensu tragicznego', *Ruch Muzyczny*, No. 15, 1978, pp.3–4; see also his 'Sonoryzm polski'.

Her view is, however, rather confusing as she does not clearly define what she means with these terms.⁴²

Nevertheless, the domination of sonorism allowed Tomaszewski to call the whole period 1956–74 in Polish symphonic music ‘sonoristic symphonism’,⁴³ without making more detailed subdivisions. Therefore, the term indicates the importance of both sonorism and symphonic thinking in the music of Polish composers, although, as will be discussed, the proportions of both features during the whole period were unequal. In the following discussion orchestral music will be examined first, before the symphony *per se*, as in many ways orchestral works became for composers the field for musical experiment and testing new techniques and musical ideas, before they attempted any re-engagement with the genre of the symphony itself.

3.3. Symphonic thinking in orchestral music

In the late 1950s, together with the development of sonorism and other avantgarde ideas in Polish music, traditional genres such as the symphony were largely treated as old-fashioned, too conservative and not suitable for the new musical language. As a result, the number of symphonies written by Polish composers in the first decade after 1956 is very low and the majority of those composed during the period belong to long-pursued neo-Classical or post-Romantic idioms, written by composers of minor significance for Polish musical life.⁴⁴

⁴² Lidia Rappaport (Gelfand), ‘Sonorism: Problems of style and form in modern Polish music’, *Journal of Musicological Research*, vol. 4, No. 3–4, 1983, pp. 399–415.

⁴³ Tomaszewski, ‘Sonorystyczna ekspresywność i alegoryczny symbolizm: symfonia polska 1944–1994’, p. 30.

⁴⁴ Tadeusz Paciorkiewicz (Second Symphony, 1957), Tadeusz Kieseewetter (Third Symphony, 1958), Edward Bury (First Symphony, 1960), Stefan Kisielewski (Symphony for 15 Players, 1961), Piotr Perkowski (Sinfonia Drammatica, 1963). Bolesław Woytowicz composed his Third Symphony in 1963, but as this is a concertante piece, with the solo part for piano, it will not be considered in the present discussion.

However, composers who wanted to join the stream of avantgarde explorations in terms of form and musical material had to abandon their neo-Classical approach. In terms of orchestral music, this was connected with replacing the symphony by shorter orchestral pieces, often unusual in their formal outline, with descriptive titles, indicating the character of the music or type of musical construction. This solution assured composers that their music would not be connected with traditional genres. The neglecting of the symphony was also a reaction against the years of socialist realism, when composers were supposed to write monumental symphonies, often bearing important messages with a political content. Moreover, the traditional baggage of meanings connected with such genres as the symphony would have hampered an avantgarde musical approach. Therefore, composers now preferred to concentrate on purely musical matters and to explore new areas of musical language, which was easier to try out in pieces on a smaller scale.

This does not mean, however, that all signs of symphonic thinking disappeared completely, as some of the orchestral works composed between 1956 and 1974 reveal elements which allow them to be called symphonic. Orchestral music was in full bloom, encouraged by the possibility of performances created by the Warsaw Autumn and many full-size orchestras now working in the main Polish cities.

The next section will be devoted to orchestral works not named as symphonies but revealing strong traces of symphonic structure and symphonic dualism, usually realised with new techniques and innovative musical language. In many ways, the orchestral works from the 1960s prepared the composers for the more sophisticated and larger-scale symphonic works, including symphonies, that appeared in the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. It should be added that Górecki's First Symphony,

chronologically belonging to the early period of Polish avantgarde, will be analysed at a later stage of the chapter, alongside other models of full-scale symphonies.

Changing style I: Szabelski, Bacewicz and Lutosławski

TABLE 1

Bolesław Szabelski	<i>Sonnets</i>	1958
Grażyna Bacewicz	<i>Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion</i>	1958
	<i>Pensieri notturni</i>	1961
	<i>Musica sinfonica in tre movimenti</i>	1965
Witold Lutosławski	<i>Funeral Music</i>	1958
	<i>Jeux vénitiens</i>	1961

As was already indicated, the interesting changes in musical language after 1956 may be observed in the music of the older generation of composers, such as Szabelski, Bacewicz and Lutosławski.

The most radical and unexpected shift can be noticed in the music of Szabelski. His works from 1957 to 1968, such as *Sonnets* for orchestra, *Improvisations* for mixed choir and chamber orchestra (1959), *Verses* for piano and chamber orchestra (1961), *Aphorisms '9'* for chamber ensemble, *Preludes* for chamber orchestra (1963) and *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra* (1964–65) belong to the most advanced experiments of the 'Polish School'. The inspiration of Webern is evident, both in the time-span of his works and in the aphoristic musical language based on a pointillist texture determined by the rules of dodecaphony, although this is not treated rigorously. Traces of symphonic thinking are present in *Sonnets*, which remains a transitional piece in Szabelski's output, showing the composer's established care for formal precision, as well as new, partly pointillist texture. The tripartite formal outline of the piece – Adagio, Vivace, Lento – reveals the principle of symphonic dualism especially in the first movement, in which the play of dynamically and rhythmically contrasted figures

leads to the climax emphasised by introducing an almost homophonic, chordal texture *ff* (Fig. 8, last bars). The two later movements do not have such directional structures. The second is a kind of vivacious scherzo, while the third has an atmosphere and musical material similar to the first movement, although now the interchange of short figures does not lead to a climax. Instead, these figures seem to lose their conflicting possibilities and finally disappear.

Despite these connections with traditional thinking, *Sonnets* elsewhere marked a radical change in Szabelski's music. He avoided the dense, polyphonic texture of his previous works and replaced it by pointillist techniques. In *Sonnets* they are still mixed with short passages either using imitational superimposed lines (second movement particularly) or chordal textures. The change in Szabelski's style was confirmed by his next pieces: athematic, using more or less pointillist textures and not shaped in any recognisably traditional format. Together with their brevity (no longer than 10 minutes each), they did not create any dualistic conflicts which could be regarded as symphonic. In the context of symphonic thinking, they are not as significant as Szabelski's neo-Classical works and only much later did his Fifth Symphony (1968) mark his return to the genre, resulting in a piece summing up Szabelski's entire musical career.⁴⁵

Bacewicz's neo-Classical music was also based on traditional formats. By 1956 she was already the author of several large-scale orchestral pieces, including four symphonies (1945, 1951, 1952, 1953). However, she joined her colleagues in their attempt to modernise their musical language, although hers was far from the radical shift made by Szabelski. On the contrary, in her music from the late 1950s and the 1960s (she died in 1969) she maintained her neo-Classical preoccupation with a predilection for traditional formal thinking and a propulsive musical language. This can

⁴⁵ See pp. 214-215.

be observed in her *Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion* and *Musica sinfonica in tre movimenti*, both with a ternary framework alluding to Classical models. A clear formal structure was always very important to her; instead of abandoning traditional formats, she concentrated on innovating her harmonic language as well as broadening the instrumental palette in her orchestral works. The former is represented by more densely dissonant harmony, as can be observed in the *Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion*, which, however, remains still rooted in Bacewicz's neo-Classical style.

Thomas suggests that in this piece the composer wanted to reinterpret her most popular work, the Concerto for String Orchestra (1948) in a language and manner more appropriate to the late 1950s.⁴⁶ She maintained the sonata principle in the first movement (two contrasting themes are immediately subjected to developmental processes) and a sonata rondo in the third, while the second serves as the lyrical slow movement. The texture of the piece is reminiscent of Bacewicz's earlier music, with propulsive rhythmical pulsation and Baroque-like figurations. Despite extending the string orchestra's colouristic palette by adding trumpets and percussion, the piece is far from being sonoristic: percussion is limited to celesta, xylophone, drum and timpani, which are treated rather traditionally. Only in the middle movement (see Ex. 3.1.), by using the subtle colours of strings and percussion particularly, does Bacewicz create a delicate sound world, 'the most sophisticated example of the impressionistic, lyrical sonorism of the composer, where the play of motifs and rhythms is replaced by the play of timbres, sound layers, textures.'⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, pp. 94-95. Also Gąsiorowska suggests that the piece is reminiscent of the Concerto, see Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz*, p. 295.

⁴⁷ Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz*, p. 302.

Ex. 3.1 Bacewicz, *Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion*, second movement

The image displays two pages of musical notation for the second movement of Bacewicz's *Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion*. The left page shows measures 1-4, with a 3/4 time signature and a 4-measure rest for the trumpet. The right page shows measures 5-8, with a 2/4 time signature and a 4-measure rest for the trumpet. The notation includes staves for Trumpet, Cello, Violins I and II, Viola, and Double Bass, with various musical markings such as dynamics (ppp, p, f) and articulation (accents, slurs).

This modern colouristic effect anticipated later explorations of the composer, as presented in some of Bacewicz's subsequent works, such as in *Pensieri notturni*. In this little, eight-minute piece, she developed the concept of 'lyrical sonorism' from the middle movement of the *Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion*.

Pensieri notturni is based on a free flow of unrelated textures and timbral figures which does not create any traditional formal outline. The opening of the piece is highly original and mysterious in character, with sustained blurred figures of violas and harp (later joined by the sustained note G in the violins), and separated notes of vibraphone over this background (Ex. 3.2.).

Ex. 3.2 Bacewicz, *Pensieri notturni*, opening[illegible]

The composition is full of various colouristic effects, such as trills, glissandi and pizzicato in the strings, short figures for the winds and the timbre of the vibraphone, but the changing sonorities are not much contrasted, being rather subtle and delicate, so the character of the piece is more impressionistic than dramatic. Its nature is therefore not symphonic but lyrical and poetic, recalling rather the slow movements of Bacewicz's neo-Classical works. The piece was, however, an important study of new sound possibilities for the composer, showing her ability to create an original sound world fitting perfectly to the title of a piece.

After exploring this new territory, Bacewicz decided to return to a symphonic structure in *Musica sinfonica in tre movimenti*. Both the title and the ternary framework,

with the movements entitled 'Tesi', 'Dialogo' and 'Gioco', indicate its intended symphonic character but in fact the piece is not satisfactory from this perspective. 'Tesi' is rather truncated and serves instead as an introduction to the more extended second movement. However, the musical ideas presented in the first movement do not find any development either in this movement or in the later stages of the piece. 'Dialogo' presents its own musical material, based on the low sounds of strings and brass, with piano, harp and timpani. It not only serves as the contrasted lyrical middle section in the tripartite structure but is in fact the centre of gravity for the entire piece.

Unlike the majority of Bacewicz's earlier works, *Musica sinfonica* reveals a post-Romantic expression, emphasised in the second movement by using an elegiac thematic idea in the trombones, taken over by low strings and timpani. This has a funereal atmosphere, interrupted from time to time by short figurative passages for the woodwind. This solemn and elegiac 'Dialogo' is followed by the third movement, 'Gioco', which tries to bring a more optimistic atmosphere. It starts with unpitched percussion (tamburo, bongos, blocchi di legno, piatto), joined later by strings and the rest of the orchestra. The movement is vigorous and recalls Bacewicz's motoric neo-Classical style, although despite its scherzo-like character it still keeps something of the serious atmosphere of the preceding movements, especially in the monumental brass chords and the tutti chordal ending. 'Gioco', with many fast-changing events, seems to be busy but not purposeful. The whole piece lacks the clarity of formal shape so typical of Bacewicz's neo-Classical works and, by putting the emphasis on the slow movement, it comes close to the Romantic type of symphonism, emphasised also by the tone of solemnity.⁴⁸ These elements assured *Musica sinfonica in tre movimenti* a special place

⁴⁸ Gąsiorowska even indicated a transformed motif from Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* in the first movement of the piece. She also interpreted the rhythmical passages of the timpani as a kind of

in Bacewicz's oeuvre, although in formal clarity and logic of musical development it is not as powerful as her best neo-Classical works. Neither Szabelski nor Bacewicz achieved full success in creating symphonic works by using a modernised musical language based either on the note row (Szabelski) or on atonal harmonic complexes combined with timbral possibilities and the contrast of orchestral groups (Bacewicz).

A quite different situation is presented by the music of Lutosławski, whose innovative ideas, including his contribution to contemporary symphonism, assured him a top place among twentieth-century composers. He had already confirmed his reputation as a symphonic composer by the time of the avantgarde explosion in Polish music. The premiere of his Concerto for Orchestra in 1954, especially, marked his eminent position on the Polish musical scene. However, compared with his older colleagues, such as Szabelski and Bacewicz, he was soon not only to revise his musical language but also to play the leading role among Polish composers thanks to his innovative musical concepts. After 1956 he was still developing his own harmonic ideas based on the combinations of chord aggregates.⁴⁹ The first symphonic work presenting the results of his new harmonic system was *Funeral Music* for strings.⁵⁰ It is also one of the most important works of the late 1950s in Polish music and truly symphonic in developmental processes and feeling for symphonic dramaturgy.

The piece, divided into four movements played attacca, is less than 14 minutes long. Its originality, compared to other Polish works of the time, lies in its style.

Lutosławski concentrated on harmony, determined by dodecaphony, although used in

'memento'. In her opinion, *Musica sinfonica* remains one of the most mysterious and enigmatic of Bacewicz's works. See Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz*, pp. 362-363.

⁴⁹ Cf. Charles Bodman Rae's analysis of Lutosławski's sound language and harmony in *The Music of Lutosławski*, pp. 49-74.

⁵⁰ In 1957 Lutosławski composed the Five Songs for soprano and piano, in which he used his new harmonic language for the first time.

an individual way which resulted in music completely different from the sound world of the Second Viennese School. Instead, Lutosławski remained much closer to the energy and rhythmical nerve of Bartók, evident especially in the second, most extended movement, 'Metamorphoses'. The central musical material of the piece is a twelve-note row. It is built carefully from semitones and tritones only, and this structure allowed the composer to control also the vertical aspect of the piece. This is especially significant in the framing outer movements, the twin-like 'Prologue' and 'Epilogue' (the latter mirrors the former), where he treats the basic musical idea canonically (Ex. 3.3.).

Ex. 3.3 Lutosławski, *Funeral Music*, first movement, opening

PROLOG
PROLOGUE WITOLD LUTOSŁAWSKI

♩ = 88

5/2

3

I Violoncello I solo

I Violoncello II solo

p

3 5

5

I Vla I solo

I Vc. I solo

I Vc. II solo

mp

3 5 10

I Vla I solo

I Vla II solo

I Vc. I solo

3 Vc. I

I Vc. II solo

mf

By using polyphonic technique, the composer creates a linear dramaturgy, developed and intensified by adding instrumental lines until reaching the complex texture of the full string orchestra. This gives a feeling of organic growth to the musical material. Interestingly, a similar idea was used almost two decades later by Górecki in the first movement of his *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* (1976).⁵¹

Funeral Music gathers momentum in the second movement, approaching its focal point, which is the beginning of the third movement, a twelve-bar 'Apogée' (see Ex. 3.4.). With its homophonic structure of chord aggregates, repeated in various combinations, in more or less dense texture, the 'Apogée' provides an exit for the accumulated tension, leading to the final 'Epilogue'. According to Thomas, 'it is in chords such as these, which verticalise all the twelve pitch classes, that Lutosławski found the key to his future development'.⁵²

Indeed, the harmonic aspect of music remained extremely important for Lutosławski, although after *Funeral Music* he soon changed his musical style. In this respect, this piece closes the first period in Lutosławski's music, containing both forward and backward-looking elements. *Funeral Music* remains one of Lutosławski's best achievements, in both its symphonic thinking and expressive power. His symphonism here is based on the organic growth and continuous development of an initial musical idea which is closer to the morphological than the syntactical type of symphonism (using Ivashkin's terms⁵³): the symphonic tension is built not from contrasted ideas but through the constant transformation of musical material. This aspect is further emphasised in *Funeral Music* by the use of the homogenous string orchestra.

⁵¹ see Chapter Four, pp. 274-275.

⁵² Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 97.

⁵³ See Chapter One, p. 28.

Ex. 3.4 Lutosławski, *Funeral Music*, end of 'Metamorphoses' and beginning of
'Apogée'

35

(230)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 230 to 232, and the second system covers measures 233 to 235. The instrumentation includes Violins I & II, Violas I & II, Cellos I & II, and Double Basses. The music is in 3/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamics. The first system ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The second system begins with a measure rest and continues with the same instrumentation. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *ff* and *p*.

(molto appassionato, quasi rubato)

Lutosławski, however, realised that he was not able to continue much further his path and decided to search for new means of expression and musical language. Inspired by Cage's aleatoric ideas, he invented his own version of micropolyphony, limited in its rhythmical aspect hence easier to control by the composer. This technique concerned a type of musical texture where the melodic content of each line was indicated in the score but the lines were not coordinated rhythmically and the performers played them ad libitum. By allowing the rhythmical flexibility of independent instrumental lines, he was able to achieve a new kind of musical

expression impossible to create in a traditional way, therefore called by Tomaszewski 'aleatory sonorism'.⁵⁴ At the same time, the harmonic content of such a texture remained unchanged.

The technique was called by Lutosławski 'limited aleatoricism' or 'aleatory counterpoint', though in fact it has not much in common with truly aleatoric ideas explored by Cage and his followers and should be more appropriately defined as a type of ad libitum technique. However, the term invented by Lutosławski indicated the innovative character of his technique and it soon became commonly used by both composers and musicologists when referring to this type of musical structure. As such, it will be also used in the present discussion.

The technique of controlled aleatoricism became one of the most characteristic features of Lutosławski's music in the next decades.⁵⁵ As observed by Thomas:

This [controlled aleatoricism] gave Lutosławski's compositions from 1961 onwards both a variety and a stylistic identity that made his music stand out not only from that of his compatriots but also from that of composers in other countries [...]. It was a truly imaginative leap, lending his music a resonance and character which had enormous compositional potential. From this moment, Lutosławski had secured his creative future [...],⁵⁶

Lutosławski presented his newly invented idea for the first time in *Jeux vénitiens* for chamber orchestra. The linear dramaturgy as well as harmonic transparency and organic growth of *Funeral Music* disappeared, giving way to new musical concepts and a format which alluded to the traditional four-movement symphonic model in its outline while its musical content was based on entirely new means.

The first movement, with its concept of refrains (ACEG) and episodes (BDFH), can be regarded as a kind of modern rondo. The materials of these alternating sections

⁵⁴ See p. 128.

⁵⁵ For more about Lutosławski's concept of controlled aleatoricism see Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, pp. 87-91.

⁵⁶ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 133.

are built with different degrees of aleatoricism and types of notation (Ex. 3.5 shows episodes B, D and F).

Ex.3.5 Lutosławski, *Jeux vénitiens*, first movement, notation, episodes B, D and F

The image displays three musical score excerpts from Lutosławski's *Jeux vénitiens*, first movement, episodes B, D, and F. Each excerpt shows a multi-staff orchestral score with various instruments including woodwinds, strings, and percussion. Episode B (top) is marked with a 3/4 time signature and a 'ca 3'' tempo marking. Episode D (bottom left) is marked with a 3/4 time signature and a 'ca 3'' tempo marking. Episode F (bottom right) is marked with a 3/4 time signature and a 'ca 3'' tempo marking. The scores are complex, featuring many notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The refrains are more vigorous, consisting of superimposed arabesque figures, while the episodes are slower and marked by more sustained sound layers. Each section starts with a chord which serves as a structural punctuation. This idea was used by the composer in later works based on aleatoric material, such as the String Quartet and

Second Symphony; a related idea would be also used much later in the Third Symphony (1983).⁵⁷

The second movement may be seen as the equivalent of a scherzo with its elusive play of delicate short aleatoric figures passed between strings and winds. The third brings a more lyrical atmosphere with short solo flute arabesques over sustained woodwind notes, coloured by harp and piano, punctuated by string chords. The last movement serves as the climaxing finale finished with a calming coda. It is the most intense movement, engaging opposing orchestral forces: each group creates its own sound quality which is juxtaposed with the others (strings, woodwind, brass, piano). This creates tension which is gradually intensified by shortening the consecutive entries of juxtaposed passages, overlapping them, and increasing their dynamic levels. This process leads from letter A to the climax at letter G, while from letter I the tension is gradually resolved until the appearance of a short coda at J.

This formal outline, with the emphasis put on the finale, hence referring back to the Romantic type of symphonic structure, was the first developed sign of the end-weighted model subsequently refined by Lutosławski, especially in the String Quartet and the Second Symphony (as will be discussed later). Therefore, *Jeux vénitiens* is the crucial piece in Lutosławski's music, in which he replaced the traditional musical means of melody and harmony by new expression based on aleatory counterpoint. (Although his aleatoric lines are carefully built harmonically, they result in a kind of musical magma, especially in the finale). By using the contrasted textures of instrumental groups, particularly in the last movement, he managed to operate them in a way which allowed him to create a symphonic development with gathering momentum and resolution. This manner of symphonic structure, referring to a Classical, syntactical type

⁵⁷ In the form of a four-note 'motto'; see Chapter Four, pp. 309-310.

of symphonism, marked by clear contrasts and their development, was merely indicated in *Jeux vénitiens* and found its mature realisation in Lutosławski's large-scale orchestral works from the late 1960s, the Second Symphony and in *Livre pour orchestre* (1968) especially (as will be discussed later).

Changing style II: Baird and Serocki

TABLE 2

Tadeusz Baird	<i>Four Essays</i>	1958
	<i>Epiphany Music</i>	1963
	<i>Psychodrama</i>	1972
Kazimierz Serocki	<i>Episodes</i>	1959
	<i>Symphonic Frescoes</i>	1963
	<i>Dramatic Story</i>	1968–70

Baird and Serocki represent the middle generation of Polish composers active after 1956. As with their older colleagues, such as Szabelski, Bacewicz and Lutosławski, their musical style was rooted in neo-Classicism. Both Baird and Serocki confirmed their symphonic talent in their first symphonies, composed in 1950 and 1952 respectively, but at the same time they carried some baggage of socialist realism.⁵⁸ After 1956 they both joined the avantgarde tendencies in Polish music and started working on changing their own musical styles. While Serocki, after experimenting briefly with dodecaphony and pointillism (*Musica concertante*, 1958), soon moved to exploring the sonoristic aspect of music, Baird remained more concerned with melody, the element abandoned by the majority of avantgarde composers. Their non-symphonic orchestral works will be given considered attention because Serocki did not compose any symphonies after 1953, while Baird's two late symphonies (*Sinfonia breve*, 1968; Third

⁵⁸ See Chapter Two, pp. 106–111.

Symphony, 1969) are not as successful symphonically as his minor orchestral works of the period.

An original trait in Baird's musical thinking is his connection with literature, evident not only in the titles of his compositions but often also in their structure. Baird was probably one of the few composers trying to adapt literary forms to music. He is the composer of *Four Essays* (1958), *Epiphany Music*, *Four Dialogues* (1964) and *Four Novels* (1967), among other pieces. The first of these works was *Four Essays* for orchestra. Its four-movement outline might suggest a reference to symphonic structure but it is rather a collection of four disparate miniatures, different in character and musical material and not creating any recognisable overall model. The first essay presents a sequence of statements (moving from the lower to the upper strings) which is indeed developed symphonically, leading to a climax and fading away. However, this is the only symphonic movement in the piece, not matched by what follows. The second essay is stylistically completely different and belongs to Baird's neo-Classical period with its vivid rhythmical phrases and instrumentation limited to woodwind.⁵⁹ The third essay combines the dance rhythms of the charleston with neo-Classical inflection, while the finale recalls the highly intense atmosphere of the first movement.

In the outer movements the composer uses dodecaphonic language echoing a highly intense Bergian lyricism (Baird discovered Berg's music in 1955 and found it very close to his own musical imagination), with long melodic lines and slowly changing harmonies. The music reveals thematic thinking in clear melodic phrases. As did his compatriots, Baird treats dodecaphony rather freely, repeating chosen notes and motifs, treating twelve-note material in a traditionally thematic way. In comparison to

⁵⁹ The material of this section was borrowed from an earlier Baird work, *Divertimento* (1956); see Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 99.

Lutosławski's *Funeral Music*, composed the same year, the *Four Essays* lacks overall dramaturgy, as well as a thoroughly developed symphonic argument. However, it reveals some features present and developed by Baird later, such as the tendency for using thematic, linear lines (mostly solo), usually based on large interval steps, a technique significant in *Sinfonia breve* and the Third Symphony. *Four Essays* remains a transitional piece in Baird's oeuvre, a stylistic mixture of old and new musical ideas.

He created a more original musical structure in his next orchestral piece, *Epiphany Music*. It is a one-movement work, lasting less than 13 minutes. The compositional technique used here was inspired by the writings of James Joyce, as explained by the composer:

The work's title results from an attempt to transfer to music the constructional method invented in the literature by James Joyce, which he applies consistently from his youthful *Epiphanies* to *Finnegans Wake*. *Epiphany Music* is therefore a series of short impressionistic sketches of an improvisatory character linked seamlessly together as an integral whole. It is a series of instantaneous, almost involuntary emotional manifestations; there is no pre-established schema in this piece and the sole formal determinant is the rapid and transient 'ebb and flow' of emotion.⁶⁰

What is relevant in this work is the independent solo cello part, which determines the structure of the entire piece (although it is not a concerto). *Epiphany Music* emerges from and fades away with the cello's delicate solo phrase, subtly accompanied by percussion (cassa piccola and gran cassa) and bass clarinet. By using the idea of continuous development for the main melodic idea, the composer creates a kind of linear dramaturgy directed through a sequence of rises and falls. The cello's main solo phrase evolves organically from a single cello note, coloured by the bass drum, into a more developed and richer musical thought (see Ex. 3.6.).

⁶⁰ Quoted in Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, pp. 121-122.

In the middle section of the piece, the cello disappears while its basic phrase is taken over by other instruments, such as the clarinet, flute and violin, and is subjected to textural and harmonic transformations. The last musical wave could be considered as the piece's climax (Fig. 120), resolved in the coda, which brings back a sequence of solo cello phrases, fading away 'niente assoluto'. Recalling an opening idea frames the piece and assures it a clear closure.

Ex. 3.6 Baird, *Epiphany Music*, opening

TADEUSZ BAIRD (1963)

System 1:

- Clarinetto basso:** 4, 2, 3, P.G., 4, Andante, delicatissimo, ppp, 2, P.G., 3.
- Cassa piccola (Gran cassa):** delicatissimo, c. h. 1/2 temp., niente assoluto molto soffice, molto in Gran pace, quasi niente, niente, niente, niente.
- Violoncello I solo:** molto sul tasto, P.G., molto sul pontic., P.G., quasi niente, (un pochino), niente, ppp, [un pochino] ppp, ppp.

System 2:

- Fl. p.:** 3, 4, 5.
- Vi. gr.:** 3, 4, 5.
- Cl.:** 3, 4, 5.
- I Timp.:** and. al corno, sfz, cresc., decresc., and.
- II Timb. s.c. (Timballo basso):** delicatissimo, ppp, quasi niente, ppp, niente in Timballo basso, con le dita, ppp delicato.
- Cemb.:** 3, 4, 5.
- Vc. I solo:** 3, 4, 5.

The main phrase of the cello solo is contradicted by the short rhythmical figures interrupting the slow musical flow and bringing an element of possible conflict. This element is also transformed into a more developed orchestral texture but is overcome by the main cello solo phrase (bb. 20-24). The contrast and tension between solo line and orchestral tutti is only suggested in this piece and will be developed and used more elaborately as a means for creating symphonic structure in Baird's later works, particularly in his symphonies. The idea of musical ebbs and flows based on the transformation of solo melodic lines, evolving slowly and usually of an elegiac character, helped to create his innovative musical world of expressive lyricism, so different from the music written by his compatriots. This was also Baird's single most individual contribution to the music of the 'Polish School'.

The significant change in Baird's compositional procedures can be seen in *Psychodrama* (1972), an orchestral piece which, despite its small scale (ca. 9 minutes), remains one of Baird's greatest achievements. It was written after the composer had created his two named symphonies, but he came much closer to the symphonic principle in this little piece than in any of his other works from the avantgarde period, the symphonies included. The very first chord of the piece catches the attention as it appears as a single event in the low register; then it is followed by pauses and the sustained harmonic on the violas quietly resounding (see Ex. 3.7).

This strong opening is completely opposite to the opening of *Epiphany Music*, which emerges delicately from the silence. Here the only similarity is the instrumentation favouring low registers. Together with the increasing dynamics and superimposed instrumental lines, the composer creates a texture of musical waves

known from previous pieces but now much more powerful. Each consecutive wave seems to grow: it takes more time to develop and uses denser textures to evolve and fall. This technique gives a feeling of musical development of a symphonic character. It recalls the structure of the first of the *Four Essays* with its sequence of statements, although now the musical material is more substantial and the idea of symphonic dramaturgy better drawn.

Ex. 3.7 Baird, *Psychodrama*, opening

The image displays the opening of Baird's *Psychodrama*. On the left is a full orchestral score, and on the right are piano reductions for P.G. (Piano Grand).

Full Orchestral Score (Left):

- Tempo:** Moderato
- Time Signature:** 4/4
- Key Signature:** One flat (B-flat).
- Instrumentation:**
 - Woodwinds: Flute (fl), Oboe (ob), Clarinet (cr), Bassoon (bn).
 - Strings: Violin (vi), Viola (vc), Cello (cb), Double Bass (db).
 - Percussion: Timpani (tmp), Snare Drum (lrs), Cymbal (cmb), Piano (pf).
- Score Structure:** The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes woodwinds, strings, and percussion. The second system includes violins, violas, cellos, and double basses. A vertical dashed line separates the two systems.

Piano Reductions (Right):

- P.G. (Piano Grand):** Two piano reductions are shown. The first reduction is for the first system of the orchestral score, and the second reduction is for the second system. Both reductions are in 4/4 time and one flat.

The dualistic tension is achieved by the confrontation of vertical blocks with the linear lines developing some quasi-thematic ideas. This concept is similar to the previously used juxtapositions of solo lines and orchestral tuttis but here Baird achieved a great degree of inner tension and created a convincing overall drama for the piece, even though it is quite short, by replacing the slowly evolving, rotational symphonism of the Romantic type, used by him so far, by confrontational, dialectical symphonic thinking closer to the Classical tradition .

The extremely dramatic character of *Psychodrama* corresponds well with its title. It is likely that the composer wanted to evoke some drama connected with a psychological state of mind, maybe even that of his own (he often admitted that his music expressed his own feelings and emotions). Nevertheless, the atmosphere of the piece confirms Baird's general attitude to composition:

For me music is something other or something more than organization of sound in time. [...] For me, means of expression are not a goal in themselves, for they merely serve to attain the goal which is more important than they are and which has been questioned by whole generations of musicians, critics, and musicologists. As is widely known, the existence of content in music, even in the widest sense of the word, has often been questioned by identifying it with form. For me, the division is quite distinct and easy to see.⁶¹

A quite different attitude was presented by Baird's colleague, Serocki. He had already shown his great ability to search for new sound qualities in his music from the early 1950s. As early as in 1952, in his *Suite of Preludes* for piano, he experimented with dodecaphony, so it was obvious that in the new circumstances he was likely to explore the most innovative techniques and means of expression. After 1956, he maintained his natural predilection for orchestral music, as presented in his works from the early 1950s (two symphonies, 1952 and 1953; Piano Concerto 'Romantic', 1950;

⁶¹ Grzegorz Michalski, 'New Music', *An Outline History of Polish Music*, ed. Tadeusz Ochlewski (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1979), p. 164.

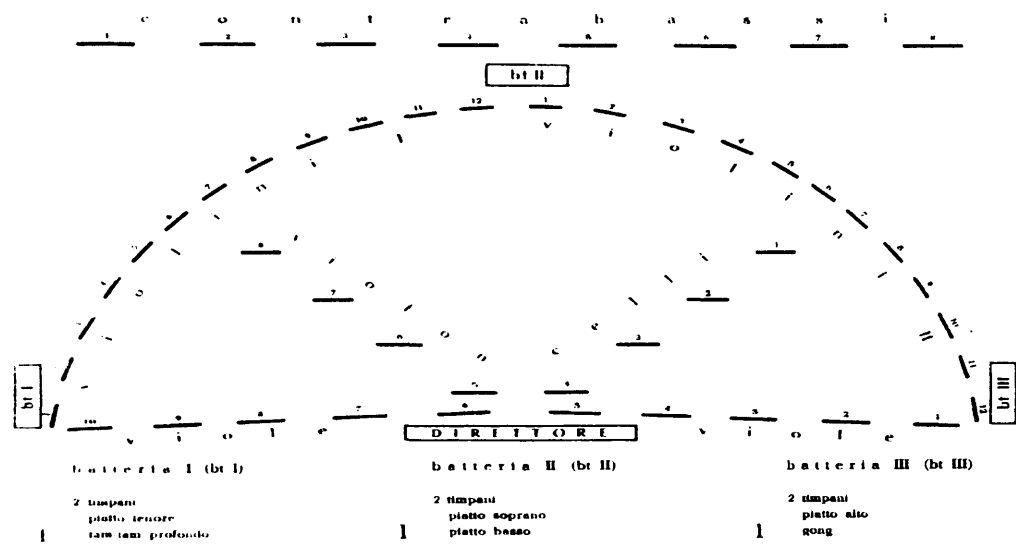
Trombone Concerto, 1953), and from the late 1950s he was developing two aspects of his musical style. On the one hand, he was purely experimental: he tried new techniques (the pointillist *Musica concertante*, the sonoristic *Symphonic Frescoes*), explored possibilities of open forms (*A piacere* for piano, 1963; *Ad libitum* for orchestra, 1973–77) and electronic music (*Pianophonie* for piano, electronics and orchestra, 1976–78).

On the other hand, he was trying to re-establish or rather recreate traditional orchestral genres. He did not stop writing concertos, even if they were unconventionally titled (*Forte e piano* for two pianos and orchestra, 1967; *Fantasia elegiaca* for organ and orchestra, 1972; *Pianophonie*), nor did he abandon orchestral forms with a symphonic character, as in *Episodes*, *Symphonic Frescoes* and *Dramatic Story* (1968–70). These three symphonic works are significant not only separately but also together, as they present the evolution of the composer's symphonic thinking, realised with innovative means of musical expression.

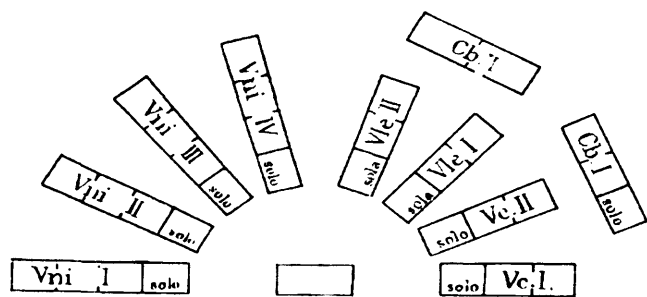
In *Episodes* for strings and three groups of percussion, Sierocki followed the idea of a spatial set-up used for the first time in his still rather neo-Classical Sinfonietta for two string orchestras (1956), his last work whose title referred openly to tradition. It is worth adding that similar ideas of placing an orchestra on the platform in a certain way were being explored by other Polish composers at that time. Spatial set-up can also be found in Lutosławski's *Funeral Music*, Górecki's First Symphony and Penderecki's *Emanations* (1958–59), as Ex. 3.8 shows.

Ex. 3.8 Spatial set-up in orchestral works composed at the end of the 1950s

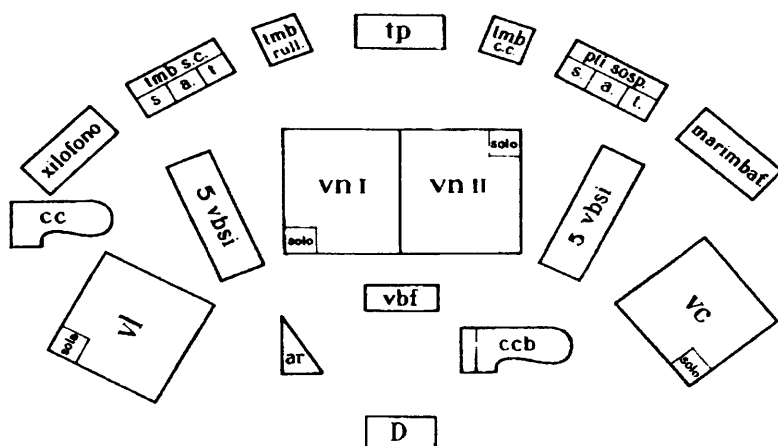
a) Serocki, *Episodes* for strings and percussion (1959)



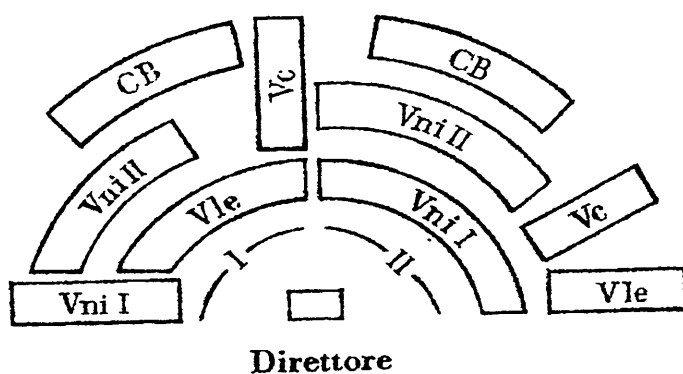
b) Lutosławski, *Funeral Music* for strings (1958)



c) Górecki, First Symphony for strings and percussion (1959)



d) Penderecki, *Emanations* for two string orchestras (1959)



However, only Serocki created a truly spatial music based on the effects of music traversing the platform. This music was created by short motifs introduced on a single instrument and passed to the next one, which resulted in varying dense musical textures and became the basis for the structure of the entire piece.

The formal outline of *Episodes* refers to a traditional symphonic order, as the overall one-movement framework is divided into four sections. 'Proiezioni' (bb. 1-92) serves as the exposition of the strings (see Ex. 3.9a), 'movimenti' (bb. 93-117) as the exposition of the percussion, 'migrazioni' (bb. 118-227) can be considered not only as a development of the strings' exposition but also, thanks to its fragile character, as the equivalent of a scherzo (see Ex. 3.9b), while 'incontri' (bb. 278-442) serves as a synthesising finale: it combines the musical ideas from the previous movements and leads to the climax. It is very likely that, after the anti-dramatic, pointillist *Musica concertante*, Serocki wanted to create a piece with a more traditional musical dramaturgy and decided to refer to the traditional symphonic outline, although filled with a new musical language. In *Episodes* the composer replaced thematic contrasts with two strongly opposing groups of instruments: strings and percussion.⁶² Rather traditionally, after presenting them in two expositions, their material is developed and then combined in the finale, which becomes the piece's centre of gravity. The first three episodes prepare the finale, hence the dramaturgy of the composition leads to the last episode which is the most intense expressively and the most complex structurally.

A similar formal outline was used by Serocki in his later symphonic works, *Symphonic Frescoes* and *Dramatic Story*. It also corresponds with the idea of end-accented form developed by Lutosławski, although the *Episodes* was composed two years before Lutosławski's *Jeux vénitiens*, not to mention his String Quartet and the Second Symphony, the pieces which crystallised Lutosławski's end-accented form.

⁶² A similar contrast was used also by Górecki in his First Symphony and by Penderecki in *Anaklasis*.

Ex. 3.9a Serocki, *Episodes*, opening

proiezioni

The musical score is arranged in a multi-staff format. At the top, a flute part (fl II) is shown with a measure number 5 in a box. Below this, the woodwind section includes multiple staves for ATc (Alto Saxophone) and other instruments, with dynamics like ppp and p. The string section includes staves for vni I, vni II, vle, vc, and cb, with various musical notations and dynamics. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics.

• - 60 →

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Ex. 3.9b Serocki, *Episodes*, 'migrazioni'

The image displays a musical score for 'Episodes, migrazioni' by Serocki. The score is arranged in four systems, each representing a different instrument: Vni I (Violini I), Vni II (Violini II), vle (Violoncello), and VC (Violoncello). The notation is complex, featuring various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (e.g., *f*, *ff*). The score is written in a modern, minimalist style, with a focus on rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. The Vni I system is on the left, Vni II is in the middle, vle is on the right, and VC is at the bottom. The score is divided into measures, with some measures containing multiple notes and rests. The overall layout is clean and professional, typical of a published musical score.

Serocki's idea, however, seems to be more traditional than Lutosławski's and more similar to the traditional model of a synthesising finale. Serocki's finale, bringing back the most important musical ideas of a piece, transformed and multiplied up to the final climax, fulfils one of the most important principles of symphonic music, that of the

recapitulation as resolution.⁶³ A recapitulation in Serocki's symphonic works serves then not merely as a repetition of the initial musical thoughts but as the centre of gravity in the overall, goal-directed structure of the piece.

In terms of musical language, it would be hardly possible yet to talk about sonoristic means in *Episodes*. Yet, the piece, composed one year after Baird's *Four Essays* and Lutosławski's *Funeral Music*, reveals a more unconventional musical language than theirs. While both Lutosławski and Baird were still concerned with harmonic and melodic aspects, Serocki abandoned any connections with tradition (even that of dodecaphony) in favour of dealing with purely sound textures, separated from a melodic-harmonic context and used spatially on the platform. Instead of traditional thematic figures, he used sound structures blurred harmonically and free from any recognisable melodic line. They create very dynamic musical material, fast-changing and propulsive, leading the musical drama up to the final climax. His musical style is completely different from the dense expressionistic atmosphere of Baird's music (based on long melodic lines) as well as from the harmonically oriented dramaturgy of Lutosławski's *Funeral Music*. However, in the sense of symphonic structure, Serocki remained closer to Lutosławski, as would be confirmed by his later works.

Serocki's search for new sound colours as components in building the symphonic structure of a piece was deepened in *Symphonic Frescoes*, which represents the trend of 'total sonorism'. In comparison to *Episodes*, *Symphonic Frescoes* presents a larger scale and weight, seen already in the scoring: it is written for large orchestra, including unusual instruments like mandolin and guitar (often used by Serocki from the 1960s onwards) and an extended body of percussion (four performers). The spatial element is not important here. *Symphonic Frescoes* is divided into three movements

⁶³ See Chapter One, p. 39.

(three frescoes), which are strongly contrasted in character. The first fresco is rather slow, bringing a mysterious, lyrical-poetic atmosphere with a quasi-Romantic dark mood, emphasised by using such instruments as double basses, timpani and bassoon. The contrasting second fresco is impetuous, characterised by short fast passages or, rather, sound strands of a very dense, polyphonic texture, moving quickly through the orchestral groups. The dynamic character of the music is emphasised by the loud dynamics and fast-changing motion, quietened only at the end of the movement. The third fresco is in two sections, starting with an extended episode for percussion supported by other instruments (piano, strings) that are treated percussively (see Ex. 3.10). This section is an impressive example of sonorism in music. Serocki created here an extremely original sound world characterised by rich percussive timbres and a combination of sonorities fully liberated from the context of pitch. This colourful opening leads to the second section of the final fresco, which is again a synthesising finale, recalling and developing elements presented earlier in the piece.

III

10

fregando
X con dita sulle corde

pf 2.

II vf

fregando

ppp

III mbf

fregando

ppp

IV bd

ppp

2
4 J-120

20

fregando con dita sulle corde

pf 1.

pf 2.

ar 1.

ar 2.

I xf

II vf

III mbf

IV btl

30

I mc

II trg

III pt

IV mc

28

fregando con unghie sulle corde

pf 1.

pf 2.

I tpbl

II chbl

I mc

II trg

III pt

IV mc

40

50

pf 1.

pf 2.

I tpbl

II chbl

III pt

IV tmb

60

pf 1.

pf 2.

I hh

II vf

III mbf

IV tmb

70

pf 1.

pf 2.

I mc

II trg

III pt

vn

vl

vc

vb

*) grać środkiem drzewca - col legno with the middle of the bow - col legno mit der Bogenmitte

Not only is the formal outline of *Symphonic Frescoes* a development and intensification of ideas introduced in *Episodes*, but so too is its musical language. Instead of single motifs, as used in *Episodes*, the musical material of *Symphonic Frescoes* is constructed from sound shapes of dense vertical structure (semitonal and

quartertone clusters) resulting from tightly superimposed instrumental lines. The majority of such figures reveal a characteristic inner structure based on harmonic expansion and contraction, for example a figure starts in unison and is expanded to an eleven-note chord and then returns to unison (Ex. 3.11).

Ex. 3.11 Serocki, *Symphonic Frescoes*, first movement, Fig. 30 (violins)

The image displays a musical score for violins, specifically Figure 30 from the first movement of Serocki's *Symphonic Frescoes*. The score is written for 12 staves, numbered 1 through 12. Above the first two staves, the notation 'pf 1.' and 'pf 2.' is present, followed by the dynamic marking 'fff' and the tempo/style instruction 'secco, marcatissimo'. The music itself is a dense, complex cluster of notes, primarily consisting of quarter and eighth notes, which are tightly superimposed across all 12 staves. A large, curved line arches over the entire cluster, indicating a single, continuous melodic or harmonic figure. The notes are arranged in a way that creates a rich, textured sound, characteristic of the 'sound figures' discussed in the text. The bottom of the score shows some lower-register notes on staves 11 and 12, including some triplets and quintuplets.

This technique allowed the composer not only to pass the whole figure up or down registrally but also to give it a wedge-like shape, more or less dense harmonically. These sound figures, although built of specific harmonic material, serve as purely sonoristic means in the material of the piece; their harmonic aspect is less important

than the resulting unusual shapes. The changing textures help to create the musical drama and structure of the piece: they traverse the orchestral groups, are superimposed, passed on, and subjected to various transformations in a way which allows *Symphonic Frescoes* to be seen as part of 'total sonorism'.⁶⁴ At the same time, all that motion of sound shapes assures the music a sense of development of a symphonic nature. A dualistic contrast, based in *Episodes* on using two different instrumental groups (strings and percussion) placed spatially, in *Symphonic Frescoes* is achieved through the sonoristic material of the first two frescoes, whose contrasting nature creates a high tension, gathering momentum in the final, third movement. It assures the piece a goal-directed structure, this time built with entirely sonoristic means of expression.⁶⁵

Serocki used a similar model in his *Dramatic Story* for orchestra, the piece which became 'the culmination of Serocki's large-scale orchestral pieces of this period'.⁶⁶ It is the longest and most sophisticated of the three works discussed here. Compared to Serocki's earlier pieces, the musical language of *Dramatic Story* is characterised by much denser textures filling much longer sections of the piece. At the same time, the vertical structure of chords is more relaxed thanks to their intervallic content, often consisting of thirds and sixths (instead of tight semitones, as in *Frescoes*), which results in chords with a less dissonant or cluster-like nature than in the composer's earlier music. The harmonic differentiation between chords results in a music which has a more harmonic than purely sonoristic character.

⁶⁴ For more details about Serocki's sonoristic language see Anna Masłowiec, 'Sonorism: Footprints and Fingerprints', *Muzyka*, No. 1, 2008, pp. 81-92.

⁶⁵ The fast motion of sound figures in time is reflected in the score of *Symphonic Frescoes*, which looks like a painting with clearly drawn shapes. The connection with painting is quite significant because of the title of the piece: the word 'fresco' finds its realisation in the sound colours created by the composer as well as in his way of notating music, which remains close to the strokes of a paintbrush (second movement particularly).

⁶⁶ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 153.

This aspect of Serocki's musical thinking, seen partly in *Symphonic Frescoes* and elaborated in *Dramatic Story*, provides a comparison with Lutosławski's compositional procedures. However, while Serocki used harmony as one of several musical means to create his original sound world, for Lutosławski the harmony and pitch organisation were the central aspect of his artistic explorations. Nevertheless, the attention to harmonic detail and a predilection for end-weighted formal outlines are common to both composers.

The formal structure of *Dramatic Story* maintains the idea of a goal-directed form ending with a synthesising finale. However, it brings elements not present in *Episodes* and *Symphonic Frescoes*, such as the lyrical cantilena of the middle section, harmonically clear chords and longer musical thoughts. This indicates a kind of synthesis of the composer's sonoristic explorations with more traditional musical thinking. Serocki, however, went no further along this path. After composing *Dramatic Story* he abandoned symphonic thinking in favour of exploring the possibilities of mobile forms in orchestral music (*Ad libitum*, 1973–77) and continued searching for original sound worlds in his numerous concertante pieces.

Powerful debuts: Penderecki and Górecki

TABLE 3

Krzysztof Penderecki	<i>Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima</i>	1960
	<i>Polymorphia</i>	1961
	<i>Fluorescences</i>	1962
	<i>De natura sonoris 2</i>	1971
Henryk Mikołaj Górecki	<i>Scontri</i>	1960
	<i>Refrain</i>	1965

As was mentioned before, in the late 1950s the Polish musical scene witnessed the powerful debuts of the youngest generation of composers, born in the 1930s. As was

soon evident, the most successful and most important of them were Krzysztof Penderecki and Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, both born in 1933. Górecki made his debut at the Warsaw Autumn in 1958; Penderecki made an even stronger entrance, winning all three main prizes in the composers' competition announced by the Polish Composers' Union in 1959.⁶⁷ Both these young individuals revealed an exceptional boldness in abandoning any traces of musical tradition as well as an extraordinary imagination in exploring the unknown sound qualities of music, which soon assured them a top place at the musical scene in Poland and opened the gate for international success. What also differentiated them from older colleagues was that they were too young to have had to engage with the socialist-realist period and even neo-Classicism was not that close to their aspirations. On the contrary, they felt completely free in their artistic choices and the avantgarde movement in Polish music after 1956 encouraged them in their feeling of musical freedom. From this perspective, they were in a better situation than their older colleagues who, faced by the new musical world, had to abandon or change their musical style. Both Penderecki and Górecki soon entered the field of symphonic music, contributing their innovative ideas.

In his first orchestral pieces, such as *Emanations* for two string orchestras and *Anaklasis* for percussion and strings (1959–60), Penderecki presented the most avantgarde face seen in Polish music. Instead of any conventional harmony or melody, the composer used various types of sounds and noises of generally unrecognisable pitch, mostly clusters or sounds achieved by using untraditional articulation. Therefore, his scores from the late 1950s and early 1960s are often treated as a catalogue of unconventional sounds, mostly for strings and percussion, or as studies in cluster music.

⁶⁷ He was awarded the first prize for *Strophes* for soprano, reciting voice and 10 instruments (1959) and the two equal second prizes for *Psalms of David* for mixed choir and percussion (1958) and *Emanations* for two string orchestras (1959).

At the same time, they exemplify all that the term 'sonorism' means and in the context of this trend they have been thoroughly analysed by Mirka⁶⁸ and Malecka.⁶⁹ Among these works, however, there are compositions which bring a certain amount of symphonic thinking, realised by new, sonoristic means of expression.

The first piece that is more than just a catalogue of unusual timbres is *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*, which remains not merely one of the best-known of Penderecki's works but also reveals a very intense sense of musical drama. Its great dramatic power combined with a highly sonoristic musical language brought huge international success to the young composer. The innovative sound world resulted in the piece being awarded the UNESCO Prize of the International Composers' Jury in Paris (May 1961). It also 'won an almost symbolic esteem for new Polish music, and was ranked as a milestone in its most recent development'.⁷⁰

The essentially ternary formal outline of *Threnody* is based on strong textural and dynamic contrasts, though not engaged with deeper developmental processes. However, the confrontation of opposing textures creates a musical drama which can be considered as symphonic. The composer, by using various kinds of clusters, more or less dense in content and shorter or longer in time-span, manages to create a new, sonoristic type of musical discourse. His clusters move the music forward much as themes and motifs worked in more traditional music.⁷¹ It is especially heard in the opening section, which starts with the superimposed sustained highest notes of the strings, later replaced by unpitched sounds of strings repeated rhythmically. The idea of

⁶⁸ Mirka, *The Sonoristic Structuralism of Krzysztof Penderecki*.

⁶⁹ Malecka, '1 Symfonia Krzysztofa Pendereckiego'.

⁷⁰ Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki: his life and work*, p. 28.

⁷¹ For the detailed classification of Penderecki's clusters and their function in musical structure of his works see Mirka, *The Sonoristic Structuralism of Krzysztof Penderecki*.

long, sustained clusters returns (Fig. 10); they are now overlapped and intensified gradually (Ex. 3.12).

Ex. 3.12 Penderecki, *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*, Fig. 16

16

12Vn 1-12

12Vn 13-24

10Vl 1-10

10Vc 1-10

8Cb 1-8

18'' 20''

flauto in quarant' / flauto in trent' / flauto in trent' / armonica

The dialectic conflict of the piece is achieved not only by using strong dynamic opposition in the opening bars but also by juxtaposing outer sections with the contrasted central part, dominated by vigorous movement of separate notes treated pointillistically. The final section closes the piece by recalling the powerful continuous clusters heard in the opening one, although it serves more as reminiscence than a full recapitulation as it is short and coda-like. In *Threnody* the composer confirmed that musical material based on innovative, sonoristic means of expression could create tension and sense of musical drama. He followed this path in consecutive works, gradually leaving the idea of strong

confrontation in favour of more developmental processes, as seen in *Polymorphia* and *Fluorescences*.

Polymorphia for strings was described by Thomas as a piece, 'where lapidary evolution is more central than confrontation, resulting in an organicism which is almost symphonic'.⁷² This evolutionary process was emphasised by using a C-major chord as the resolution and closure of the piece, however surprising this may have been in the context of a purely atonal, sonoristic work. The composer admitted that *Polymorphia* was written backwards: he started with the C major chord and built an entire structure directed towards this particular chord. According to Schwinger, 'Penderecki himself said that he wanted to release all the piled-up tension with this C major chord, to break free from all the existing pressure'.⁷³ In Schwinger's own opinion, 'the composer releases us from the chaos with that C major chord, which comes as a pure balm'.⁷⁴ Apart from this last chord, the musical language used by the composer remained similar to his previous works.

The piece's ternary outline is marked by different types of articulation: the long, sustained notes of the outer sections of the piece create contrast with the percussive effects of the middle one. But the important change occurred in the musical procedures, connected here with the slow and gradual transformation of sound or group of sounds to create an integral and closed formal outline. This resulted in a 'specific evolutionary form',⁷⁵ which Penderecki was often to use in later works. All the musical material in *Polymorphia* is gradually intensified and leads to the C major chord. This tactic creates

⁷² Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 179. Schwinger makes a similar connection while describing the final (third) section of the piece as 'the reprise of the first section, which completes the work'; see Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki: his life and work*, p. 133.

⁷³ Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki: his life and work*, pp. 131-132.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 134.

⁷⁵ Ludwik Erhardt, *Spotkania z Krzysztofem Pendereckim* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1975), p. 40.

the effect of a musical shock as a diatonic chord is certainly the last thing expected as a resolution of a purely sonoristic piece, in which any traditional sense of musical pitch and harmony has been completely forgotten. However, such a clear structural closure could mark the tendency towards the more traditional formal thinking of the composer, particularly that it was not the only instance in his music during the 1960s (cf. *Stabat Mater*, 1962–63, and *Capriccio per violino e orchestra*, 1967). This also corresponds with his attitude to musical form:

The form in which from the beginning to the end there is always something new happening is not at all the form; in this way usually bad composers act. I also dislike pieces, which could start and end anytime; this takes away something very important from music, and is not the expression of modernity. [...] pointillism as well as aleatoricism are completely alien to my understanding of music.⁷⁶

Indeed, the traditional sense of closed musical form certainly remained important for the composer. He never experimented with open forms but concentrated on creating his own musical language based on sonoristic qualities, which he engaged in building carefully constructed forms of a recapitulative character, either with a simple ABA in his early works or with more sophisticated structures later.

Penderecki's next piece, *Fluorescences*, closes the period of 'classic sonorism' in his music, summarising his most advanced sound explorations, this time with a large symphony orchestra (extended by extramusical instruments, such as the saw, the typewriter and the siren). The piece shares many characteristics of his earlier works. The composer develops here the concept of evolutionary form initiated in *Polymorphia*, but the crucial difference concerns the fact that the structure of the piece is now based on two different musical ideas introduced at the beginning of the piece: long, sustained sound layers and rhythmicised musical thought, initiated by the typewriter and imitated

⁷⁶ Tadeusz Zieliński, 'Współczesny kompozytor a tradycja. Rozmowa z Krzysztofem Pendereckim', *Ruch Muzyczny*, No. 12, 1963, p. 9.

by other instruments. Both these ideas serve almost as two subjects in a traditional sonata allegro. The elements constituting the second musical idea are already anticipated in the first (arhythmic repetition in woodwind, b. 12 and brass, b. 14) and both ideas are later synthesised in the finale (see Ex. 3.13a, b and c).

Ex. 3.13a Penderecki, *Fluorescences*, first musical idea

II IV VI VIII X

Fl 1-4
Ob 1-4
Cl 1-4
Fg 1-4

Cr 1-4
Tn 1-3
Tb 1-2

III Gng jav.

IV Tmt 1

VI Sirena

Vn 1-24

VI 1

Vc 1-8

Vb 1-6

Pf te

10" 9" 7" 9" 12"

*) Przy zabiegu z dźwiękami naturalnymi, tak aby dźwięki odpowiadali naturalnej wysokości głosu.
**) Rozciąganie dźwięków w kierunku wyższym i niższym.

Ex. 3.13b Penderecki, *Fluorescences*, second musical idea

Ex. 3.13c Penderecki, *Fluorescences*, synthesis of both musical ideas

Therefore, in *Fluorescences* Penderecki abandoned the idea of juxtaposing strongly contrasting larger sections (as still used in the ABA of *Polymorphia*) in favour of a more linear dramaturgy, based not on just one initial musical idea but on two different musical thoughts, introduced at the beginning, developed and synthesised in the finale. Compared with Baird, whose linear dramaturgy was static and anti-dramatic (connected more with the Joycean idea of the stream of consciousness), Penderecki put the emphasis on building a clear line of development of musical ideas to create a symphonic drama. He kept the principle of dualism as well as that of the recapitulation as resolution, building the structure close to the traditional symphonic model with an emphasis on the finale, as observed in Sierocki's symphonic works.

This aspect of symphonic thinking, combined with the imaginative soundscape of *Fluorescences*, achieved by using an extremely avantgarde, sonoristic musical language, allowed Zieliński to connect this piece with the atmosphere of Romantic music and the genre of the symphonic poem particularly.⁷⁷ This reference is not surprising when considering Penderecki's much later music (from the mid-1970s onwards) but at the time when *Fluorescences* was composed (1962), Penderecki himself preferred to emphasise its avantgarde side. In the concert programme written for the premiere of the piece (Donaueschingen, 1962) he wrote: 'In this composition, all I'm interested in is liberating sound beyond all tradition'.⁷⁸

Penderecki's relation to musical tradition was, however, soon to become much deeper. In his orchestral works, the next step on this path was made in the small-scale *De natura sonoris 2* (1972). While its predecessor, *De natura sonoris 1* (1966) had been

⁷⁷ Tadeusz Zieliński, '“Fluorescencje” Krzysztofa Pendereckiego (1964)', *Spotkania z muzyką współczesną* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1975), p. 153.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Mieczysław Tomaszewski, CD booklet for Naxos 8.554491.

‘painted with sound’,⁷⁹ with a formal outline indicated by the rule of contrast leading to a final climax, *De natura sonoris 2* brought a change in both its sound world and musical structure. It is homogenous in sound and based on one main musical thought, built of long sustained sound layers, transformed and interwoven through the various instruments (with a preference for low registers, typical of Penderecki’s later music) in a way which creates a continuous developmental process. In this respect, the piece anticipates the next period in Penderecki’s music, marked by the return to the late-Romantic type of symphonism (as will be discussed in Chapter Four).

This new aspect of *De natura sonoris 2* was described by Tomaszewski as ‘sonorist narration’.⁸⁰ Although he does not elaborate this term, it is clear that he wanted to emphasise the narrative aspect of Penderecki’s piece, not so obvious in his previous works. This view corresponds with that of Nikolska, who pointed out that *De natura sonoris 2* is the piece which gave the first sign of change in Penderecki’s formal thinking, indicating a processual type of form, with slowly developed linear dramaturgy and a fading coda (typical of the composer’s music in the 1980s).⁸¹ However, the piece which much more explicitly marked Penderecki’s shift towards the new musical territories and opened the period of ‘new Romanticism’ in his music was an orchestral work *The Awakening of Jacob* (1974). But before that happened, he decided to sum up the period of his avantgarde explorations in the First Symphony. Both of these pieces will be discussed later.

Górecki started his professional musical career in February 1958, with a monograph concert in Katowice, where he studied with Szabelski, and later that year

⁷⁹ Tomaszewski, CD booklet for Naxos 8.554491.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Irina Nikolska, ‘Z niektórych zagadnień twórczości symfonicznej lat osiemdziesiątych’, *Muzyka Krzysztofa Pendereckiego. Poetyka i recepcja*, ed. Mieczysław Tomaszewski (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 1996), p. 48.

with his debut at the Warsaw Autumn Festival, where his *Epitaph* was premiered. One year later he composed his First Symphony '1959', presented at the festival in Warsaw the same year (the piece will be discussed later). He soon confirmed his interest in orchestral music in *Scontri*, *Three Pieces in Old Style* (1963), *Choros I* and *Refrain*. The most important in the context of both symphonism and the evolution of Górecki's style, are *Scontri* and *Refrain*.

Scontri is the first Górecki piece written for large symphony orchestra (without oboes), with an extended group of percussion (eight players). Górecki used an unusual, spatial set-up for this large body of orchestra, although the spatial element does not seem to play a significant role in the deployment of the musical material. The main idea of the piece is based on the juxtaposition and confrontation of contrasted sound qualities, hence the title of the piece ('collisions' in English). The confrontation of opposed textures is especially strong in the outer of the six sections of the piece (see Ex. 3.14), while the middle sections (the second half of Fig. 8 up to Fig. 24) concentrate on exploring one group of instruments consecutively (strings, brass and woodwind, percussion with piano and harps). Therefore, after the dynamic and colourful exposition (Section 1: Fig. 1 – first half of Fig. 8), there come slow and quieter sections, bringing some relaxation after the tension of the opening section but also serving as the developmental part of the piece. The composer starts these developmental processes by recalling the string cluster texture which had opened the entire piece (Section 2: second half of Fig. 8 – Fig. 10), but he soon concentrates on exploring the sound possibilities of separate instrumental groups. Therefore, Section 3 (Figs. 11-14) concentrates on strings, Section 4 (Figs. 15-17) on woodwind and brass, accompanied by pitched percussion

with pianos, and Section 5 (Figs. 18-24) is devoted to unpitched percussion, coloured subtly by pitched instruments, including strings which appear at the later stage (Fig. 22).

Ex. 3.14 Górecki, *Scontri*, Fig. 6

The musical score for Górecki's *Scontri*, Fig. 6, is presented in two systems. The first system includes woodwinds (fl, cl, fg, cfg), brass (tr, cr, tn, tb), and strings (vn, vl, vc, vb). The second system includes woodwinds (fl, cl, fg, cfg), brass (tr, cr, tn, tb), and unpitched percussion (timb, t-t, tmb). The strings are represented by a large black block. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *f*, *mp*, *ff*, and *ppp*. A large black block covers the string parts in the second system. The score is numbered 15 and 38.

The main idea of collisions reappears in the last section of *Scontri* (Figs. 25-28), which serves as a recapitulation ending with a coda. All the orchestral groups (woodwind, brass, percussion and strings) play again together, juxtaposing different types of sound textures recalling those of the opening section (Ex. 3.15).

Ex. 3.15 Górecki, *Scontri*, Fig. 28

(28)

fl 72
40
fl
pc
cl
fg
cfg
tr
cr
tn
tb
pti
pti
cc
vn
vl
vc
vb
mf
f
sf
ord.
ord.

Despite the volcanic character of the music, the material and structure of *Scontri* are very precisely organised. Górecki used here the principles of serialism, especially the parameters of pitch, dynamic and duration, which are subjected to serial procedures. The musical material of the piece is ruled by one main row and three other series, used limitedly and associated with three instrumental groups: woodwind, brass and strings.⁸² This resulted in a piece which is still recognised as the most representative orchestral example of total serialism in Polish music, although Górecki's *Monologhi* for soprano and three instrumental groups (1960) comes closer to Boulez's example.⁸³ However, in *Scontri* Górecki used serial material and procedures, as well as sonoristic qualities, to create a musical structure which can be recognised as symphonic. The confrontational character of *Scontri*, operating with powerful orchestral masses, provides a useful comparison with Penderecki's *Threnody*, composed one year later.

Both works are based on strong expressive contrast and confrontation of main musical ideas. In entirely new musical languages, both composers managed to create works of a symphonic nature: each sound figure, particularly clusters, seems to arise and disappear, which results in a structure which moves the music forward and helps to build a musical drama of recapitulative character, closed in a simple formal model in *Threnody* and a more sophisticated structure in *Scontri*. Both works operate with extremely intense sound textures (strings only in Penderecki and full orchestra, without oboes, in Górecki). But while Penderecki operates mostly with sound shapes blurred harmonically, Górecki concentrates on musical material which is much more concerned with harmony. Therefore, while Penderecki created a sonoristic language free from any connection with pitch or harmony, Górecki's sound explorations remained more

⁸² For a detailed analysis of serial procedures used in *Scontri* see Thomas, *Górecki*, pp. 29-38.

⁸³ Thomas, *Górecki*, p. 27.

connected with traditional sense of musical pitch, although the result is new and original, and in this respect may be treated as sonoristic. Moreover, Górecki managed to create a more integral and developed structure in *Scontri*, compared to the much simpler model of *Threnody*.⁸⁴ Górecki, however, did not continue along this path but decided to relax such strict connections with serialism and look for solutions that are more individual, putting as much distance as possible between himself and Western techniques or trends. This affected also his symphonic thinking, although the new and significant ideas did not appear immediately.

The piece which became the turning point in Górecki's compositional path, also from the symphonic point of view, is *Refrain* for orchestra. As Thomas observed, 'in retrospect, *Refrain* appears to be a pivotal work, drawing from its predecessors and anticipating later compositions, sometimes at a remove of many years. In this sense, its role is fundamental'.⁸⁵ The elements derived from the previous works are especially presented in the vivid middle section of the tripartite *Refrain*, while the material of the outer sections brings a new idea, which initially astonished commentators and, as it soon appeared, dominated Górecki's musical style from then onwards. The composer himself admitted that his music since *Refrain* remained the 'music of one idea'.⁸⁶

This one idea, which fills the outer sections of *Refrain*, is the developed repetition of a main 'theme' created from a chordal string texture moving extremely slowly. The structure of the opening section is based on six repetitions of this refrain. Each repetition is built as a palindrome, each time extended harmonically and in its phrase length. The harmonic structure of the refrain is based on the whole-tone scale:

⁸⁴ It should be remembered, however, that *Threnody* is much shorter work; it lasts less than 9 minutes while the duration of *Scontri* is c. 17 minutes.

⁸⁵ Thomas, *Górecki*, p. 54.

⁸⁶ Henryk M. Górecki, 'Powień Państwu szczerze', *Vivo*, No. 1, 1994, p. 43.

each new statement adds the next note of the scale with the full six-note harmony achieved in the fifth refrain (Ex. 3.16 shows the first refrain – C, D flat, C – and the start of the second – C with D, D flat with E flat, etc.)

Ex. 3.16 Górecki, *Refrain*, opening

H. M. GÓRECKI (1965)
op. 21

1 5 3 5 3 ① 5 3 2 3
 26-28 *legatissimo e ben tenuto*
mp sempre

tr

cr

tn

pp *quasi pp*

vn I, II

vn III

vc

vb

This marks a significant shift away from the fully chromatic, serial material of his previous works. The idea of repeating a musical pattern, each time extended melodically and harmonically, creates a very slow musical dramaturgy, emphasised by the narrow melodic ambit of the main structure (an envelope of just a minor third during the whole movement). However, the developmental process is obvious as the music goes forward and some feeling of dramaturgical tension is achieved, also by creating a contradiction between a prolonged harmonic texture and a very narrow melodic line.

It is worth adding that each repetition of the pattern is 'signalled' by short punctuation on the brass, playing unison F sharp, later adding G sharp, both pitches concordant with the whole-tone scale on C natural. The tension of the opening is intensified by strongly contrasted material in the middle section. Contrast is evident in terms of tempo, orchestration, dynamic and the musical language as the composer uses fully chromatic material in this section, instead of the whole-tone harmonies of the outer parts. The primarily chordal nature of the previous section is still apparent but its character and expression is quite different. Górecki builds a pulsating, rhythmicised and propulsive structure of chords repeated by woodwind and strings, while brass and timpani make strong interventions using a hoquet-like technique known from *Scontri* (see Ex. 3.17).

This very dynamic, even aggressive, sound material leads to the climax marked by a powerful vibrating tutti cluster (Fig. 19), stopped twice by the appearance of quasi-aleatoric figures on the horns (Figs. 20 and 22), until it reaches its peak at the end of the section (Fig. 23).⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Similar aleatoric figures will also be used in later Górecki pieces, such as *Old Polish Music* and the Second Symphony.

Ex. 3.17 Górecki, *Refrain*, middle section

7 I 7⁽¹¹⁾ I

(cresc.) (mf)

ob
3.4.

cl
1.2.
3.4.

lg
1.2.
3.4.

tr
1.2.
3.4.

cr
1.2.
3.4.

tn
1.2.
3.4.

tp
1.
2.
3.

(ffff)

(cresc.) (mf)

vn
I, III
1.2.
3.4.
5.6.
7.8.

l.vc
1.2.
3.4.
5.6.
7.8.

The last part of the piece starts with a sustained whole-tone cluster which gradually gives way to separate chords until the pattern from the opening section reappears in full (Fig. 31; a reflection of Fig. 5). This time, however, the refrain does not increase but is reduced in a gradual diminuendo, emphasised by the reduction of instruments until just the cellos and double basses. This helps to quieten the tension accumulated in the middle section and brings the resolution at the end with the last two repetitions of the C natural, played in unison by all strings and woodwind (which join the previously reduced texture of cellos and double basses), with added interval C-F sharp on brass, being a reminiscence of the brass pitches from the opening section of the piece.

Refrain can be seen as an example of confrontational, dialectical symphonic thinking based on the strong contrast between two opposing sections of the piece. The development of the initial refrain, leading to the dynamic and stormy central section with its powerful climax, as well as a kind of reprise appearing afterwards, can be considered in the context of symphonic structure, although realised in a basic, ABA model. However, Górecki's most original contribution here is connected with using an evolving chordal musical idea, each time transformed, hence serving as an albeit slow musical development. This kind of symphonic structuring could be more adequately labelled as 'slowed-down' symphonism. This feature was entirely new not only in Górecki's music but in Polish and foreign music as well. That is why in Thomas's opinion the role of the *Refrain* overcame other Polish achievements and the piece became 'one of the most distinctive contributions to contemporary music in the 1960s'.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Thomas, *Górecki*, p. 51.

Górecki developed this technique in his later works, going even further especially in the reduction and limitation of the musical material, which were at the same time connected with the increasing of expressive tension, usually combined with contemplation. Droba called this technique 'constructivist reductionism', indicating that it constituted the composer's musical language between *Refrain* and *Beatus vir* (1979).⁸⁹ In this respect, *Refrain* anticipated later works, such as *Canticum graduum* and *Old Polish Music* (both written in 1969), and especially his symphonies – the Second Symphony 'Copernican' (1973), and, even more so, the Third Symphony 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs', which marked another crucial shift in Górecki's musical language and feeling for symphonic structure (as will be discussed in Chapter Four).

The majority of orchestral pieces presented in the above discussion confirmed that symphonic thinking was present in orchestral music written after the avantgarde explosion in Poland. Such pieces kept the most important principle of symphonic music, which is the dialectical conflict with its development and conclusion, even if the traditional thematic processes were replaced by innovative techniques and means of expression far from any connections with tonality. Moreover, in many works a final recapitulation served as a resolution, confirming the importance of this principle of symphonism in twentieth-century music. However, because of the rather small scale of orchestral works discussed above, they could hardly represent symphonic thinking in large-scale forms. Nevertheless, they played an extremely important role not only in testing new sound possibilities and technical explorations of musical material but also in building more extended symphonic structures. This was soon to result in symphonies as

⁸⁹ Krzysztof Droba, 'Od Refrenu do Beatus Vir czyli o redukcjonizmie konstruktywistycznym i ekspresjonizmie muzyki Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego', *Przemiany techniki dźwiękowej, stylu i estetyki w polskiej muzyce lat 70.*, ed. Leszek Polony (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 1986), pp. 85-97.

such, which in many ways drew on the experience of the orchestral music composed in the first avantgarde decade in Polish music.

3.4. The symphony in the avantgarde period

With two exceptions, all the composers whose orchestral music was discussed in the previous section also composed full-scale symphonies by the middle of the 1970s. The two exceptions are Bacewicz, who died in 1969, and Serocki, who, after composing *Dramatic Story*, concentrated on various kinds of concertante music. Baird composed his two late symphonies at the end of the 1960s (1968, 1969), thereafter concentrating on vocal and concertante music. Górecki wrote two symphonies (1959, 1972), different in outline and musical language. Penderecki summarised his sonoristic exploration with his First Symphony (1973). Szabelski's Fifth Symphony (1968) closed the period of his avantgarde explorations as well as his entire musical career. Lutosławski introduced a new symphonic model in his Second Symphony (1965–67) and *Livre pour orchestra* (1968), the piece which was intended to be his Third Symphony.⁹⁰

All these symphonies present different ways of symphonic thinking and various types of symphonism. They all are significant for Polish music, confirming the reappearance of the genre in the late 1960s and its weight in the composers' thinking. There are also symphonies by other composers, who were of minor significance only or who pursued neo-Classical or post-Romantic idioms,⁹¹ and they, with the exceptions of Mycielski and Krzysztof Meyer (b. 1943), will not be examined here. The other exclusion concerns émigré composers, of whom particularly Panufnik and Palester

⁹⁰ Cf. Reyland, 'Akcja' and Narrativity in the Music of Witold Lutosławski, p. 194.

⁹¹ Cf. footnote 44 on page 129.

contributed to the genre with their highly individual musical languages.⁹² Neither, however, after leaving Poland (Palester in 1949, Panufnik in 1954), had much contact with the country; their names and music were banned and practically unknown in Poland, therefore they did not take part in the transformations which Polish music witnessed from the late 1950s onwards. Some of Panufnik's symphonies, however, will be discussed briefly where they are parallels between his musical ideas and some trends developed within the country.

Between tradition and experimentation: Mycielski and Meyer

Mycielski, whose music by 1956 represented neo-Classical trends (including the First Symphony 'Polish', 1951), remained independent of the innovations of the 'Polish School', following his own musical path in his four later symphonies (1961, 1967 – *Sinfonia breve*, 1972, 1977). After the avantgarde shift in Polish music, he tried to modernise his musical language although he was far from making such radical stylistic changes as did Szabelski. His musical style was still inspired by the ideas of neo-Classicism, as may be observed in his Second Symphony (1961), based on dissonant, freely treated dodecaphonic material mixed with either highly syncopated rhythms and quasi-pointillist texture (first movement) or with superimposed polyrhythmic figures (second movement, see Ex. 3.18).

In his later symphonies Mycielski replaced this kind of language with more transparent textures, his harmonies are less dissonant (especially in the Fourth Symphony, which is almost euphonic) and sharp rhythmical figures are not so exploited. The composer put more emphasis on creating long sound layers, although

⁹² Panufnik composed ten symphonies altogether (1948, 1957, 1963, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1980–81, 1987, 1988–90), Palester five (1934–35; 1941–42; 1948–49; 1948–52 and 2nd version in 1972; 1977–81).

Ex. 3.18 Mycielski, Second Symphony, second movement

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system includes staves for Fl. p, Fl. II, Cl. I, Cl. II (in sib), Trgl., Tmb., Ar. (with 'Ret. Soli' marking), and Pfte (with 'crescendo' marking). The second system includes staves for Fl. p, Fl. II, Cl. I, Cl. II (in sib), Trgl., Tmb., XII., Ar. (with 'Mib, Soli' marking), and Pfte. A rehearsal mark (70) is placed above the second system. The score features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings.

PWM - 4071

they have more in common with the musical impressionism of Debussy or the aura of Szymanowski's works than with sonorism or avantgarde innovations known from the music of other Polish composers of that time. Mycielski tried to build his own musical language by using dodecaphonic material, although treated individually, according to

his own system.⁹³ Compared to the symphonies by Baird or Lutosławski (not to mention the much more stylistically radical Górecki and Penderecki), Mycielski remained traditional in his musical style. His symphonies lack dialectical conflicts and are based rather on the continuous development of musical ideas, therefore they continue the Romantic, morphological type of symphonism (*Sinfonia breve* particularly).

Meyer, who made his symphonic debut in 1964, studied with Penderecki in Kraków and with Boulanger in Paris, and this dual influence found a reflection in his music. He showed his predilection for Classical genres from the beginning of his musical career, writing string quartets, concertos and symphonies already in the 1960s. The musical language of his early symphonies (1964, 1967, 1968), however, uses many sonoristic ideas known from Penderecki scores, such as pointillist technique (First Symphony), string clusters (First and Second symphonies), an extended role for the percussion (First and Third symphonies), as well as aleatoric figures typical of Lutosławski (Third Symphony particularly). Meyer combined these with precise formal structures clearly divided into movements (First Symphony, four movements) or sections (the one-movement Second and Third symphonies).

Meyer's individual contribution to sonoristic language can be seen by the incorporation of choral parts in the structure of both the Second and Third symphonies. In each work the choir appears in the second part of the piece, after a very intense orchestral tutti passage, separated by a pause from the entry of the choir. The choral part is also treated sonoristically, uses unconventional vocal techniques and becomes yet another layer of the texture (see Ex. 3.19). Despite these ideas, Meyer followed the concepts of his older colleagues, exploring the sound possibilities of the orchestra rather

⁹³ For more details about Mycielski's dodecaphonic system see Iwona Lindstedt, *Dodekafonia i serializm w twórczości kompozytorów polskich XX wieku* (Lublin: Polihymnia, 2001), pp. 289-300.

than creating a truly innovative and original musical style. His symphonies combine sonorism with formal precision and clarity of musical drama, closer to the Classical type, marked by the juxtaposition of different musical ideas which create a dialectical tension, developed and leading to the final resolution.

Ex. 3.19 Meyer, Second Symphony, Fig. 33

33

b. di tmb. al margine

1 batt. di trg. al margine

2 con le dita, al meta

3 con spazzole, al meta

4 b di tmb. alla cpa

5

fff

coro

precipitoso

S

A

T

B

fff

An avantgarde experiment: Górecki's First Symphony '1959'

Górecki wrote his first symphony in 1959 and this date became the title of the piece.

The premiere, which took place at the Warsaw Autumn that same year, became an important event because of the work's radical language. Its technical difficulties meant that the first performance omitted the second movement, a pointillist and technically complicated *Antiphon*. The work consists of four movements, a division which can be seen as a thread, however thin, linking the piece with the Classical symphonic tradition. The titles of the movements are archaic: 'Invocation', 'Antiphon', 'Chorale' and 'Lauda'. Therefore, they recall rather the tradition of medieval Gregorian chant than that of the symphony, following the specific types of musical structure connected with choral singing.⁹⁴

In fact, only 'Chorale', thanks to the melodic line in the violas, makes direct reference to the traditional meaning of its title, as the idea of spatial, antiphonal technique is not particularly connected with 'Antiphon' but emphasised by the symmetrical set-up of the orchestra (see Ex. 3.8). However, the material of the symphony does not reveal any particular connection with the spatial set-up of an orchestra, as was the case in Sierocki's *Episodes*, with its idea of the spatial traversing of the music. Instead, Górecki decided to emphasise the strong contrast between two engaged orchestral forces, particularly in the first movement.

Each movement of the symphony has a clear formal shape. 'Invocation' is based on the four repetitions of the main musical 'theme' juxtaposed with the passages for percussion. 'Antiphon' is divided into two sections, with the climax in the second, ending with a percussive coda. 'Chorale' is a little ABA structure with the short outer

⁹⁴ Antiphon and chorale was also used as the titles for the middle sections of the composer's *Epitaph* composed in 1958, see Thomas, *Górecki*, p. 18.

sections performed by strings (mostly a three-line texture) with added percussion, and the middle B section based on the chorale line on the viola, with piano counterpoint. The final 'Lauda' has an AA'B+coda structure, with B performed by percussion only and leading to the climax of this movement (Fig. 20-23). A short coda (Fig. 24) recalls the block structure of the first movement of the symphony but its appearance has nothing to do with the idea of a synthesising finale as presented in works by Serocki or Penderecki; here it serves more as a distant reminiscence than the synthesis of musical material.

The main dualistic contrast of the piece is achieved by the orchestration. The symphony is scored for strings and percussion alone (the percussion includes a keyboard section), two opposing instrumental forces which create the dramatic tension, presented most powerfully in the first movement, 'Invocation'. A great innovation in this movement can be seen in the unconventional treatment of both groups. The strings, usually connected with lyricism and melody, appear here in aggressive sound blocks, while the percussion is treated in the opposite way: usually strong and powerful, it creates delicate and fragile rhythmical figures. The musical language of the symphony is based on serial technique. In the 'Invocation' the row determines not only the horizontal but also the vertical aspect: each of the twelve melodic lines presents a version of the twelve-note row and each chord does likewise, as in a matrix.⁹⁵ (see Ex. 3.20).

⁹⁵ For a detailed analysis of serial procedures see Baculewski, *Współczesność*, pp. 256-260, and Thomas, *Górecki*, pp. 18-24.

Ex. 3.20 Górecki, First Symphony, entrance of string texture

The image displays two musical staves from Górecki's First Symphony, illustrating the entrance of the string texture. The left staff is marked *ff sempre* and shows the initial entry of the strings. The right staff shows a continuation of the texture. Both staves include parts for Violin I (vn I), Violin II (vn II), Viola (vl), Violoncello (vc), and Double Bass (vb), all divided into two parts (div. a 2). The notation shows a dense, rhythmic texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a complex, layered sound.

The above process is repeated three times and each repetition is separated by a contrasting passage for percussion, which has a much thinner texture and its own rhythmical pattern. In fact, the percussion begins the whole piece with a short, two-bar phrase, which in the ensuing presentations is extended. These two opposing forces – percussion and strings – are clearly separated at the beginning of the piece, but the composer combines them in the final section of the ‘Invocation’. It is hardly possible to say, however, that there is a synthesis of previously presented thesis (percussion) and antithesis (strings) in the sense as presented in the finale of Sierocki’s works. This is caused by the fact that both forces, percussion and strings, are not equal in their structural and dramatic functions; the string texture dominates hugely and finally in the last repetition the percussion simply joins it, being overwhelmed by the strings’ powerful nature.

The level of tension created in the ‘Invocation’ is maintained in the ‘Antiphon’ and finally resolved in the ‘Chorale’ and ‘Lauda’. The material of these later

movements gives way to a primarily contrapuntal construction, based on serialist textures close to Boulez's example. This is especially true in the second movement, where Górecki creates an extremely tight network of superimposed instrumental lines (in the middle section particularly), which makes it the most complicated for performers (Ex. 3.21).

Ex. 3.21 Górecki, First Symphony, 'Antiphon'

The musical score for Górecki's First Symphony, 'Antiphon', is presented in a multi-staff format. The staves are labeled as follows: tmb (timpani), xlf (xylophone), mrbf (maracas), vbf (vibraphone), pf (piano), ar (accordion), vn I (violin I), vn II (violin II), vl (viola), vc (violin), and vb (violin). The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines. Above the staves, the following time signatures are indicated: 7/32, 2/16, 5/32, 3/16, tp 2/16, and 2/4. The music features a dense network of superimposed instrumental lines, with various dynamics such as *ppp*, *pp*, *ppp sempre*, *ff*, and *fff* marked throughout. The notation includes a variety of note values, rests, and articulation marks, creating a complex contrapuntal texture.

The textures of 'Chorale' and 'Lauda' are much more transparent. 'Chorale' uses strings almost exclusively, with only a little participation from the percussion and the piano; 'Lauda', on the other hand, is based on the sharp rhythmical motifs of the percussion instruments, with a smaller role given to the strings. In the 'Chorale' the composer introduced a clearly audible 'chorale melody' in the violas. Some elements from 'Invocation' appear in the material of the later movements. This is seen especially when the pointillist passages are from time to time coloured by the sound combinations reminiscent of either chordal string figures or short percussion phrases. This method assures the piece some level of material integrity, although it is not particularly sophisticated.

The principle of integration is also supported by echoing the chordal texture of the first movement at the end of the piece, before resolving it onto the final interval of a perfect fifth, A-E (see Ex. 3.22). The idea of ending the symphony with a consonant perfect fifth (A-E) may provide a comparison with Penderecki's *Polymorphia* (composed in fact two years after Górecki's symphony), which ends with a C major chord. Górecki's ending does not make such a strong impression because of its extremely delicate nature (violins only, *pppp*). In this almost inaudible final interval, Górecki wanted to make a subtle allusion to mountaineers' music,⁹⁶ while Penderecki used a different tactic, according to which the tension of the whole piece is released with the strongly unexpected tonal chord.

⁹⁶ Thomas, *Górecki*, p. 22.

Ex. 3.22 Górecki, First Symphony, final bars

66

25) 3/4 3/4 2/4 4/4

tmb
c.c.

pti a.
s.
t.

tutti molto sul pontic. e non vibrato

vn I
div. a 2

vn II
div. a 2

vl
div. a 2

vc
div. a 2

pp sempre

vb
sul pontic.
pp

4'

Górecki's First Symphony can be described as an avantgarde symphonic experiment. Its connection with tradition of the genre seems to be rather superficial (four movements, some degree of material integration), although the concept of a carefully structured overall form, with the emphasis put on the most dramatic and intense first movement followed by the more relaxed later parts, reveals deeper

connections with the symphonic thinking of a Classical type. This also means that the composer used the chosen serial material and pointillist technique not just for creating a new world of sounds and effects but to create a precise formal construction alluding to the symphonic large-scale model. This may explain why the composer named the piece a symphony: he tried to fill an old framework with new musical content, keeping a precisely built formal structure. This attitude reveals a deeper level of symphonic thinking than the musical language itself might suggest. However, the material used by Górecki (maybe with the exception of the extended string blocks of the first movement) seems to be too amorphous and not significant enough musically to create real musical drama and symphonic dramaturgy based on the weight of arguments and a certain amount of developmental work.

The 'stream of consciousness': Baird

After composing several orchestral works, Baird decided to try out his new musical language in a larger symphonic format, which resulted in *Sinfonia breve* and the Third Symphony. The title of the first piece implies a symphonic piece on a smaller scale and of lesser weight than a symphony. All this describes Baird's composition precisely. As in many earlier works, including *Four Essays* and *Epiphany Music*, Baird was inspired by literature. This time the titles of the symphony's three movements are derived from Greek tragedy: 'Epos', 'Epeisódion' and 'Elegéia'. Following their ancient meaning, 'Epos' exemplifies a great epic poem; 'Epeisódion' can be translated as an episode (between acts of a drama) and 'Elegéia' is the lyrical part with the character of a farewell. In the score, only the first and second movements have numbers, what might indicate that the third is in fact the second part of a big second movement, as is

sometimes suggested by commentators.⁹⁷ However, the composer himself recognised his *Sinfonia breve* as a three-movement piece.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, 'Elegeia' follows smoothly from the 'Epeisódion', maintaining the character of its last notes, although the composer separated the two movements with a general pause.

The weight of the argument in the piece is put on the first movement, though all of the movements are very similar in musical material and expression. The first movement is the only movement with a directional line of musical drama, leading to a climax and resolution. The composer creates here four large sequences of musical waves, which are each time extended in length and instrumentation and intensified in expression. Each wave rises and falls, usually giving way to short solo lyrical lines, emphasised by using such instruments as oboe, clarinet, flute or cello. The appearance of solo lines brings moments of relaxation which act as transitions between the musical waves of the orchestra. The fourth wave (starting in b. 47) leads to the dramatic climax, prepared by intensifying dynamics, rhythm, texture and tempo (*poco a poco avvivando*) until the 'explosion' of several *ad libitum* layers after a short general pause.

Such an explosive climax, carefully prepared and finished with the rather aggressive sounds of an *ad libitum* orchestral tutti, is similar to the solution used by Lutosławski in his Second Symphony (finished one year before Baird's work) and later used also by Penderecki in his First Symphony. This type of climax is usually resolved through the softening of the orchestral mass; this also takes place in 'Epos' and is finished with a solo oboe emerging out of the tutti (see Ex. 3.23). This brings a short coda, starting with the solo oboe, joined first by clarinet and later by other winds (bassoon, horn, bass

⁹⁷ Teresa Chylińska, Stanisław Haraschin and Bogusław Schaeffer, *Przewodnik koncertowy* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1991), p. 45.

⁹⁸ Tadeusz Baird, note in programme book of 15th Warsaw Autumn (Warszawa, Związek Kompozytorów Polskich, 1971), p.112.

clarinet and flute) in subtle dialogues. They finally give way to a lyrical string theme, which recalls the musical material from the beginning of the movement, although now with different character and sound colour (tutti at the beginning, strings at the end).

Ex. 3.23 Baird, *Sinfonia breve*, 'Epos', end of the movement

This is a page from a musical score, specifically the end of the movement for Baird's *Sinfonia breve*, 'Epos'. The page is numbered 16 at the top left. The score is written for a large orchestra, with parts for woodwinds, brass, and strings. The woodwind section includes flutes (fl I, II, III), oboes (ob I, II), clarinets (cl I, II, III), and bassoons (bs I, II, III). The brass section includes trumpets (tr I, II, III, IV), trombones (tb I, II, III, IV), and tubas (tuba I, II). The string section includes violins (vn I, II), violas (vi), cellos (vc), and double basses (cb). The score features various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *pia. 27*, *pp*, *f*, and *ppia*. There are also performance instructions like *more in cl b* and *more in g e*. The page ends with a measure containing a *poco a* marking.

Più andante
(molto tranquillo)

90
Adagio

poco ai -vi -van -do

Poco più mosso

Largo

[illegible]

Neither of the later movements have such a directed structure, although they are based on similar sequences of rises and falls of musical material, organised by the juxtaposition of solo lines with a strong orchestral tutti; but they do not create any dramatic tension and are more repetitive or rotational than developmental. Each sequence, solo and tutti, is short and fragile and moreover is stopped before it can be developed into a more extended structure. This idea of stop-start makes the character of these movements rather static. Moreover, the composer uses similar music material in the whole piece, which assures it a certain degree of integrity but, at the same time, does not help to create dialectic tension. Although the principle of integration is symphonic, *Sinfonia breve* lacks the counterbalance of dynamic development and dramatic conflict in its overall structure. The juxtaposition of solo and tutti does not move the music much forward; it rather seems to circulate, repeating the same ideas. This is emphasised especially by the frequent return to the characteristic arabesque shape of the solo lines, which reveal a strongly melodic, even lyrical aspect, underlined by the instrumentation (flute, oboe). This confirms Baird's predilection for melodic thinking on a level unseen in any other Polish composer of that time.

Baird's Third Symphony is in every respect a continuation and development of *Sinfonia breve*. It starts exactly where *Sinfonia breve* ended – even the first solo line of the clarinet seems to continue the solo timbres that close its predecessor. Once again, the composer decided to base his symphonic work on the juxtaposition and contrast between solo melodic lines and orchestral tutti. This time the symphony consists of four movements, which do not bear extramusical meaning: 'Poco andante improvvisando',

‘Andante moderato’, ‘Non troppo allegro’, ‘Moderato ma grave’.⁹⁹ They all are short and relatively slow, very similar in expression and musical character, but the balance between the movements and overall model is different from *Sinfonia breve*. The weight of argument is not as obvious as in the preceding work, where the emphasis was put on the first movement. In the Third Symphony all movements seem to rework the same material and evoke very similar musical expression, and each also has its own climax. However, the first three movements with their local discourses between lyrical solo lines and strong orchestral tutti, and with their local climaxes, find their culmination in the finale, which not only brings the main climax of the piece (Fig. 30) but also creates a new type of resolution, not seen in Baird’s music so far. This takes the form of a powerful tutti, at the very end, which replaces the usual ‘niente’ finales of previous works. This time the composer decided to resolve the piece in a complex twelve-note chordal texture, in which triadic elements may be observed (C major and B major chords in horns, E minor and A minor in cembalo, A major in bassoons, B flat major in clarinets; C major + note B flat in flutes; see Ex.3.24).

In comparison to *Sinfonia breve*, the musical material of the Third Symphony is definitely more substantial, especially in the tutti sections, which are extremely intense and dramatic, engaging more extended orchestral forces and more complex textures (usually based on three or more sound layers). The character of the symphony is more monumental. What is characteristic of the whole piece is that solo melodic lines are not only longer and more developed than in *Sinfonia breve* but, in addition to providing the exit from the orchestral mass (as observed in Ex. 3.23), they can also, as here on the clarinet, lead directly into tutti sections (see Ex. 3.25).

⁹⁹ However, at the recording of the symphony, released by Polish Radio in 2003, the first movement has a title ‘Evocation’ and the last one ‘Epilogos’. The score published by Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne in 1985 has no titles.

Ex. 3.24 Baird, Third Symphony, finale

Ex. 3.25 Baird, Third Symphony, first movement, Fig. 30-40, clarinet entrance into tutti

The musical score is divided into two main sections, Fig. 30 and Fig. 40. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'.

Fig. 30: This section shows the initial entry of the woodwinds and strings. The instruments listed are:

- cl I (Clarinet I)
- fg II (Flute II)
- tamt (Tamtam)
- ptto (Percussion)
- ar I (Acordeon I)
- ar II (Acordeon II)
- vi I & II (Violins I & II)
- VC I-4 (Violas I-4)

Fig. 40: This section shows the full tutti ensemble. The instruments listed are:

- cl (Clarinet)
- fg II (Flute II)
- tamt (Tamtam)
- cel (Cello)
- ar I (Acordeon I)
- ar II (Acordeon II)
- pf (Piano)
- cmb (Cymbal)
- vn I (Violoncello I)
- vn II (Violoncello II)
- vi I (Violin I)
- vi II (Violin II)
- vc (Viola)
- cb (Contrabass)

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (e.g., *pp*, *mf*, *mp*, *f*, *ff*). The text 'Barbero' is visible in the right margin of the Fig. 40 section.

Besides these lyrical or even elegiac solo thematic lines, performed always by solo clarinet (first movement) or oboe (second and fourth movements, with more dialogues of woodwind in third movement), the composer uses also a thematic passage which is related in musical material but contrasted in expression. It appears in the strings in the first movement (b. 18), making contrast not only with the initial clarinet line but also with the intense preceding tutti section. It serves almost as a second subject in a traditional sonata first movement, but the composer does not develop this possibility later in his musical discourse, although he alludes to this theme sometimes (as in the coda of the second movement). Therefore, this string theme appears to have been far less important for the composer as a means of creating any dialectic tension in his symphony than the basic contrast between solo and tutti sections. The long solo lines in fact weaken the feeling for musical drama and cause the music to become static; the composer does not sustain any argument and therefore halts any possible symphonic development. This results in the somewhat spasmodic or even hysterical character of the piece, reflecting more the state of mind or soul of the composer's 'I', with the free flow of his 'stream of consciousness', than a thoroughly developed symphonic form.

Baird never hid the fact that his music reflected his personal experiences. But what worked in shorter works, such as *Epiphany Music* or the later *Psychodrama*, did not fully succeed in his symphonies. The composer's idea of basing whole works on the same musical material undoubtedly guaranteed them a high level of integrity, which fits symphonic principles, but at the same time it deepened the static character of the music. This is connected with the fact that the principle of dualism, based in Baird's symphonies on the contrast between solo and tutti, was not developed onto a symphonic level (this worked much better in his concertante pieces, such as *Concerto lugubre*,

1975). The constant repetitions of the main musical idea (solo lines), appearing in various instrumental colours, refers to the late-Romantic concept of rotational symphonism based on the continuous development of an initial idea. However, Baird's technique remains closer to the variation technique used by him since *Four Essays*. Therefore, he did not take full advantage of the late-Romantic procedures (although in many aspects his music is close to the aesthetics of late-Romanticism and musical expressionism), concentrating more on returning to initial musical ideas than on developing them on a symphonic scale. In this respect, the structure of the Third Symphony, even if end-weighted, has nothing in common with the precisely developed end-accented form of Lutosławski nor with the goal-directed models of Sierocki. Baird is also far from the dialectical symphonism based on strong contrasts as presented by Górecki and Penderecki.

However, both *Sinfonia breve* and the Third Symphony remain examples of Baird's highly original musical style, very different from the symphonic music of his compatriots and more deeply rooted in the Romantic tradition. Baird's predilection for melody and lyricism was exceptional and assured him a separate place in the history of Polish music. His late symphonies remain the individual interpretations of symphonic genre, representing more a psychological 'stream of consciousness' than a precise formal model. The composer himself was aware of that weakness, admitting almost a decade later:

The problem of a large-scale symphonic form was always in front of me. Perhaps from the perspective of form, *Four Essays*, *Erotics*, *Dialogues* and other works from the 1960s are more perfect there because the principle of structure is adequate to the musical content and homogeneity of the musical material. Aiming to escape this sphere and working to overcome a dramaturgy of large-scale symphonic form, this took me a couple of years and the result was not immediate; hence my dissatisfaction with the Third

Symphony. The first large-scale piece I am satisfied with is *Goethe-Briefe*, and later ones are *Concerto lugubre* and *Scenes*.¹⁰⁰

The synthesis of sonoristic explorations: Penderecki and Szabelski

After over a decade of sound explorations, Penderecki decided to compose a symphony. So far, he had avoided using generic titles in favour of more descriptive names, free from any formal associations. This time, at the beginning of the 1970s, he felt able to face the symphony. It should be remembered that already in the middle of the 1960s he had shown the first signs of returning to musical tradition, in the *St Luke Passion* (1965). Now, he decided to synthesise his sonoristic experiences in a large-scale symphonic form.

Penderecki's First Symphony was initially planned as a five-movement piece with a central, extended passacaglia framed by four shorter and symmetrically placed movements, entitled 'Arché 1', 'Dynamis 1', 'Dynamis 2' and 'Arché 2'. According to Erhardt, the idea came to the composer in 1967 (the piece was finished in 1973) during a stay in Ravenna.¹⁰¹ *Arché* and *Dynamis* were the names of angels Penderecki saw in the mosaics in Ravenna and their dualistic (as he called it) nature inspired him to compose a symphony. 'Arché' ('pre-beginning') brings or initiates the musical material and ideas, while 'Dynamis' ('power', 'activity') develops and transforms them in many different ways and is much more active in character. This opposition creates the main dualistic tension of the piece. Initially the composer wanted to repeat the second 'Dynamis' and 'Arché' after the central passacaglia, in reverse order, but finally he gave up the idea of the central movement, realising that it was not necessary. The four-movement outline creates a full-size symphonic structure and does not lack anything in

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Irina Nikolska, 'O ewolucji stylu Tadeusza Bairda', *Muzyka*, No. 1-2, 1984, p. 27.

¹⁰¹ Erhardt, *Spotkania z Pendereckim*, p. 200.

its inner dramaturgy. The mirror symmetry of this form is obvious, although it is more sophisticated than merely a simple reversed repetition of the first two movements.

Instead, the material of 'Dynamis 2' and 'Arché 2' is transformed, bringing many new ideas besides recalling some of those already used.

It is not only the four-movement model that refers to the traditional symphonic format but also the role of the movements, which bring some references to the generic pattern. 'Arché 1' serves as a kind of exposition. Its main musical ideas are later developed and transformed in 'Dynamis 1' and particularly in 'Dynamis 2', which not only presents a variety of musical activities but also brings the musical drama to the final climax. The symphony is completed with 'Arché 2', which serves as a short coda, summarising all the musical events and resolving all the tensions in a quiet end. The role of 'Dynamis 2' in the structure of the piece is much more important than merely referring to a symphonic scherzo, as has often been observed by commentators.¹⁰² Its animated and vivacious character brings this immediate connection, deepened by the fact that it is the third movement of the symphony (as in the Classical model). However, its animated nature helps to create a more directional line of development than in the clearly sectionalised 'Dynamis 1'. It becomes clear that the first two movements lead to 'Dynamis 2'; they initiate and develop the musical drama before it reaches its climax in this movement (Figs. 21-23). However, the centre of gravity in this symphony is not so clear, as will be discussed below.

'Arché 1' introduces two types of sound textures, creating a dualistic opposition: the percussion pattern of frusta, vibraslap and pizzicato strings, and the contrasting section based on string 'whispers', which emerge over trudging bass C

¹⁰² Erhardt, *Spotkania z Pendereckim*; Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki: his life and work*.

naturals which anticipate one of Penderecki's favourite low-register textures. (Ex. 3.26a and b).

Ex. 3.26a Penderecki, First Symphony, 'Arche 1', opening musical idea

Arche 1

1 $\text{♩} = 104$

KRZYSZTOF PENDERECKI (1973)

P.G.

flr

vb-al

mbf

vn

vl

vc

vb

2a

2

c di l.

b di l.

ar

pf

vn

vl

vc

vb

7,8

5,6

ord. 3. stacc.

ord. 3. stacc.

Ex. 3.26b Penderecki, First Symphony, 'Arche 1', second musical idea

These two ideas are completed with a sustained single A natural on the horns at the end of the movement. Together, they fulfil the implication of the principle of integration, as they constitute the musical material for the whole symphony. While the first two ideas create a basis for later transformations and developments, the A natural serves as a point of stability, which was even interpreted by Zieliński as a symbol of a 'sounding Absolute' in the dramatic musical world of the symphony.¹⁰³ Indeed, the appearance of a single pitch line brings a moment of peace and helps to create smooth transitions between the more intense and dramatic sections. Using a pitch centre was a new element in Penderecki's music, being a signal that he had started to abandon purely sonoristic thinking.

This does not mean, however, that sonorism is not apparent in this piece. On the contrary, Penderecki's sound imagination allowed him once again to create a very original and impressive sound world. But he limited unconventional sounds and means

¹⁰³ Tadeusz A. Zieliński, *Dramat instrumentalny Pendereckiego* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 2003), p. 38.

of articulation, paying more attention to the pitch aspect than in his earlier works. This can be seen in using the characteristic texture which Nikolska called 'fan-like',¹⁰⁴ a term which is derived from the delicately clustered string whispers from the second section of 'Arché 1'. This is a melodic passage built by passing a quartertone motivic pattern from one instrument to another (Ex. 3.27).

Ex. 3.27 Penderecki, First Symphony, 'Dynamis 1', example of fan-like textures

¹⁰⁴ Irina Nikolska, 'O ewolucji twórczości instrumentalnej Krzysztofa Pendereckiego', *Muzyka*, No. 1, 1987, p. 44.

This figure allowed the composer to achieve an effect different from the clusters used in his previous pieces but no less imaginative and sonoric in its nature. It serves in building musical drama as, by superimposing more and more of them and combining them with a faster tempo and louder dynamic, the composer increases the musical tension, as in the approach to the main climax of 'Dynamis 1' (Figs. 15-15a).

'Dynamis 1' is the longest and most extended movement, bearing two climaxes, in its first and last sections, the second of which may be seen as the main one. In 'Dynamis 2' the musical drama comes to a focal point at Figs. 21-23 but the climax is not as strong as that of 'Dynamis 1'; instead of one sound explosion the tension is sustained by using five repetitions of a punctuating chord (grouped 2+3) separated by pauses and short aleatoric passages (Figs. 23-24; see. Ex. 3.28), which recall those from the climax of 'Dynamis 1' but are much slower and less aggressive. As a result the power of the climaxing chordal section is softened and the musical tension relaxed.

This is why the symphony does not have a precise centre of gravity, although, from the perspective of musical dramaturgy, the role of the third movement is crucial. It is possible to analyse the whole form of this symphony as divided into two main movements: 'Arché 1' and 'Dynamis 1' as the first, introductory or rather expository movement, and 'Dynamis 2' with 'Arché 2' as the second, main movement.¹⁰⁵ This interpretation parallels Lutosławski's idea of end-accented form and this connection is underlined by the fact that the main climax of 'Dynamis 1', culminating in the explosion of aleatoric lines, is similar to the idea used a few years earlier by Lutosławski in his Second Symphony. The aleatoric passages ('Dynamis 1' and 'Dynamis 2') also recall Lutosławski's textures but it should be remembered that by the

¹⁰⁵ Julian Haylock, CD booklet for EMI Classics, Matrix 17, 5 654162.

end of the 1960s Lutosławski's ideas were being broadly adapted by other Polish composers, including also Baird and Górecki.

Ex. 3.28 Penderecki, First Symphony, 'Dynamis 2', climax, Fig. 23

70

23 J-126

The musical score is for a large orchestra and includes various instruments and sections. The instruments listed on the left are:

- pc (Percussion)
- fl (Flute)
- ob (Oboe)
- cl (Clarinet)
- cl b (Clarinet in B)
- fg (Fagott)
- tr (Trumpet)
- cr (Corni)
- tn (Tromboni)
- tb (Tuba)
- gr. c (Grande Corno)
- trap (Trappista)
- vn (Violini)
- vl (Violini)
- vc (Violini)
- vb (Violini)

The score is divided into two main sections. The first section, marked with a circled '23' and 'J-126', features a complex, dense texture with many notes and rests. The second section, marked with a circled '23' and 'J-126', features a more sparse texture with fewer notes and rests. The score is written for a large orchestra and includes various instruments and sections.

2
4

1
fl 2
3
1
ob 2
3
1
cl 2
3
cl b
1
tg 2

P.G.

24

25 poco meno
2
4 J-114

71

1
tr 2
3
1
cr 2
3
4
5
1
2
tn 3
4
tb

f *p*

gr. c
tmp

1-12
vn 13-24
v1 1-8
vc 1-8
vb 1-6

f

In fact, Penderecki's formal model of the symphony is different from Lutosławski's end-accented form and more connected with traditional arch form. His strategy of recalling at the end of the piece the musical thoughts evoked at the beginning was present already in his early works, realised either in a simple arch or ABA forms (*Anaklasis*, *Threnody*) or in more developmental works (*Polymorphia*, *Fluorescences*, *De natura sonoris 1* and *De natura sonoris 2*). The material of the First Symphony continues and develops this method but at the same time the overall model is more mature and results from the more thoroughly developed musical material. Therefore, the closing 'Arché 2', while short, is a kind of recapitulation, which not only recalls initial musical thoughts from 'Arché 1' but also makes a brief synthesis of the whole material. In this sense, Penderecki's model is closer to the traditional model of the symphony with a synthesising finale (however abbreviated) than to the innovative Lutosławski's format (which will be analysed below).

Penderecki's First Symphony was written on commission from the Perkins factory in Peterborough and, confronted by its aggressive sound world, some critics tried to interpret it as 'mechanical music', inspired by engines, etc.¹⁰⁶ Although this was not Penderecki's idea, the language of the piece does allow alternative interpretations. Zieliński called this piece an 'anti-symphony' (comparing it with the idea of the anti-novel), as it is completely free from any themes, melodies or even more substantial intervallic motifs. But on the other hand Zieliński admitted that it is an instrumental drama, like the majority of Penderecki's works. He even interpreted this symphony in the context of cosmic ideas (unlike those connecting it with the music of machines), according to which the piece symbolises a chaotic material of the universe, stabilised by the pitch centre A. Without looking for any extramusical interpretation, it was clear that

¹⁰⁶ See Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki: his life and work*, p. 76.

the First Symphony closed the avantgarde period in Penderecki's music. The composer himself was aware of this, when he admitted shortly after finishing the piece: 'After composing *St Luke Passion* I created a style based on combining many elements from my earlier music with some ideas taken from electronic music. This synthesis reached its critical stage in my Symphony.'¹⁰⁷ His next orchestral work, *The Awakening of Jacob*, indeed brought a significant stylistic shift, opening the new chapter in Penderecki's music (as will be discussed in Chapter Four).

Penderecki was not the only composer who, after several years of avantgarde experimentation, decided to synthesise his new musical language with more traditional formal models in the form of a large-scale symphony. A slightly different case is represented by the much older Szabelski. He decided to return to the symphonic genre after a decade of sound experiments¹⁰⁸ and in 1968 composed his Fifth Symphony. The piece tries to use his recent experiences in creating a symphonic form. It is a kind of large-scale symphony-cantata with textless choir and organ. It was considered by Leon Markiewicz as the composer's opus summa,¹⁰⁹ in which he combined the elements of music from his long musical career. The neo-Classical clarity of formal structure, which is in one ABA movement, is mixed with complex musical textures, contrapuntal and multilayered, recalling Szabelski's earlier neo-Baroque procedures. Elements of sonorism are seen in the organ and choral part particularly, which are used not as independent musical voices but as timbres enriching the orchestral palette with their own sound qualities: the composer uses clusters in organ and meaningless syllables in the choir.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Erhardt, *Spotkania z Pendereckim*, pp. 216-217.

¹⁰⁸ See pp. 131-132.

¹⁰⁹ Leon Markiewicz, *Bolesław Szabelski. Życie i twórczość* (Kraków, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1995), p. 102.

The combination of all these elements resulted in a piece which synthesises the whole of Szabelski's musical output. It is similar to Penderecki's First Symphony in its summing-up of the composer's avantgarde period, but it is much more backward-looking, reaching to Szabelski's early symphonic language. While Penderecki's work closed only the first period of his creative life, Szabelski's symphony came at the end of his career.

Large-scale end-accented form: Lutosławski and Panufnik

Since writing *Jeux vénitiens*, Lutosławski had been working simultaneously on developing his harmonic language (using the technique of aleatory counterpoint) and the idea of end-accented form.¹¹⁰ After abandoning tonal or post-tonal references (cf. *Funeral Music*), the composer was looking for other types of formal structure with which he could create a musical drama with entirely new musical means. Lutosławski always wanted to pursue what he understood to be the listener's perception and this aspect was crucial for him while working on new large-scale structures.

The main purpose of a piece of music is that it should be experienced by the listener. [...] I understand the process of composing above all as the creation of a definite complex of psychological experiences for my listener, the fulfillment of which is on the whole extended throughout the greater number of performances of the same work.¹¹¹

Following this attitude, the problem of closed forms was very important for him and he even prepared a lecture devoted to this issue.¹¹² Considering the process of perception, Lutosławski decided that the first section, or sections, of a piece should have an

¹¹⁰ The term was first used by Steven Stucky in the context of Lutosławski's music; see Stucky, *Lutosławski and his music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 130.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Stucky, *Lutosławski and his music*, p. 126.

¹¹² In: *The Orchestral Composer's Point of View: Essays on Twentieth Century Music by Those Who Wrote It*, ed. Robert Hines (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), pp. 128-151.

introductory character, which would slowly engage the listener's attention and prepare him for the appearance of the main movement, characterised by propulsive musical action leading to a climax and resolution.¹¹³ This formal idea remains in fact close to the Romantic type of symphonic structure, with the emotional climax situated in the final stage of the piece,¹¹⁴ which is not surprising if one considers Lutosławski's attention to Beethoven and his symphonic procedures. Lutosławski, however, wanted to create his symphonic form with using innovative musical means. The end-accented outline had already been initiated by him in *Jeux vénitiens* but in more mature form was realised first in the String Quartet and then in the Second Symphony. The symphony was at the same time the first large-scale orchestral piece (it lasts ca. 30 min.) in which Lutosławski attempted to use his new formal model.

Like the String Quartet, it is built as two balanced movements. They are equal in duration and totally contrasted in character. They also play different roles in the overall structure of the symphony, following the implication of their titles, 'Hésitant' and 'Direct'. 'Hésitant' has an unsettled, somewhat chaotic character. It consists of seven short episodes divided, after the second episode, by a refrain, which then reappears six times (the last repetition is developed and leads straight to the beginning of the second movement). The movement's musical flow is interrupted by pauses, which appear always before each episode and refrain, separating them clearly. Furthermore, each episode itself cannot develop smoothly as it is stopped during its course by two more pauses. The pause near the beginning creates the effect of a double start; and the second pause stops the music before the episode is really finished. Therefore, no musical action

¹¹³ The connection of Lutosławski's concept with the process of musical perception was broadly reported by commentators and by the composer himself. The expression 'musical action' was often used by Lutosławski and in fact occupies a crucial position in his formal concept, as was thoroughly analysed by Reyland in *'Akcja' and Narrativity in the Music of Witold Lutosławski*.

¹¹⁴ See Chapter One, pp. 16-17.

or real development can be achieved. This determines the static, stop-start character of the whole movement, fitting Lutosławski's formal concept, according to which 'the first movement [...] is preparatory, introductory in character. It is supposed to excite the listener's curiosity in order that he may get an appetite for something more substantial.'¹¹⁵

The episodes are differentiated by instrumentation and only the percussion performs in them all. The first episode has the character of an introduction: it is a kind of fanfare played by trumpets, horns and trombones, followed directly by the second episode, with no refrain between them. All the episodes, although performed by different instruments, remain similar in texture, rhythm and character. They consist of unstable, superimposed instrumental lines, repeating short motifs *ad libitum*. The last episode is the most extended, as is the last refrain.

Each refrain is performed by different instruments: oboe, cor anglais and bassoon in different combinations (three instruments each time, e.g. 2 oboes + cor anglais, etc.), and has a texture and rhythmical shape different from the episodes. In comparison to the aleatoric, lively figurative lines of the episodes, the refrain is based on long sustained notes and is slow and peaceful in character. Also its intervallic content is different, as it operates with two three-note cells only, compared to the episodes, which contain the full twelve-note construction resulting from superimposed instrumental lines, each of them using only carefully chosen pitches. Therefore, the refrain is also contrasted harmonically (see Ex. 3.29).¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Nikolska, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski*, p. 95

¹¹⁶ For a detailed harmonic analysis of the episodes and the refrain see Stucky, *Lutosławski and his music*, pp. 159-162.

Ex. 3.29 Lutosławski, Second Symphony, refrain and the beginning of third episode

8

ob.

c.ing.

9

ob.

c.ing.

P.G.I"

1° pousuimé et de notes d'opéra (8), se c'est de degré d'or | répéter jusqu'au signe du chef (9), puis jouer jusqu'à 11

10

cor.

P.G.

II gr. c.

P.G. (1)

h. de l'opéra (composé)

ar.

cor.

II tmb. rull.

gr. c.

ar.

All these contrasts suggest a dualistic opposition which might create symphonic discourse but in fact does not because each of the episodes and refrains is stopped before entering any stage of development. Even the seventh, and longest, episode is also stopped, giving way to the last refrain. This is the longest of the refrains; the composer increases here the instrumentation by adding trumpets, trombones and tuba. They join in the refrain after it is first presented in the usual instrumentation. This solution allowed Lutosławski to move the whole structure of the refrain down to a low register and enable a smooth transition to the second movement, which starts with the double basses (see Ex. 3.30). The appearance of the string section at the beginning of 'Direct' emphasises one of many differences between the two movements, as neither the episodes nor the refrain in 'Hesitant' used the strings. This instrumental group appeared only twice in the first movement, close to the end of the first and last episodes, playing a punctuating close-position twelve-note pizzicato chord, each time repeated once. The role of the string section is much more exposed in the second movement of the symphony.

'Direct' is built as a purposeful, highly intensive musical drama, or action, as the composer used to call it. It starts pianissimo in the low registers of the double basses and develops gradually to the dramatic climax of the orchestral tutti at Fig. 153. Short episodes and refrain from the first movement have given way to a broad musical idea, developed slowly but continuously from the beginning of 'Direct' until the climax and final resolution. The small-scale polyphonies of the first movement are replaced by the multi-layered texture of the second. In both movements Lutosławski used aleatory counterpoint almost entirely; the only exception is the central, a battuta part of 'Direct' (Figs. 133-153), leading straight to the piece's climax.

Ex.3.30 Lutosławski, Second Symphony, transition between 'Hésitant' and 'Direct'

30

fg

trba

trbni

50

51

52

trbni

tb

53

trbni

tb

54 P.G.

55

56 P.G. I¹¹ (STRINGS 101)

The increasing tension of the second movement has some moments of relaxation (e.g. the beginning of Figs. 123 and 125), but the line of directional development never stops. Successive stages are marked by the introduction of new groups of instruments (winds and brass at Fig. 107, percussion at Fig. 120; and Fig. 133 – a battuta), as well as by the shortening of rhythmical values and the raising of dynamic levels. Moreover, sections become shorter and each of them starts with chordal punctuation, which marks the accelerating musical action. This process, deepened by using aleatory counterpoint combined with changing textures, seems to be an improvement of the technique used by the composer in the last movement of *Jeux vénitiens* and it helps the symphony to gather momentum. In the most intense section (starting in Fig. 133), the dense *ad libitum* texture is exchanged for a metred pulsation of the orchestral groups. This is the only section in the symphony in which Lutosławski used metre (3/4) and its role in approaching the climax is crucial. Fast moving orchestral groups are united in the orchestral tutti in a regular unison rhythm, called by the composer ‘deliberately primitive’¹¹⁷ (from Fig. 145). It is gradually accelerated and culminates (after being stopped twice by short general pauses) in the powerful climax marked by the explosion of an *ad libitum* texture with its multi-layered polyphony of aleatoric lines (Fig. 153).

The climax is resolved by a gradual dynamic and textural diminuendo which leads to a slow and quiet epilogue for strings (Figs. 158-160). This is marked by subtle motifs in the double basses (repeating notes G flat-F with their quartertones, moving down to F-E flat at the end) played over a delicate quartertone cluster (embracing a dyad E flat-F) in the upper strings until the music fades away. It is worth indicating that this is yet one more quiet ending in a Polish symphonic work of the avantgarde period, which confirms that this way of resolving tension was definitely one of the most

¹¹⁷ Stucky, *Lutosławski and his music*, p. 164.

popular and fruitful (other examples include Baird's *Sinfonia breve* and Penderecki's First Symphony).

Lutosławski's Second Symphony realises his plan, according to which 'Direct' creates in every sense a strong opposition to 'Hesitant'. As explained by the composer:

It is only in a 'Direct' that the full orchestra takes the stage, music develops continuously, and the former 'uncertainty', 'paucity' and 'timidity' disappear. The listener had the right to anticipate this movement already for some time [...].

That is why counterpointing the two movements of my Symphony I tried to create in the first a kind of 'low pressure'. Only in this condition I imagine my listener to be fully ready to perceive the much denser sound matter of 'Direct'. In attempting a score of more than thirty minutes one should take into account the listener's 'capacity' and make allowances for his staying powers [...].¹¹⁸

However, in the case of the Second Symphony, Lutosławski's interest in the listener's perception, although rather unusual in the period of the musical avantgarde, resulted in a piece which is not fully satisfying artistically. The second movement is thoroughly developed in a symphonic sense; it remains the main and most important part of the piece and its direct musical action has a strong impact on the listener. The problem concerns the first movement, which seems to fail in its attempt to interest the listener and encourage the anticipation of the main movement. The sequence of episodes and refrains seems too long and too static to keep the listener's attention for 15 minutes. The idea of juxtaposing calm refrains with vigorous and figurative episodes does not succeed in creating dialectical tension any more than the juxtaposition of solo and tutti sections were to do in Baird's symphonies. As a result, the 'lower pressure' that Lutosławski wanted to achieve in this movement seems too low.¹¹⁹ It also deepens the feeling that the overall structure is not well balanced and the musical action not

¹¹⁸ Lutosławski in interview with Tadeusz Kaczyński, quoted in *Lutosławski*, ed. Ove Nordwall (Stockholm: Wilhelm Hansen, 1968), p. 115.

¹¹⁹ On May 2nd, 2009, Charles Bodman Rae kindly informed the author that the composer was aware of this problem and that he used to make some cuts in the first movement when he conducted it himself.

perfectly governed. The composer fulfilled the implications of a symphonic work in full only in the second movement.¹²⁰

It should be remembered, however, that the Second Symphony was Lutosławski's first attempt to realise his concept of end-accented form in a large-scale symphonic piece. The symphony lacks a melodic aspect and instead the form is realised through rhythmical, textural and instrumental means. The new formal shape, independent of any traditional models, was realised with an avantgarde musical language based on chromatic material and aleatory counterpoint. Despite the attention paid to creating aleatoric textures, which might suggest that linear thinking was more important to Lutosławski than the harmonic aspect, the composer was strongly concerned with the harmonic side of his works.

He organised each instrumental line very carefully, choosing particular notes and intervals of the twelve-note harmony for each line. Thanks to this solution, used for the first time aleatorically in *Jeux vénitiens*, he could not only foresee and control the vertical result of the whole texture but also managed to create a musical style different from his fellow composers. Penderecki was more concerned with sonoristic qualities not related to harmony, Baird cared more for melodic lines juxtaposed with orchestral magma and, while Serocki indeed built harmonies carefully, he used them in sonoristic way, to create a specific sound effect. Only Górecki seemed to reveal a similar interest in the harmonic aspect of his musical language, although realised differently. Lutosławski's harmonic system was definitely the most complex and precisely organised, as has been thoroughly analysed by his biographers.

¹²⁰ In fact, he composed the second movement first and it was even premiered separately, without the first movement, on 16 October 1966 in Hamburg, by the orchestra of the Norddeutscher Rundfunk conducted by Pierre Boulez. The full version of the Symphony was premiered on 9 June 1967 in Katowice, with Great Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer.

As was already mentioned, Lutosławski considered his next work, *Livre pour orchestre*, to be his third symphony¹²¹ and this is the main reason why it is discussed here, among other late-avantgarde Polish symphonies. It is a one-movement orchestral piece with clearly marked divisions into four chapters (as the composer called them) separated by three interludes. Following his idea of large-scale end-accented form, the first three chapters serve as an introduction to the main final movement. Lutosławski replaced in this piece the idea of two equal movements from the Second Symphony with a more sectional structure, with a clear sequence of events leading to the main movement.

Livre pour orchestre is one of the most significant works in Lutosławski's output. Its artistic level is much higher than that of the Second Symphony. The musical action in *Livre pour orchestre* is much clearer and is developed from beginning to the end. The chapters are larger and more extended than the episodes in the first movement of the Second Symphony. They are also developed in their inner structure and are therefore more significant and memorable than the episodes in the symphony. In fact, their role is also different as they serve as proper movements in the piece, more like those in a four-movement symphony, with an emotional and formal centre of gravity in the finale. This does not mean, however, that the composer had abandoned his idea of two-movement end-accented form. On the contrary, the first three chapters create a large introductory movement (they have similar time-span as the finale itself) and the final chapter represents the main movement.

Already the first chapter creates a tension and dramaturgy by introducing an extended, quasi-thematic texture of strings (see Ex.3.31), developed and, later in the

¹²¹ See p. 184.

movement (Fig. 106), taken over by brass (with percussion interruptions), which brings the musical action of this movement to a conclusion, resolved in slow string chords.

Ex. 3.31 Lutosławski, *Livre pour orchestre*, opening of Chapter 1

1^{er} CHAPITRE

WITOLD LUTOSŁAWSKI
(1968)

3
4 (♩ = ca 80)

rit.

a tempo

2
4

3
4 rit.

The next two chapters follow this procedure, creating no less significant musical entities, serving at the same time to build an overall line of musical development. The chapters are contrasted in textures and character: the stream of arco string texture in the first chapter is contrasted with the animated pizzicato figures in the second (later joined by woodwind, brass and percussion) and the ‘weeping motives’ in the third. The chapters seem to arise smoothly one from another and are only separated by very brief interludes, which serve as moments of relaxation, being merely a break between the more musically rich chapters. Interludes are characterised by a small-scale and thin, three-line texture: the first is played by three clarinets, the second by two clarinets and harp (single line), and the last one is realised by harp and piano, later joined by bells. Moreover, they are played *ad libitum*, while the majority of the chapters’ material is

metred. This marks a change compared to the Second Symphony. The composer still uses aleatoric lines and superimposed instrumental textures in *Livre pour orchestre* but by organising them within metrical pulsation he managed to achieve a more directed musical process and dramaturgy. This results in a more successful symphonic structure.

The role of chapters and interludes seems to be similar to the episodes and refrain in the Second Symphony. However, by extending each chapter and shortening the interludes, the composer changed the balance used in the symphony and achieved dynamic process of musical events. Another important change can be observed in the transition between the introductory and main movement. In the symphony, this element was limited to the lower sound of bassoon finishing 'Hesitant' and taken over by double bass starting 'Direct'. In *Livre* the transition is much more extended and arguably deceptive. It is created by the last interlude, which smoothly transforms itself into the final movement; its repeated ad libitum pattern is eventually joined by two solo cellos (Fig.403), which marks the start of the final chapter, developed slowly from the material of the interlude (see Ex. 3.32).

The finale is definitely the most thoroughly developed movement; its delicate starting texture is gradually intensified and leads to the powerful climax and resolution. The way of approaching the climax is similar to that used in 'Direct' of the Second Symphony: the music arises from the low registers and soft dynamics and becomes tighter in texture (by adding instrumental groups) and more vigorous in rhythm and tempo. The composer bases the structure of this movement on aleatory counterpoint, initiated by the interlude, and only after increasing tension and accelerating the whole texture does he introduce the a battuta section (Fig. 439).

Ex. 3. 32 Lutosławski, *Livre pour orchestre*, transition between last interlude and the final chapter

3^{me} INTERMEDE et CHAPITRE FINAL

401 AD LIB.
ca 20"
ca 10♩/sec.

ar.

pf.

senza tim.

402
ca 15"
ca 10♩/sec.

campane

ar.

pf.

403²⁾

c-ne

ar.

pf.

2 vc. soli

ca 5♩/sec.
a.s. pizz.
mf a.s. pizz.
1/2"

ca 6♩/sec. f.vibr.
mf f.vibr. mf

- 1) Harpa i fortepian powtarzają swe frazy aż do następnego znaku dyrygenta.
2) Na ten znak wchodzi tylko wiolonczela I. Drwony, harpa i fortepian rozpoczynają tę sekcję po dograniu poprzedniej do znaku powtórzenia.

- 1) Harp and Piano keep repeating the phrase within the repeat signs until the next beat.
2) Cello 1 enters on this beat. Bells, Harp and Piano commence this section as soon as they have finished playing up to the repeat sign.

The role of this section is exactly the same as in the Second Symphony: it brings the music to the climax marked by the explosion of aleatoric lines at *tutta forza ma cantabile* (Fig. 445), intensified in the following *furioso* (Fig. 446; Ex. 3.33).

Ex. 3.33 Lutosławski, *Livre pour orchestre*, climax (Fig. 445-446)

72 444 2"

445 1) 10-15" *tutta forza ma cantabile*

fl. I
fl. II
picc.
ob. I
cl. I

fig. I
fig. II

trbe I
trbe II
trbe III
cor. I
cor. II
cor. III
cor. IV
trbni I
trbni II
trbne III
tuba

5 10+/sec. *tutta forza ma cantabile*
tom-toms
al labbra
tmb. a. c.
al centro

gr. c. b. dura *tutta forza ma cantabile*

vni I
vni II
vle
vc.
cb.

1) Położone jest aby długość fermat nie była jednakowa.

1) It is desirable that the duration of the fermatas should not be the same.

1) Od tego znaku do początku sekcji dyrygowanej powinnno upłynąć ok. 12" (1) From this beat up to the beginning of the conducted section twelve seconds should elapse. The Brass continues to play independently of the conductor up to the end.

446

12"

fl. I
fl. II
picc.
ob. I
cl. I
cl. II
fg. I
fg. II
cig. *furioso, pavillons en l'air*
7) inc.
trb. I
trb. II
tuba
tomb. medio
tomb. c.c.
tomb. tenore
vln. I
vln. II
vle
vc.
cb.

The accumulated tension is then released in the chordal string coda, coloured by aleatoric arabesques on flutes, fading away in a gradual *pianissimo*, bringing yet another example of a symphonic quiet ending.

Compared to the Second Symphony, the musical action and the symphonic structure of *Livre pour orchestre* is more perfectly governed and balanced by the composer. Some elements absent in the Second Symphony but used in *Livre pour orchestre* enabled the composer to create a deeply symphonic piece, with musical dramaturgy precisely developed and resolved, resulting in a ‘masterpiece of the modern orchestral repertoire’.¹²² Lutosławski confirmed that his idea of a large-scale end-accented symphonic form found its perfect realisation in *Livre pour orchestre*. He managed to compose a convincing symphonic structure using avantgarde musical language, far from traditional melodic-thematic thinking. Moreover, his idea of the end-accented formal outline, essentially divided into two movements, although an introductory movement could consist of several smaller sections (*Livre pour orchestre*, *Preludes and Fugue*, 1970–72) or the main movement could be extended by a long epilogue, as in the Third Symphony (1983), remained important for the composer.

An interesting comparison to Lutosławski’s end-accented forms can be made with *Sinfonia Sacra*, composed in 1963 by Panufnik. Since his escape from Poland in 1954, Panufnik had remained in exile in the United Kingdom and he did not have much contact either with his native country or with changes occurring in Polish music since the mid-1950s. However, some of his formal ideas seem to be close to the concepts refined at the same time by Lutosławski. It is very likely that both composers, coming out of the same musical ground and taught formal analysis by Maliszewski in the

¹²² Stucky, *Lutosławski and his music*, p. 172.

Warsaw Conservatory in the 1930s, as was indicated in Chapter Two,¹²³ had a similar attitude to the formal aspect of music which could influence their own concepts.

Maliszewski was himself a conservative composer but his lessons on musical analysis of Classical symphonies were of a great importance for Lutosławski, as he often admitted.¹²⁴ There are no such reports from Panufnik¹²⁵ but it is a fact that for both composers the formal structure of their pieces was always extremely important.

Moreover, when analysing the interviews or notes written by them, one can be surprised by how many similarities are to be found in their thinking on music and their attitude to composing. Despite their different musical languages, some of the formal aspects of their works remained similar.

In this respect, Panufnik's *Sinfonia Sacra* is a good example, as its structure seems to anticipate Lutosławski's concept of end-accented form, particularly its model realised in *Livre pour orchestre*. In Panufnik's symphony, the first movement is divided into three sections, 'Visions', while the second movement, 'Hymn', is a homogenous structure developed directly from the most delicate, pianissimo notes on strings up to a powerful orchestral tutti, climaxing in the final chords. Each Vision has a different character: the first is a trumpet fanfare, the second a lyrical prayer for strings, and the third is an imaginative vision of a battle.¹²⁶ Therefore, they create independent musical worlds but at the same time prepare the entrance of the main movement, which recalls and transforms the elements presented in the Visions; for example, the fanfare of the

¹²³ See Chapter Two, p. 87.

¹²⁴ Maliszewski's influence on Lutosławski has been explored by Charles Bodman Rae and Nicholas Reyland, among others.

¹²⁵ The possible influence of Maliszewski's theories on Panufnik was mentioned by Ewa Siemda in *Twórczość symfoniczna Andrzeja Panufnika* (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 2003). Siemda also indicated that the end-weighted structure was the main principle in Panufnik's symphonic works.

¹²⁶ According to the composer's note, the symphony, devoted to the Millennium of Polish statehood and Christianity, expressed the two most important elements in Polish history – battles and prayer; see Andrzej Panufnik, *Impulse and Design in My Music* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1974), p. 5.

first Vision closes the whole symphony, appearing over an orchestral tutti (Ex. 3.34 a and b):

Ex. 3.34a Panufnik, *Sinfonia Sacra*, ‘Vision 1’, opening

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system features Tromba 1 in D major, marked *Allegro* (Solo), *Maestoso*, and *lungo*. It includes a *secco* marking and a *ff* dynamic. The second system features Tr 2 in D major, marked *ff*, and Tr 3 in D major, marked *ff*. The third system features Tr 4 in D major, marked *ff*, and Tr 5 in D major, marked *ff*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 3.34b Panufnik, *Sinfonia Sacra*, 'Hymn', final bars

72

72

Picc. *molto*

Fl. *molto*

Ob. *molto*

Cl. *molto*

Cl. in Bb *molto*

Cl. in Bb *molto*

Fag. *molto*

C. Fag. *molto*

L. 3 *molto*

Cor. in Fa *molto*

2. 4 *molto*

Tr. in D *molto*

Tr. in D *molto*

Tr. in D *molto*

Tuba *molto*

Timp. *molto*

Pitt. *molto*

G.C. *molto*

Tam. *molto*

VI. I *molto*

VI. II *molto*

Vla. (div.) *molto*

Vc. (div.) *molto*

Cb. *molto*

(Hymn - c. 31)

R. & H. 19379

Forham - Surrey, Culpis - Alicante, 1963

C.P. 9.79

Panufnik's musical language is of course different from Lutosławski's. Panufnik created a musical world with a rather traditional face, with melodic and thematic thoughts and with many allusions to modality, resulted from the fact that he based the material of the symphony on the Polish medieval tune *Bogurodzica* (Mother of God). Although his texture is full of symmetrical chords and layered polyphonies, they are not used in such

avantgarde ways as in other works discussed in this study. Panufnik was also not interested in any aleatoric ideas, as he was searching for his own musical language, independent of any popular modern technique. However, the main formal concept of *Sinfonia Sacra* remains close to the ideas that Lutosławski developed in his works. Was it purely coincidental or could Lutosławski have been inspired by Panufnik's work? Although he admitted to Mycielski that he liked *Sinfonia Sacra* and its second movement particularly,¹²⁷ there is no evidence of any direct connection.

A bipartite cosmic model: Górecki's Second Symphony

In addition to Lutosławski's concept of large-scale two-movement symphonic form, as represented in his Second Symphony, Górecki gave his own proposal for such a symphonic model. Coincidentally, this was also the Second Symphony in his oeuvre. In many ways this work summarised Górecki's experience from the avantgarde explorations but, at the same time, it opened new possibilities and anticipated the next period in his music.

Górecki's Second Symphony 'Copernican' is monumental in its time-span, orchestration and character. It lasts about 35 minutes and is scored for a very large orchestra (quadruple woodwind and brass, six percussion players), two solo voices (soprano and baritone) and mixed choir. This monumentality is closely linked with the topic of the piece, according to which the symphony represents the cosmic universe. In

¹²⁷ Noted in Mycielski's diaries under the date April 6, 1969; Zygmunt Mycielski *Dziennik 1960-1969* (Warszawa: Iskry, 2001), p. 567: 'How well Lutosławski expressed himself about Panufnik's music – the second movement of *Sinfonia Sacra* he considers marvelous.' He most probably heard the symphony from the tape sent by Panufnik to Mycielski in early 1967.

this sense Górecki's work fits perfectly the Mahlerian view that the symphony 'must be like the world. It must be all-embracing'.¹²⁸

The symphony was commissioned by the Kościuszko Foundation in New York to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of the great Polish astronomer, Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543). The composer wondered how to refer to Copernicus's achievement and realise it in music in an original way. The solution came in a conversation with the film director Krzysztof Zanussi, who drew the composer's attention to the fact, that Copernicus's discovery

was one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the human spirit: an entire system of thought, the way of thinking on which man's attitude to the reality out there was based, was in ruins. We were no longer the centre of the universe, we became nothing.¹²⁹

This aspect fired Górecki's musical imagination and he decided to create a symphony built of two equal but strongly opposed movements: the first movement represents the mechanism and dramatic chaos of the world, which finds its purifying resolution in the mystical contemplation of the spiritual second movement.

The monumental, cosmic character of the piece becomes clear from the first bars, which introduce a massive tutti uttering the main musical idea (see Ex. 3.35). This is based on a powerful chordal texture built from a six-octave whole-tone chord, moving slowly, *forte* and *nota contra notam*. This chordal passage, shifting in semitonal steps up and down in a very clear recitative rhythm, constitutes the basis for the musical structure of the first movement (except its central contrasted section).

¹²⁸ See Chapter One, p. 21.

¹²⁹ Thomas, *Górecki*, p. 74.

Ex. 3.35 Górecki, Second Symphony, opening

TEMPO $\text{♩} = 92$ Marcantissimo **I** - con massima passione - con massima espressione
con grande tensione - ma ben tenuto

2 4 2 4 2 4 3 4 2

ffff Przy zmianach tych się akordach - absolutnie Without a slightest interruption between the chords, if they change. If the chords are repeated, a distinct stress on each chord.

ffff TUTTI ARCH CON MOLTO ARCO

x) Wzrosty uderzeń przy grupach instrumentalnych symfonicznych - czyli oznaczają numerację PULPITÓW a nie wykonawców.
xx) Wzrosty na kluczu ♩ VI II brzmia o oktawę wyżej.

The numerals beside individual groups of strings refer throughout to the desks / not to the players! Mind the clef of VI II sound an octave higher

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It is possible to describe this idea as a musical theme, because it has its own rhythm and melodic shape, marked by the descending semitone (E-D sharp). From this perspective, Górecki's Second Symphony remains an unusual example of an avantgarde piece with a clearly structured musical theme.¹³⁰ The rhythmical pattern of this texture is explained only in the movement's finale, where the composer introduces the choir singing a Latin text (excerpts from Psalm 135 (136), verses 7-9). With the entrance of the choir, it becomes clear that the rhythmical structure of the massive, chordal 'theme' of the symphony's first movement was determined by the rhythm of the words now sung by the choir.

This idea is not entirely new in Górecki's music. He used a similar procedure in *Old Polish Music*, where the material of the initial brass passage is explained in the piece's coda, with the appearance of a direct quotation of a medieval organum. Here in the Second Symphony's first movement, the composer used the same pattern but gave it a more powerful and monumental realisation. This is not the only reference to Górecki's earlier works, as a slowly moving whole-tone chordal texture was previously explored in *Refrain* and *Canticum graduum*. Therefore, the structure of the first movement of the Second Symphony can be considered as a continuation of these ideas in monumental form. Górecki also used in the symphony the idea of announcing some musical ideas in the first movement and developing them at the later stage of the piece. He had used this method in the *Refrain* and in *Old Polish Music*.

In the Second Symphony a similar method may be observed in bars 94-133, whose character and harmonic structure anticipate the material of the second movement. Its contemplative nature, emphasised by long, sustained chords with a lyrical expression

¹³⁰ This structure also recalls the opening idea of Górecki's First Symphony, precisely shaped in twelve-note chords, although not so strong in expression because of its different musical language.

makes a contrast to the massive whole-tone chordal theme (see Ex. 3.36). Moreover, the harmonies created in this passage juxtapose chords built on whole tones with others consisting only of the pentatonic ‘black notes’ (which will form the harmonic material of the second movement). This little passage, announcing the peaceful sound world of the next movement, serves as the moment of relaxation between monumental chordal textures of the movement. After that, the main massive thematic idea reappears (b.134-230).

The real contrast comes in the section starting at bar 231, which can be called B when set against the main chordal theme (section A). Section B is built on short figures on the trombones and lower strings, which lead to a purely aleatoric section for brass, with each segment marked by a tutti chord. The sound material of this *ad libitum* section is fully chromatic, which emphasises the harmonic contrast with the whole-tone material of section A. The B section is developed and intensified with each repetition of its pattern. Its last stage is metrical (b. 264) and leads straight to the reappearance of the massive theme of A (b. 287). The idea of developing aleatoric musical material into a fast metred section is similar to Lutosławski’s way of preparing the climax in his Second Symphony and *Livre pour orchestre*. Górecki uses the same procedure but it does not lead directly to the climax. Instead, he brings back the main massive theme, although now performed faster and with shorter rhythmical values. This musical flow is slowed down slightly several bars later (b. 313) before approaching the powerful coda (b.334), based on the monumental chordal texture of the main theme, combined now with the choir.

Ex. 3.36 Górecki, Second Symphony, first movement, bb.115-125

4 2 4 1 2

pp pp p.c.

121

The second movement introduces calm, pentatonic chords ('black-note' pitches), which also function as the harmonic complement to the main melody (there is a real melodic line in this movement). The melody is introduced by the baritone solo, based on a semitonally descending shift (E flat-D). This idea refers to the melodic ambit of the first movement's massive theme, although in its completely different environment it evokes an entirely different, lyrical and peaceful atmosphere (see. Ex. 3.37).

The baritone's phrase is overtaken imperceptibly by the soprano. The melodic line of the soprano is based on the Phrygian mode starting on F. The accompanying chordal texture concentrates on an A flat major chord in first inversion, mixed with a superimposed G flat major triad (derived from the pentatonic scale) and note F, which combined with A flat major chord also produces an F minor triad. All three chords – A flat major, G flat major and F minor – can be also derived from the Phrygian scale (see Ex. 3.38a and b).

Such a combination of modal and tonal allusions marked a crucial shift in Górecki's compositional technique at the end of his avantgarde period, anticipating a new chapter in his musical path. It will be used more broadly in his later pieces, such as the Third Symphony 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs'. Moreover, the type of solo melodic cantilena performed by the human voice and complemented by chordal accompaniment in the orchestra anticipates the main musical ideas of Górecki's next symphony.

Ex. 3.37 Górecki, Second Symphony, second movement, bb. 10-14

Br. *p* Da-us Da-us Da-us qui fe-cit cae-lum et te-rram *poco*

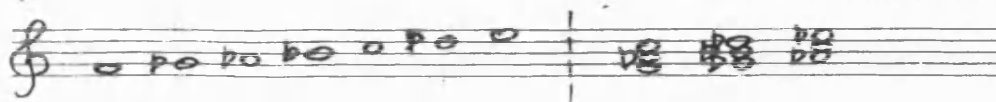
Vl. *p*

Vc.

Vb.

14

Ex. 3.38a Phrygian mode and tonal chords derived from the scale



Ex. 3.38b Górecki, Second Symphony, second movement, bb. 42-48 (Fig. 8)

6⁸ 4 8 2 4

FL 12/8
SA 12/8

LARGO $\text{♩} = 46$ *tranquillissimo*
cantabilissimo

Supran.
(Lia)
mi na ria ma gna

arpa (DELLA 22 PIRELLA 152 - DECA)

pt 5

subito p

Vn I
2
3
4
5
6

Vn II
tutti

Vl
tutti

Vc
tutti

Vb
tutti

The modality of the second movement is crowned at the end by the quotation of an authentic 15th-century Gregorian chant *Laude digna prole*. The composer uses this short four-part choral work in its original musical form but with a different text, a quotation from Copernicus's magnum opus *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium*.¹³¹ It creates an enchanting coda to the second movement, the four-voice chorale using Dorian homophony (the choir is counterpointed by woodwind and brass) combined with sustained pentatonic chords on the strings, harp and piano (see Ex. 3.39). Górecki, by juxtaposing these two modes – D Dorian and 'black-note' pentatonic – created a fully chromatic harmony but by separating harmonic layers he achieved an unusually subtle musical world. This passage creates a unique sound quality, chromatic but with a calming or even purifying nature. The expressive simplicity of the chorale enriched by the pentatonic chords and followed by an extended and multiplied pentatonic chord, rising majestically from the lowest registers and the quietest dynamics up to the high registers and disappearing gradually (bb. 142-161), makes an extraordinary impression. It is like a transition to a mystical, transcendental cosmos, which enlightens the darkness of the earthly world with heavenly, everlasting light and peace.

The Second Symphony is not only the most monumental piece in Górecki's oeuvre but also extremely important as it reveals the composer's crucial stylistic shift. While the first movement can be treated as a summing up of his music from *Refrain* onwards, with its massive sound and strongly dissonant harmonic language, the second movement looks forward, with its reduced musical material, strong affiliation with modality and delicate if not euphonic character, which will be so significant for the Third Symphony.

¹³¹ *Quid autem caelo pulcrius, nempe quod continet pulchra omnia? (What indeed is more beautiful than heaven, which of course contains all things of beauty?);* English translation taken from Thomas, Górecki, p. 78.

Ex. 3. 39 Górecki, Second Symphony, second movement, opening of the choral coda

2 ⁷⁰ MOLTO LENTO $\text{♩} = 40$ SEMPLICE

Handwritten musical score for the opening of the choral coda, marked **2** ⁷⁰ MOLTO LENTO $\text{♩} = 40$ SEMPLICE.

Flutes (fl): 42.4, 34.4

Clarinets (cl): 42.4, 34.4

Cor Anglais (cr): 42.4, 34.4

Trumpets (th): 42.5, 34.5

mp sempre

Chorus (CORO): Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B). Lyrics: *qui- au- tem cae- lo pu- ul- cri- us,*

mp sempre

Arpeggiators (ar): 42.5, 34.5

Percussion (pf): 42.5, 34.5

Timpani (tim): 42.5, 34.5

mp sempre

Violins (Vln): 42.3, 34.3, 45.6, 34.6

Violas (Vla): 42.3, 34.3, 45.6, 34.6

Celli (Vcl): 42.3, 34.3, 45.6, 34.6

Double Basses (Vcb): 42.3, 34.3, 45.6, 34.6

The structure of Górecki's Second Symphony is based on the dualistic opposition between two well-balanced movements. While the first one is more sectionalised, the second brings a gradual musical rise leading to the climaxing coda: the baritone exposition is followed by the soprano exposition developed into a vocal duet (all in an extremely important partnership with the orchestra) and culminating in the choral coda bringing its celestial resolution. These two completely opposite musical worlds presented in the two movements have some links, which help to integrate them. This is the role of the little passage in the first movement (bb. 94-133), announcing the character of the second one; moreover, the integrating role is also given to the descending semitone E flat-D, used in the chordal texture of the first movement and in the melodic theme of the baritone in the second. Therefore, the symphony realises the principle of symphonic dialectic combined with the principle of integration, although the dualistic tension and opposition is a much stronger factor, determining the structure and character of the piece.

Górecki created in his Second Symphony a bipartite formal model different from that of Lutosławski's Second Symphony. In a way, Górecki's first movement is also a kind of preparation for what will happen in the second, but one would hardly describe it as 'hesitant' or lacking in symphonic action. The power and drama of this massive movement can be regarded as a preparation only in the sense that its huge tension awaits resolution. Indeed, it could not be resolved in a more appropriate way. Górecki's second movement, serving as an opposition to the first one, calming and resolving the dramatic tensions, is equally long and equally important in the overall structure of the piece, although from the perspective of the musical material the first movement seems to be more important, bringing the germs of harmonic material for the whole piece. The role

of the piece's climax is entirely different from that used by Lutosławski: while in Lutosławski's music the climax is the most intense, even aggressive, musical explosion in the work, Górecki's idea was to bring the musical action to a culmination which simultaneously serves as a purifying resolution.

In Górecki's symphony neither of the two movements could exist separately; they complement and explain each other, creating the precise overall outline of the large-scale symphony, resulting in a real masterpiece. The 'Copernican' Symphony remains the crowning achievement of Górecki's symphonic style developed since *Refrain*. At the same time, the bipartite model created in this symphony could not be repeated in any other works as it was organically united with this particular realisation of the cosmic theme in the symphonic genre. From this perspective, Górecki's model was not able to function as Lutosławski's end-accented form, which was more abstract and proved useful as a structural skeleton for many subsequent works.

* * *

The period between 1956 and 1974 in Polish music was a time of extremely interesting changes in composers' attitudes and their musical languages. It was the time of avantgarde explorations and innovations, supported by the artistic freedom of styles and techniques used by the composers. The explosion of new music in Poland after 1956 dominated Polish musical life and deeply affected composers' thinking. As Mycielski wrote to Panufnik in 1961, 'after listening to that [avantgarde music], you

cannot listen to pieces composed nowadays with 'old' language. Something has happened (with ears!) – there is no choice [...].'¹³²

This 'no choice' situation meant that no other period in Polish music brought so many original ideas in terms of both musical language and form. This contains all musical genres and is clearly visible in symphonic music as well. The musical avantgarde, with sonorism particularly, opened composers' imagination beyond all tradition and did not allow the composers to forget these experiences even after entering, in the middle of the 1970s, the age of so-called postmodernism, with its return to tradition and pluralism of musical stylistics. Therefore, the importance of avantgarde changes in Polish music in the late 1950s and the 1960s is crucial not only for understanding the pieces composed then, but also because the influence of this avantgarde movement went much further (as will be discussed in Chapter Four).

The period of musical avantgarde brought many experimental works, whose significance did not survive. Others, like Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* and *Fluorescences*, Serocki's *Episodes* and *Symphonic Frescoes*, Baird's *Epiphany Music* and *Psychodrama*, Lutosławski's *Jeux vénitiens* and Górecki's *Refrain*, still fascinate not only because of their stylistic innovations but also because of their artistic power. While the first part of the period neglected the symphony in favour of smaller orchestral works (often revealing a certain degree of symphonic thinking), the later years infused new life into the genre, resulting in large-scale symphonies, with the most successful being Lutosławski's *Livre pour orchestre* and Górecki's Second Symphony 'Copernican'. Both works exemplify the perfectly balanced combination of

¹³² Quoted in Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska, 'Zygmunt Mycielski – Andrzej Panufnik – korespondencja', *Twórczość Zygmunta Mycielskiego jako dziedzictwo kultury polskiej i europejskiej*, ed. Grzegorz Oliwa (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2008), p. 116.

innovative musical language with an original formal model and both at the same time synthesise the composers' sound explorations with the main principles of symphonic thinking.

CHAPTER FOUR

The symphony in post-avantgarde times: 1974–1994

As was discussed in the previous chapter, already the late avantgarde period in Polish music brought several pieces in which some returns to tonality or modality, as well as the reappearance of large-scale formal models, were clearly apparent. The late 1970s deepened the tendency of looking backwards into musical tradition, which resulted in pieces more explicitly referring to Romantic and post-Romantic traditions and avoiding the avantgarde languages of the 1960s. This was seen in a return not only to tonality and modality but also to lyricism, which was connected with putting more attention on the melodic aspect, so often neglected by the avantgarde composers (with the exception of Tadeusz Baird).

This turn was signalled in the mid-1960s by Penderecki's *St Luke Passion* (1965), with its recreation of oratorio and cantata genres in its formal aspect, and with a musical language reinstating an idea of orchestral lyricism (i.e. final 'In te Domine speravi'), although synthesised with sonoristic language. Górecki's works from the 1960s, such as *Three Pieces in Old Style* (1963), *Old Polish Music* (1969) and the Second Symphony, by including direct quotations from the musical past, brought some elements of modality, which not only resonated within a modern musical context but also, as in the second movement of the Second Symphony, helped to create the lyrical character of his music. This tendency deepened in the middle of the 1970s, which brought a significant shift in Polish music, marking the beginning of the post-avantgarde period.

It is not an easy task to give a precise date as to when this new period in Polish music started as there was no such event as the foundation of the Warsaw Autumn Festival, which had indicated the beginning the avantgarde era in Poland (1956).¹ Tomaszewski, in an essay devoted to the symphony in Polish music, took the year 1974 as his starting point, but without explanation.² Paweł Strzelecki, while analysing the 'new Romanticism' as a trend which appeared in Polish music in the middle of the 1970s, indicated the year 1975, as did Anna Nowak in her book devoted to the concerto in Polish twentieth-century music.³ Ewa Kowalska-Zajac, discussing the genre of the string quartet in Polish music, was even more guarded, referring simply to the middle of the 1970s as the beginning of a new period in Polish music.⁴

With regard to symphonic music, two dates are of particular significance: 1974 and 1976. The year 1974 brought two pieces which represented ideas strongly opposed to the principles of the musical avantgarde: Penderecki's *The Awakening of Jacob* and Kilar's *Krzesany* (Sparkling Dance), both of which refer to the Romantic tradition of the symphonic poem, deepened in Kilar's work by reaching for folk tradition (from the Podhale region).⁵ The year 1976 brought another four works confirming the stylistic shift in Polish music: Górecki's Third Symphony 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs', Penderecki's Violin Concerto, Kilar's *Kościelec 1909* and Kotoński's *Wind Rose*. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this dissertation, the date 1974 has been taken as

¹ See Chapter Three, p. 116.

² Tomaszewski, 'Sonorystyczna ekspresywność i alegoryczny symbolizm: symfonia polska 1944–1994', pp.13–40.

³ Paweł Strzelecki, 'Nowy romantyzm' w twórczości kompozytorów polskich po roku 1975 (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica 2006); Anna Nowak, *Współczesny koncert polski* (Bydgoszcz: Akademia Muzyczna im. F. Nowowiejskiego, 1997).

⁴ Ewa Kowalska-Zajac, *XX-wieczny kwartet smyczkowy w twórczości kompozytorów polskich – przemiany, nurty, idee* (Łódź: Akademia Muzyczna, 2005).

⁵ Elements of returning to folk tradition appeared at the beginning of the 1970s in the music of Zygmunt Krauze (b. 1938), who used folk melodies chosen from various countries as the sole musical material, continuously juxtaposed and superimposed, in his *Folk Music* for orchestra (1972), while *Aus aller Welt stammende* for strings (1973) treats just Polish melodies heterophonically.

marking the start of the post-avantgarde period. This is related not only to the fact that this was when the first new significant pieces appeared on the musical scene in Poland but also to the argument that Penderecki's First Symphony, composed in 1973, was the last symphony of the avantgarde period, which clearly closed this era in Polish symphonic music.

As was already indicated, and as will be explored shortly, Penderecki's short orchestral work, *The Awakening of Jacob*, composed one year after the First Symphony, marked quite a radical shift in his musical language. Two years later, in 1976, the composer's new attitude, close to the principles of late Romanticism in both musical language and expression, was confirmed in his Violin Concerto. Górecki created an even stronger, if not shocking, surprise by presenting his Third Symphony, limited and ascetic in its language but powerful in its expression. Kilar and Kotoński, hitherto associated with the avantgarde, also shifted towards late-Romantic traditions by producing symphonic poems. Kilar, after the repetitively energetic and folk-based *Krzesany* (Sparking Dance), confirmed his new attitude in the lyrical and melancholic *Kościelec 1909*, commemorating the Polish late-Romantic master of the genre, Karłowicz, who died in an avalanche on the Kościelec mountain in the Tatras in 1909. Kotoński, known mainly for his electronic and aleatoric works (*Etude for One Cymbal Stroke*, 1959; *Musical Games*, 1973) turned to produce a whole series of quasi-Romantic symphonic poems; *Wind Rose* was followed by *Bora* (1979), *Sirocco* (1980) and *Terra Incognita* (1984).⁶

Moreover, in the years 1975–80 a new generation of Polish composers appeared on the musical stage thanks to a new festival organised in those years in an industrial

⁶ Cf. Andrzej Chłopecki [in discussion]: *Muzyka źle obecna*, vol. 2 (Warszawa: Związek Kompozytorów Polskich, Sekcja Muzykologów, 1989), p. 134.

town, Stalowa Wola,⁷ which brought to the public attention such names as Aleksander Lasoń (b.1951), Eugeniusz Knapik (b. 1951) and Andrzej Krzanowski (1951–1990), often called Generation '51 or the Stalowa Wola generation.⁸ The main goal of this group was to break with the languages of the musical avantgarde in favour of an original combination of modernity with tradition, which resulted in the aesthetic often labelled as 'new Romanticism' (the term will be discussed later). Generation '51 was soon joined by several other composers, such as Rafał Augustyn (b. 1951), Stanisław Krupowicz (b. 1952), Lidia Zielińska (b. 1953), Tadeusz Wielecki (b. 1954) and Paweł Szymański (b. 1954), who also used elements of the musical past in their music in searching for new means of expression.

In the majority of works composed in the late 1970s in Poland, the return to tradition was, however, not straightforward but usually refreshed and enriched by the avantgarde explorations of the 'Polish School' and the experiences of sonorism particularly. Polish music entered a new era, which for the purposes of the present dissertation is simply called 'post-avantgarde'. In musical terminology, however (and not only musical, as will be discussed below), the period from the middle 1970s onwards is very often labelled as 'postmodernism'. The meaning of this term deserves a brief discussion, as it is a complex issue, often bearing the danger of misunderstandings.

⁷ Festival in Stalowa Wola, entitled 'Młodzi Muzycy Młodemu Miastu' (Young Musicians for a Young City), was held between 1975–80 and its idea was to present music composed by a new generation of Polish composers, openly referring to the musical traditions beyond that of the avantgarde. Krzysztof Droba, who was the promoter of the festival, combined it with workshop meetings in the nearby Baranów Sandomierski, where composers and musicologists discussed the music presented at the festival in the broader philosophical and aesthetical contexts. See Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 291.

⁸ Cf. Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 291.

4.1. Postmodernism

The term 'postmodernism' appeared broadly in the 1970s to describe the new tendencies in culture and art, which were, most generally, seen as a reaction to the complexity of the avantgarde period. As observed by Richard Taruskin, 'a term was coined that gained considerable currency in the mid-to-late 1970s, and that by the middle of the 1980s had become a cliché. Like many terms coined in periods of uncertainty, it was a notorious catchall'.⁹ Indeed the term soon became a part of a worldwide discussion about the end of modernity and the arrival of a postmodern époque, which embraced all aspects of culture, as well as philosophy, sociology, law and business.

According to Grzegorz Działowski, postmodernism was 'a broad and heterogeneous intellectual movement leading to the comprehensive rethinking of rules and values which modern Euro-American culture was based on'.¹⁰ The discussion spread over the world, engaging the most distinguished contemporary philosophers and sociologists, such as Jean-François Lyotard, Jürgen Habermas, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Richard Rorty, Gianni Vattimo, Frederic Jameson, Wolfgang Iser, Daniel Bell and Peter Bürger, among others.¹¹ This international debate brought significant change in the way of thinking about culture. The socio-economic rules of modernity, with its ideology of progress, collapsed. As a result, elements of past and traditional procedures started to be treated equally with the contemporary environment and the dialectic between the past and the present disappeared.

⁹ Richard Taruskin, 'The Late Twentieth Century', *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 412.

¹⁰ Grzegorz Działowski, 'Postmodernizm', *Encyklopedia Kultury Polskiej XX wieku: Od awangardy do postmodernizmu*, ed. Grzegorz Działowski (Warszawa: Instytut Kultury, 1996), p. 389.

¹¹ Ibid.

Therefore, when modernists rejected tradition entirely, postmodernists treated it as a 'meta-narration', constituting a rich cultural context. This meant that they could coexist with tradition instead of being in conflict with it.¹² Jonathan D. Kramer pointed out that this change was connected with the unusual development of technology, which caused the fragmentation (discontinuity of perception) and multifariousness of people's environment.¹³ This kind of 'social saturation', as it was called by the psychologist, Kenneth J. Gergen,¹⁴ describes the situation in which one continuously receives various messages and information from different parts of the world (often electronically). They all not only compete to catch one's attention but also build an intertextual reality, in which the difference between the past and the present is not clear. This 'saturation' is typical of postmodern society and the arts, including music. It opened up the possibility for using elements of the past and mixing them with contemporary procedures. Therefore, the dominance of avantgarde trends disappeared, giving way to the return of traditional genres and languages. As observed by Dorota Krawczyk:

The significant sign of the postmodern idiom can be seen above all [...] in bringing back the belief in traditional themes. In music, this is marked by larger and smaller returns: to melody, to rhythm, to the structure based on historical models; hence the shift to the past and musical tradition once consciously rejected by the avantgarde -isms, eager for modernity and progress.¹⁵

This meaning of postmodernism indicates particularly its eclectic side, with the pluralism of techniques and musical aesthetics as the main principle. This view was emphasised by the German scholar, Hermann Danuser, who first played an important role in adapting the term 'postmodernism' to music but later preferred using 'pluralism'

¹² Jonathan D. Kramer, 'O genezie muzycznego postmodernizmu', transl. Dorota Maciejewicz, *Muzyka* No. 3, 2000, pp. 63-72.

¹³ Ibid, p. 69.

¹⁴ Kenneth J. Gergen, quoted in Kramer, 'O genezie muzycznego postmodernizmu', p. 69.

¹⁵ Dorota Krawczyk, 'Postmodernizm. Esej o muzyce polskiej', *Kompozytorzy polscy 1918-2000*, vol. 1 'Eseje' (Gdańsk-Warszawa: Akademia Muzyczna w Warszawie, Akademia Muzyczna w Gdańsku, 2005), p. 298.

instead.¹⁶ In this way, he emphasised that music opened itself to a variety of stylistic idioms and musical languages. In this sense, postmodernism should not be understood as a synonym for anti-modernism¹⁷ as it did not reject modernism. On the contrary, 'the returns to traditional themes appeared here [in postmodernism] as the result of re-working an entire musical past, in which modernism is also part of tradition'.¹⁸

The artist, therefore, can feel entirely free in his artistic choices as no language or procedure is treated as better, or more accurate, than any other in the view of both audience and commentators. In this sense, postmodernism is marked by 'the sign of freedom', particularly significant on the one hand after the domination of the Darmstadt avantgarde in Western music (including post-1956 Poland) and the long-lasting imposed aesthetics of socialist realism in the Soviet Union on the other.¹⁹ Moreover, by using quotations from the past, composers (as well as other creative artists) could again make contact with a broader audience, who easily recognised elements encoded in the new pieces. This idea of 'double coding',²⁰ being 'a strategy of communicating on various levels at once',²¹ is closely bound up with pluralism or eclecticism and as such belongs to the main principles of postmodern art and music.

The return to tradition was, of course, not just a Polish phenomenon. The evolution from the avantgarde to more traditional, postmodern thinking started with the ideas of minimal and repetitive music, composed from the 1960s in both the United States (La Monte Young, Philip Glass, Terry Riley, Steve Reich) and Europe, where it embraced such different idioms as the repetitive ideas of Louis Andriessen (e.g.

¹⁶ Elżbieta Szczepańska, 'Postmodernizm a muzyka', *Encyklopedia Kultury Polskiej XX wieku: Od awangardy do postmodernizmu*, ed. Grzegorz Dziamski (Warszawa: Instytut Kultury, 1996), p. 440.

¹⁷ This term is also used in the discussions about postmodernism; see Kramer, 'O genezie muzycznego postmodernizmu'.

¹⁸ Krawczyk, 'Postmodernizm. Esej o muzyce polskiej', p. 298.

¹⁹ Cf. Elżbieta Szczepańska, 'Postmodernizm a muzyka', pp. 439-454.

²⁰ Cf. Charles Jencks, *What Is Post-Modernism* (London: Academy Editions, 1986).

²¹ Taruskin, 'The Late Twentieth Century', p. 412.

Workers Union, 1975; *De Staat*, 1972–76) and the contemplative, spiritual music of Arvo Pärt (e.g. *Fratres*, 1976; *Tabula Rasa*, 1977; *Stabat Mater*, 1985; *Miserere*, 1989). Similar ideas filtered into Poland, finding the strongest reflection in music by Tomasz Sikorski (1939–88), such as *For Strings* (1970), *Holzwege* (1972) and *Strings in the Earth* (1979–80), and Zygmunt Krauze (b. 1938), such as *Pieces for Orchestra Nos. 1–2* (1969–70) and *First Piano Concerto* (1976). As pointed out by Jadwiga Paja-Stach:

Though extreme, the early examples of minimalism, such as the famous La Monte Young *Composition 1960 no. 7*, [...] still represent avantgarde thinking. However, the main ideas of minimal music, such as using a limited number of sound structures, with their multiplied repetition, together with references to traditional music of other cultures [...], were soon clarified and they express already the spirit of postmodernism, with its idea of coexistence of all sorts of cultural phenomena, both old and contemporary.²²

It should be emphasised that both the return to tradition and the coexistence of the present and the past are seen in the theory of postmodernism as two different perspectives. According to Dziamski, ‘neo-conservative postmodernism’ emphasises the aspect of the ‘great return’ to tradition, while ‘post-structural postmodernism’ is marked by deconstruction and dispersion.²³ This view corresponds with the division made by Paja-Stach, who indicated two different approaches used in postmodern music:

- a) the ‘buffa’ approach, in which the elements of tradition are treated as a part of a creative game;
- b) the ‘seria’ approach, in which the elements of tradition are treated seriously in addition to being assimilated into the composer’s original language.²⁴

²² Jadwiga Paja-Stach, ‘Kompozytorzy polscy wobec idei modernistycznych i postmodernistycznych’, *Idee modernizmu i postmodernizmu w poetyce kompozytorskiej i refleksji o muzyce*, eds. Alicja Jarzębska and Jadwiga Paja-Stach (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 2007), p. 69.

²³ Dziamski, ‘Postmodernizm’, p. 390.

²⁴ Paja-Stach, ‘Kompozytorzy polscy wobec idei modernistycznych i postmodernistycznych’, p. 57.

The first approach resulted in many works in which composers, not just in Poland, juxtaposed quotations from various musical periods and aesthetics. These quotes are usually used as if in inverted commas: they refer back to particular musical traditions, either with a touch of irony or humour. They are also often deconstructed and vibrate within their contemporary musical context, becoming a part of the musical game. The character of such works is usually rather light; they do not carry too much musical argument and their narrations and musical forms are often spoiled and fragmented. Besides encoding the musical past, composers often include quotations from popular and folk music, as can be seen in works by Berio (*Sinfonia*, 1968–69, *Folksongs*, 1975), Schnittke (five symphonies, 1972–88; five concerti grossi, 1977–91) and Kurtág (*quasi una fantasia...* for piano and orchestra, 1987–88). In Polish music this trend was most explicitly realised by Szymański and Krupowicz,²⁵ as well as by the members of an even younger generation, such as Paweł Mykietyn (b. 1971).²⁶

The second approach to postmodernism, characterised by the ‘great return’ to tradition, is represented most explicitly by large-scale symphonies, concertos and oratorios, referring to the ideals of late Romanticism, with its lyricism, melancholy and monumentalism. Post-Romantic idioms are here treated seriously, without elements of musical games or quotation marks. In Polish music this trend can be observed particularly in the symphonies and concertos by Penderecki (a British comparison might be his contemporary Sir Peter Maxwell Davies who, after being a part of the musical

²⁵ Szymański and Krupowicz called their musical style ‘surconventionalism’. This trend, described as ‘collisions of various conventions’, was connected with the concept of polystylistics, the play with conventions and deconstruction of musical structure (e.g. Szymański’s *Sonata*, 1982; *Lux aeterna*, 1984; *Partita IV*, 1986; Krupowicz’s *Symphony*, 1980; *Farewell Variations on a Theme by Mozart*, 1986; *Concerto for Tenor Saxophone and Computers*, 1987, *Miserere*, 1997). See Stanisław Krupowicz, ‘Surkonwencjonalizm’, *Vivo*, No. 1, 1994.

²⁶ e.g. *At Radek’s* (1993), *Piano Concerto* (1997), *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (2000), the opera *An Ignoramus and a Madman* (2001). Recently, Mykietyn has been searching for a more individual language, marked by deeper expression and large-scale formal outlines (*Second Symphony*, 2007; *St Mark Passion* 2008), yet absorbing some elements of popular music (as bass guitar and vocals in his *St Mark Passion*).

avantgarde in the 1960s, shifted towards large-scale symphonies²⁷), as well as the composers from the Stalowa Wola generation. This trend is also labelled as ‘new Romanticism’ and as such will be discussed below. It should be emphasised, however, that in many works composed after the end of the avantgarde period the elements of both ‘buffa’ and ‘seria’ trends are combined. They can also appear separately in various works written by the same composer, e.g. Penderecki’s symphonies (from the Second onwards) represent the ‘seria’ approach, while his opera *Ubu Rex* (1991) is a perfect example of the ‘buffa’ trend.

However, the period which started in Polish music after 1974 embraces more tendencies than postmodernism, with its two indicated trends. The variety of new tendencies found its reflection in the terminology used by Polish musicologists. Besides ‘new Romanticism’, there have appeared such labels as ‘new humanity’,²⁸ ‘natural music’²⁹ and ‘new spirituality’, as well as ‘new tonality’, ‘new modality’ and ‘new lyricism’.³⁰ While, to some extent, they all could be included under postmodernism with its pluralism of tendencies using some elements of the past, it would be difficult to say the same about the music which tried to continue a more abstract, forward-looking line. This refers particularly to Lutosławski’s music, as well as to some symphonies by Penderecki and Meyer, among others.³¹

For the purposes of the present dissertation, the term ‘postmodernism’, although widely used in musicological literature, has been replaced by the broader category of the

²⁷ See Taruskin, ‘The Late Twentieth Century’, p. 429.

²⁸ Krzysztof Droba in interview with Paweł Strzelecki; Strzelecki, ‘Nowy romantyzm w twórczości kompozytorów polskich po roku 1975’, pp. 478–479; see also Andrzej Chłopecki, ‘W poszukiwaniu utraconego ładu. Pokolenie Stalowej Woli’, *Ruch Muzyczny*, No. 25, 1985, pp. 14–15.

²⁹ Krzysztof Szwejgier, ‘Muzyka naturalna – marzenie i fakt’, *Przemiany techniki dźwiękowej, stylu i estetyki w polskiej muzyce lat 70.*, ed. Leszek Polony (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 1986), pp. 35–48.

³⁰ For more details about terminology connected with the issue of ‘new Romanticism’, its meanings and context, as well as its realisation in music, see Strzelecki, ‘Nowy romantyzm w twórczości kompozytorów polskich po roku 1975’.

³¹ See the section ‘Pursuing the abstract’, p. 292.

‘post-avantgarde period’. This, as a purely historical label defining the era which came after the musical avantgarde, sidesteps a whole baggage of meanings connected with ‘postmodernism’. At the same time, it facilitates a discussion of the main tendencies which appeared in Polish music after the middle of the 1970s. Therefore, such categories as ‘new Romanticism’ and spirituality, as well as the ideas of the symphony as a public statement, and the pursuit of the abstract, will appear in the following discussion, marking the development of symphonic music in Poland during the post-avantgarde period. It does not mean, however, that the term postmodernism will be avoided entirely, as often it helps to explain the nature of a particular stylistic tendency. This will concern particularly ‘new Romanticism’.

4.2. ‘New Romanticism’

As observed by Paja-Stach, ‘among many ‘renewed’ traditional musical ideas Romantic ones appeared most strongly in the era of postmodernism, which allowed music critics to invent the term ‘new Romanticism’ straight away’.³² The meaning of the term was connected with the character of the music, revisiting Romantic musical idioms, which also explains other labels connected with this topic, such as ‘new lyricism’, ‘new tonality’ and ‘new modality’. Moreover, ‘new Romanticism’ was strongly marked by references to the late-Romantic principles in both form, with its monumental outlines and emphasis on slow tempi, and a musical language often ruled by the principle of continuous development. The other characteristics of the trend are focal triadic chords, modal scales, consonant harmonies and quotations from the musical past. Therefore, from the perspective of the two approaches discussed in the previous section, ‘new

³² Paja-Stach, ‘Kompozytorzy polscy wobec idei modernistycznych i postmodernistycznych’, p. 71.

Romanticism' represents the 'seria' approach, in which the elements of nineteenth-century procedures are treated with respect and attention and are included into recent musical language. The composers' aim is then to create a contemporary Romantic language, in which such categories as emotion, lyricism, mysticism, illustrativeness and the programmatic aspect would gain new power and significance.

The appearance of these elements in music was not only a Polish phenomenon as it appeared simultaneously in the United States and later spread over Europe. The first signal was given by George Rochberg in his Violin Concerto composed in 1974. Three years later Harold C. Schonberg, while discussing music by three composers – Rochberg, George Crumb and Dominic Argento – described them as being neo-Romantic.³³ In 1984 Rochberg himself explained his musical programme in his book *The Aesthetics of Survival*,³⁴ where he indicated that the element of strong emotionalism, derived from late-nineteenth-century music, combined with traditional musical narration, ought to be achieved using contemporary techniques. His view has been shared by a wide range of other composers who have not rejected the achievements of the musical avantgarde entirely, as may be observed in the music, particularly the symphonies, of Wolfgang Rihm, Sofia Gubaidulina and Peter Maxwell Davies, as well as works by Penderecki and Górecki in Poland.

It is necessary to stress here that the term 'neo-Romanticism', which was used by American commentators to describe the changes occurring in the music of the late 1970s, was not possible to use in Poland as it had been already used by Polish musicology in connection with early twentieth-century music, serving as a synonym of

³³ Harold C. Schonberg, 'Neo-Romantic Music Warms Public Chilled by the Avant-garde', *The New York Times*, 20.03.1977, p. 69. Schonberg used this term even earlier, in connection with Penderecki's *St Luke Passion*, see Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, pp. 181-182.

³⁴ George Rochberg, *The Aesthetics of Survival* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1984).

post-Romanticism. This meant that, in order to describe the stylistic shift of the late 1970s in Polish music, a new term was needed. Otherwise, as observed by Zieliński, the new trend should be called more accurately 'neo-neo-Romanticism'.³⁵ Therefore, the term 'new Romanticism' was introduced in 1976 by the young critic, Andrzej Chłopecki,³⁶ in the context of music by Knapik, Lasoń and Krzanowski presented at the festival in Stalowa Wola.³⁷ These composers, as well as the festival programme itself, manifested a musical attitude opposite to the ideas of the 'Polish School' of the 1960s. As Knapik admitted many years later, 'our music, music by the composers making their debuts at the festival in Stalowa Wola, was perhaps a kind of opposition: to the avantgarde of the 1950s and 1960s, to the novelty treated as a value per se, to the total destruction.'³⁸ Therefore, they brought back the category of musical emotion understood as an expression of human feelings, which was closely connected with lyricism.

The reference to late Romanticism was made not only in respect of musical expression but also in terms of musical structure, in which the idea of continuous development realised within the genre of the symphonic poem remains most important. This can be observed in such pieces as Lasoń's *Mountains* (1979–80) and *Cathedral* (1989), as well as Knapik's *Islands* for strings (1983). Both Lasoń and Knapik avoided strongly dissonant harmonic language in favour of consonant chords, often of neo-tonal, or neo-modal, euphonic character, combined with slowly evolving musical ideas and broad melodic lines. This helped to increase musical expression, often deepened by preferring low strings and brass which, together with an emphasis on slow tempi,

³⁵ Zieliński, *Dramat instrumentalny Pendereckiego*, p. 41.

³⁶ Andrzej Chłopecki, 'Prezentacja książki Bohdana Pocięja "Lutosławski a wartość muzyki"', *Spotkania muzyczne w Baranowie 1976. Muzyka w kontekście kultury*, ed. Leszek Polony (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1978), pp. 148-150.

³⁷ See pp. 252-253.

³⁸ Małgorzata Janicka-Słysz, 'Eugeniusza Knapika spojrzenie na siebie i na muzykę', *Studio*, No. 1, 1995, p. 25.

brought also an element of pathos, particularly at climactic moments (e.g. the brass chorale in *Mountains*, Ex. 4.1).

Ex. 4.1 Lason, *Mountains*, Fig. 6

6 animato (♩ = ca 60)

13

fl

ob

cr

tr

tn

cmp

tmt

vn I

vn II

vl

vc

cb

This type of symphonic poem, describing or evoking nature, hence sometimes called 'musical landscape',³⁹ may be seen as a recreation of the genre of symphonic poem composed by Karłowicz at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁴⁰

However, it does not mean that the composers of the Stalowa Wola generation returned to the late-Romantic tonal musical language as well. On the contrary, they used modern musical material, ruled by atonal harmonies, though usually organised in tonal centres and with chords consisting of consonant intervals, which served to create a warm and harmonious sound world. Despite their proclaimed opposition to the musical avantgarde, they also did not reject all the achievements of the 'Polish School'. As observed by Zbigniew Skowron,

The return of traditional archetypes in pieces by the young generation of Polish composers did not mean a recreation of styles from a distant or closer past. It was a phenomenon indicated by a typically postmodern awareness of the coexistence of various technical and aesthetic conventions, which included also experiences once brought by the musical avantgarde.⁴¹

The tradition of the musical avantgarde appeared particularly in the colouristic aspect of music. This may be seen in using technique of controlled aleatoricism, similar to Lutosławski (e.g. Lasoń's *Mountains*), as well as electronic means, often combined with conventional instruments or voices, as in Krzanowski's series of six *Audycje* (Programmes, 1973–82), Lasoń's *Music for Voice and Tape* (1975) and *Concerto for Improvisatory Piano and Three Tapes* (1975) or Knapik's *Comme au bord de la mer...* for instrumental ensemble and tape (1977).

³⁹ Irina Nikolska, 'Postmodernizm w interpretacji Pawła Szymańskiego', *Muzyka polska 1945-1995*, eds. Krzysztof Droba, Teresa Malecka and Krzysztof Sz wajgier (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 1996), pp. 297-307.

⁴⁰ See Chapter Two, pp. 67-70.

⁴¹ Zbigniew Skowron, 'Awangarda muzyczna', *Encyklopedia Kultury Polskiej XX wieku: Od awangardy do postmodernizmu*, ed. Grzegorz Dziamski (Warszawa: Instytut Kultury, 1996), p. 120.

Some traces of sonoristic tradition can be also observed in unusual combinations of instruments, as in Lasoń's First Symphony for winds, percussion and two pianos (1977), or Knapik's *Corale, interludio e aria* for flute, harpsichord and eleven string instruments (1979). However, in music by Lasoń, Knapik and Krzanowski, the unusual sonorities served precisely as a means of expression helping to create the deeply emotional character of the music, for which the heightened expression of a Romantic type was central. A similar shift towards late-Romantic idioms as well as to the genre of the symphonic poem may be observed in the music of the older generation, so far associated with the musical avantgarde, of whom Kilar and Penderecki are the best examples.

Kilar's *Krzesany* (Sparking Dance) presented in 1974 was a breakthrough. The composer himself admitted that this piece was like his private destruction of the Bastille (the poem was finished on 14 July 1974),⁴² where the Bastille represented the musical avantgarde. The vigorous character of the piece is an apotheosis of mountaineers' folk dancing, as evoked several decades earlier by Szymanowski in his ballet *Mountain Robbers* (1923–31). The musical language is reductive and illustrative, based on strong textural and dynamic contrasts of consecutive blocks, regular rhythms and simple melodic motifs, creating the dynamic atmosphere of folk dance, particularly in the finale, when the violins play in a folk-band manner (see Ex. 4.2). Kilar's 'new primitivism'⁴³ in *Krzesany* caused a shocked reaction at the 1974 Warsaw Autumn, where it was premiered. Compared with the late-avantgarde, abstract works by his colleagues, the piece presented an entirely different musical world.

⁴² Klaudia Podobińska and Leszek Polony, *Cieszę się darem życia. Rozmowy z Wojciechem Kilem*, (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1997), p. 34.

⁴³ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 272.

Ex. 4.2 Kilar, *Krzesany* (Sparkling Dance), opening of the coda

(715)

Molto rustico, con gran forza e vigore

2/4 FFF

The musical score is written for a full orchestra. The parts are labeled on the left: ptti a 2, vn I 1-12, vn II 1-12, vl 1-4 units, vl 5-7 units, vl 8-10 units, vc 1-4 units, vc 5-7 units, vc 8-10 units, and cb 1-4 units, cb 5-8 units. The tempo is 'Molto rustico, con gran forza e vigore' and the dynamics are 'FFF'. The time signature is 2/4. The score shows the first few measures of the coda, with a circled measure number 715 above the first measure.

Kilar confirmed his stylistic shift in his next symphonic poem, *Kościelec 1909* (1976). In this piece he made a step forward into the aesthetic of ‘new Romanticism’. He abandoned vivid rhythmical patterns, juxtaposed with dissonant tutti glissandi and ad libitum textures of a sonoristic quality, as had still been evident in *Krzesany* (e.g. three bars before Fig. 70 and the vigorous and colourful finale at Figs. 743-749), in favour of recreating musical idioms characteristic of Karłowicz, including the idea of labelled themes, functioning as leitmotifs, and the contemplation of beauty and the mystery of nature. A similar attitude, besides works by Lasoń and Knapik, may be also observed in Kotoński’s series of symphonic poems, which have already been mentioned,⁴⁴ while other examples can be seen in *Birds* (1976) by Marek Stachowski (1936–2004) and *Gardens* (for soprano and orchestra, 1987) by Zbigniew Bujarski (b. 1933).

⁴⁴ See p. 252.

The musical dramaturgy of this orchestral miniature is based on the continuous development of this initial idea, which is a nascent form of later passacaglia models (cf. Third Symphony⁴⁵), rising and gathering momentum, and later resolved in a quiet end. This type of processual musical narration, for the first time appearing so strongly in Penderecki's music, encouraged Droba to describe *The Awakening of Jacob* as being close to the principles of the Romantic symphonic poem.⁴⁶ Droba's opinion provoked a discussion between musicologists and the composer himself during the workshop meeting in Baranów Sandomierski in 1976. Penderecki rejected any connection with the genre of symphonic poem as for him the piece had no literary background and did not involve any programmatic content.

The continuous development of an initial idea, a serious type of expression and orchestral lyricism, initiated in *The Awakening of Jacob*, were deepened in Penderecki's next piece, Violin Concerto. With this work, the composer confirmed that, after being the main representative of sonorism in Polish music, he was now turning to traditional genres and musical idioms. Trying to explain reasons for such a stylistic shift, he admitted some time later: 'We have come to a point when the most creative thing to do is to open the door behind our backs.'⁴⁷ And as observed by Tomaszewski:

[...] the door was opened for a magnificent, autumn landscape of a garden from the times of late-Romanticism. For a few years already Penderecki has been irresistibly drawn and fascinated by the element of mature symphonism, in which polyphonic thinking met an extremely extended but still beautifully sounding harmony and colourfulness of a large, post-Romantic orchestra. The place of dethroned idols from his youth was taken over by Wagner and Bruckner, slightly later by Mahler.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ See p. 304.

⁴⁶ *Spotkania muzyczne w Baranowie 1976. Muzyka w kontekście kultury*, ed. Leszek Polony (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1978), pp. 67-75.

⁴⁷ Penderecki, *Labyrinth of Time*, p. 24.

⁴⁸ Mieczysław Tomaszewski, *Penderecki – trudna sztuka bycia sobą* (Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 2004), p. 33.

Penderecki's fascination with late-nineteenth-century music deepened in the following years, in his opera *Paradise Lost* (1978) and the Second Symphony 'Christmas' (1980). However, as emphasised by the composer himself, his reference to late Romanticism and music by Wagner, Bruckner, Mahler, Sibelius and Shostakovich was 'filtered through the sensibility and means of expression of a composer who had experienced the avant-garde.'⁴⁹ Therefore, in his Second Symphony 'the earlier intention of refounding the world gives way to the need for internalization and for describing the drama of existence'.⁵⁰ To achieve it, the composer decided to use musical language and procedures typical of late-Romantic rotational symphonism, with the processual, continuous development of the main musical ideas, initiated already in *The Awakening of Jacob* and refined in the Violin Concerto. As observed by Wolfram Schwinger:

The Second Symphony harks back to the works immediately preceding it, not only in the romantic tone of voice, pungent chromaticism and ever more prominent tonal clarity, but in matters of technique as well. Penderecki again uses all his favourite, by now second-nature, arts of developmental variation: one theme growing out of another, the growth of a new idea out of an old one, still serviceable *per se*. So, in this colossal movement lasting thirty-five minutes, there is again a large area consisting of themes closely related. All three principal subjects are related or else derived from each other [...].⁵¹

The main theme of the symphony again, as in *The Awakening of Jacob*, evolves slowly in the first bars of the piece, with two notes (the minor third A-F sharp) doubled on the cellos and double basses and appearing over a sustained F sharp on the timpani, before other instruments join them with B minor and F minor chords (see Ex. 4.4).

⁴⁹ Penderecki, *Labyrinth of Time*, pp. 60-61.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki: his life and work*, p. 158.

Ex.4.4 Penderecki, Second Symphony, opening

The musical score for the opening of Penderecki's Second Symphony is shown. It features a complex arrangement of instruments including woodwinds (clarinet, flute, concert flute, cor Anglais, trumpet, trombone), brass (violin, viola), and strings. The tempo markings are Moderato, poco meno mosso, and a tempo. The key signature is B minor. The score shows the beginning of the symphony, with the tempo changing from Moderato to poco meno mosso and then to a tempo. The instrumentation includes woodwinds, brass, and strings.

Despite the strictly tonal character of the harmony, as seen at the beginning of the symphony, the musical language used by Penderecki in this work is far from traditional tonal relationships, and the sequence of B minor and F minor chords introduced in the brass and woodwind confirms this.

Compared to the rather consonant language of the younger Stalowa Wola generation, Penderecki created his 'new Romantic' sound world using much more chromatic harmony. By doing so, he also referred to the dense musical language of the late-nineteenth century. Always linearly oriented, he was not interested in simplifying his language in favour of harmonious chords and transparent textures. On the contrary, the texture of Penderecki's symphonies (from the Second to the Fifth) is extremely rich and dense, polyphonic and multilayered, often with heavy orchestration (many doublings of instruments), drawing upon the symphonies of Bruckner, Mahler and Shostakovich. This corresponds with the monumentalism of form and time-span, as well

as with the preference for slow tempi (e.g. Fourth Symphony 'Adagio', 1989). These features dominated Penderecki's symphonic style from the late 1970s, even if, in Tomaszewski's view, his Third, Fourth and Fifth Symphonies (1988–95, 1989, 1992) are not as backward looking as the Second.⁵²

Quite the opposite approach was taken by Górecki, whose neo-tonal, or rather neo-modal world, as presented in the Third Symphony, was more connected with creating an original, highly spiritual atmosphere than with referring back to Romantic traditions and expressions. His musical language became much more ascetic than not only that of Penderecki but of any other Polish composer in the late 1970s. This was connected with the sacred element in his music.

4. 3. Spirituality and the sacred element

The post-avantgarde period, with its tendency of bringing back traditional qualities, returned the subject of religious faith, as well as the quality of 'sacrum' in music, to the fore. While during the years of the musical avantgarde the religious aspect of music was rarely present in Polish music (Penderecki's *Stabat Mater* and *St Luke Passion* were the major exceptions), it reappeared in many works written by Polish composers in the 1970s and 1980s, such as Górecki's *Ad Matrem* (1971) and *Beatus Vir* (1979), Kilar's *Bogurodzica* (Mother of God, 1975), Penderecki's *Magnificat* (1973), *Te Deum* (1980) and *Polish Requiem* (1980–84, 1993), to name only the most significant.

This tendency was deepened by the fact that in October 1978 Cardinal Karol Wojtyła was elected to the papacy and suddenly the Roman Catholic world had a Polish Pope, John Paul II. During the whole period of communism in Poland, the Catholic

⁵² Tomaszewski, *Penderecki – trudna sztuka bycia sobą*, p. 48.

Church was a natural and powerful opposition to the government and now 'the relationship between Church and State, already severely tested at the time of socialist realism, was to prove crucial on all fronts'.⁵³ The situation in which the Catholic Church was led by a Polish Pope not only increased the hope for regaining full independence in Poland but also intensified the popularity of religious music and compositions filled with sacred or spiritual elements. The political circumstances meant that any reference to a religious song or theme in a contemporary work (especially during the eighties, marked by imposition of Martial Law in 1981) was interpreted as a public statement, especially when combined with some patriotic dedication. The function of music to be a public statement will be analysed more broadly in the next section, while here it is necessary to concentrate on one symphony in which a powerful spiritual expression was created as a deeply personal statement. This is Górecki's Third Symphony 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs' (1976).

As pointed out by Thomas, in this symphony

[...] Górecki has moved beyond basic sacred and patriotic sentiment to another plane of understanding. He has transcended not only the vileness of death and war, which he refuses to depict, and instead has sought resolution through contemplation. His goal has not been to make obvious connections with the Polish Church nor with localised history and folk traditions but to use their repertoires and more subliminally those from 'art' music to attain the sort of universalism advocated by Szymanowski.⁵⁴

Indeed, the simplicity of musical material combined with the ardent expressivity managed to create the highly spiritual atmosphere of *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*, comparable to Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, a piece which has been particularly close to Górecki.⁵⁵ Both composers limited their musical means in favour of reaching for

⁵³ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 253.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 266.

⁵⁵ At the conclusion of the canonic theme in the first movement Górecki used one of Szymanowski's motifs from *Stabat Mater*; see Thomas, *Górecki*, pp. 85-86.

Polish folk and religious traditions to create the music of a profoundly sacred character, closely bound with Catholic faith, and particularly with the cult of the Virgin Mary, so strong in Poland. The artistic transformation of traditional sources in both cases resulted in pieces which, in the perspective of religious musical spirituality, occupy the highest artistic position in Polish twentieth-century music.

However, while Szymanowski followed the tradition of choral music in his *Stabat Mater*, Górecki, although inspired by the same topic of *Mater dolorosa*,⁵⁶ decided to create a full-scale symphony instead. The resulting piece radically challenged the symphonic dimensions and principles of the genre, at the same time marking a radical shift in Górecki's musical language. The premiere of the symphony in Royan in 1976 caused serious confusion among commentators, as did its Polish premiere given at the Warsaw Autumn in 1977 (half of the audience left the hall during the performance); the symphony was criticised for being too simple and for not being avantgarde.⁵⁷ This shock was caused by the simplification of the harmonic language and the ascetism of the musical material used by Górecki. The composer entirely avoided here the dissonant, harmonically dense and often aggressive sound world of his earlier works, following the path indicated by the second movement of his Second Symphony, with its broad lyrical cantilenas and modal harmonies.⁵⁸ Moreover, he chose the element of the sacrum, determined by the symphony's extramusical topic, to dominate the entire structure of the Third Symphony, indicating both its musical language and type of expression.

⁵⁶ Cf. Maja Trochimczyk, '“Mater Dolorosa” and Maternal Love in the Music of Henryk Górecki', *Polish Music Journal*, vol. 6, No. 2 (Winter 2003), http://www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/PMJ/issues.html (accessed 15 June 2009).

⁵⁷ See the discussion between music critics after the Warsaw premiere, *Ruch Muzyczny*, No. 23, 1977, p. 17.

⁵⁸ See Chapter Three, p. 241.

The symphony's monumental outline (the piece lasts almost 60 minutes) consists of three large movements, called 'sorrowful songs' by the composer. They all explore the most painful subject of a mother suffering after the death of her child (inverted in the second movement by the child trying to console her mother), an archetypal symbol, so closely connected with twentieth-century war traumas. According to Maja Trochimczyk,

the texts of this work juxtapose the image of eternal suffering (of crucified Jesus and His Mother in the first movement) with two embodiments of this transcendental Passion in human history: the torment of a young prisoner during World War II (second movement), and the lament of a mother grieving the death of her son (third movement).⁵⁹

Górecki's idea was, however, not to emphasise the suffering by its musical dramatization, as he was aware that such a topic could cause a danger of over-interpretation and bathos. His solution was instead to reduce the musical means to a minimum and to let contemplation dominate the character of the piece. To achieve this goal, he reached for traditional religious and folk sources, resulting in the symphony's archaic modality and character of a 'medieval misterium', as described by Gąsiorowska.⁶⁰

Górecki creates this spiritual misterium straight from the outset, opening the first movement with a purely modal theme (E Aeolian), a single melody constructed from two Polish religious songs,⁶¹ introduced by the double basses and developed canonically in a gradual crescendo to the highest registers of the violins until the canon reaches its full ten-part form. Each entry of the theme starts a fifth higher, which creates a series of quasi-tonal references (E-B-F sharp-C-G-D-A-E, and repeated A- E as the ninth and tenth part of the canon). This organic growth of musical material increases both the

⁵⁹ Trochimczyk, 'Mater Dolorosa' and Maternal Love in the Music of Henryk Górecki'.

⁶⁰ Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, 'Symfonia pieśni żałosnych', *Ruch Muzyczny*, No. 3, 1978, p. 3.

⁶¹ Cf. Thomas, *Górecki*, pp. 81-94.

expressive level and the tension of the music, leading to the contrasting central section marked by the appearance of the soprano solo (Fig. 17), who sings the words of a Polish Renaissance lamentation of the Virgin Mary standing by the Holy Cross. The simplicity of this melody is emphasised by delicate sustained chords, which complement the soprano line. When the solo voice finishes its last phrase, the canon reappears in full, marking the climax of the movement (see Ex. 4.5). It is then resolved by eliminating parts consecutively with a gradual decrescendo, until the double basses are left alone and the arch form of the movement reaches its end on the repeated note E natural, which had started the whole process.

For the second movement the composer took the text of an appeal for the Virgin's pity, inscribed by an 18-year Polish girl on the wall of a Gestapo prison in Zakopane, and combined it with his own melody. Discussing the form of this movement, with the most contemporary text in the symphony, Górecki said that 'it cannot be a poster, drama or tragedy but it should refer to the contemplation of the first movement'.⁶² He again used a slow lamentation for soprano solo, this time expressing the sorrowful request of an imprisoned girl to her mother, asking her not to cry. It ends with a common prayer, 'Zdrowaś Mario' ('Ave Maria'), intoned on the repeated note D flat which, with the repeated note B flat in the double basses, suggests a B flat minor chord, although the notes F, A flat and E flat, G flat, appearing elsewhere, bring a broader spectrum of tonal allusions (see Ex. 4.6).

⁶² Henryk M. Górecki, *Powiem Państwu szczerze*, p. 48.

Ex. 4.5 Górecki, Third Symphony, first movement (Figs. 23-24)

40. **DOLORO 6 5 0 4 6 4**

fg 12/8
cfg 12/8
cr 12/8
tn 12/8
ar
pf
soprano
Vn I 1p. 8/8
Vn II 1p. 8/8
Vl 1p. 8/8
vc 1p. 8/8
vb 1p. 8/8

crescendo

p

Bo-żu ji-azie o-de mnie, mo-ja na-dzie-ja mi-

crescendo

ancora più

368

PWM-8027

2 (24)

LENTO (♩=50-52)

sostenuto tranquillo
ma cantabile

41.

fg 1.2.3 |

clg 1.2.3 |

cr 1.2.3 |

3.4.5 | p

tn 1.2.3 | p

3.4.5 |

ar } L.v.

2 } L.v.

pf } L.v.

2 } L.v.

Violino

ta.

quasi ff

Vh I 1. p

2. p

Vh II 1. p

2. p

VL

VC

Vb

376

PWM-8027

Ex. 4.6 Górecki, Third Symphony, second movement, Fig. 6

88.

6 **2**

MOLTO LENTO ($\text{♩} = 40$)

ar b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d

pf b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d

Soprano p b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d
 Zə-ro-wa's Ma-ri-o Kas-Kis Pet-na Zə-ro-wa's

p **ma ben sonore**

Vti tutti b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d

Vti tutti b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d

VL 1p b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d
2p b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d

VC 1p b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d
2p b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d

Vb tutti b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d b^{\flat}d

90

The third movement of the symphony is based on a direct quotation of a Silesian folk melody combined with a text from the 1920s (the time of the Silesian Uprisings against the Germans). This is another lamentation of a mother who has lost her son, this time expressed in the character of a sorrowful lullaby, with its repetitive motifs of 'slow walking, the rocking slowness of pain'.⁶³

The ardent expression of the growing canon, the melodic simplicity of the solo voice, combined with the subtle pulsation of harmonious chords, the aura of both tonality and modality, mixed with relentless repetitions of musical material and extremely slowed-down musical pace, all these features resulted in the profoundly spiritual character of the symphony, corresponding perfectly with the chosen texts. In Trochimczyk's opinion, Górecki's aim in his symphony was to create a feeling of 'sacred time'.⁶⁴ Her view corresponds with that of Droba, for whom a deeply religious character of Górecki's first movement embraces the entire piece. According to Droba,

the first movement is the key to the message of the Third Symphony [...]. It is not as if the Third Symphony's theme of suffering is laicised by the third song. Quite the opposite: the theme of the first song sacralises the theme of the third song. [...] The Holy Mother standing by Christ's cross is not just one of many mothers and Christ is not just one of many sons. The situation of the Holy Mother is the archetype of sacrifice and the suffering of Christ remains the fundamental event for Christianity. The key to understanding the Third Symphony cannot be the death of a human being [...], as in the third song, because in the first song we deal with the death of God, the death which, for the Christian, shakes the whole cosmic order of the world.⁶⁵

Such a strong dominance of the sacred element is an unusual feature for the genre of the symphony. The only comparison among Polish symphonies might be provided by Panufnik's *Sinfonia Sacra* (1963) and *Sinfonia Votiva* (1980–81). They both however, although filled with a religious aspect, remain in every respect public statements of an

⁶³ Trochimczyk, 'Mater Dolorosa' and Maternal Love in the Music of Henryk Górecki'.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Droba, 'Droga do sensu tragicznego', p. 4.

exiled composer (*Sinfonia Votiva* will be discussed from this perspective later) and are far from the highly personal spirituality and contemplation of Górecki's work. Ruled by strong contrasts of dialectical musical material, Panufnik symphonies also do not challenge the symphonic principles as much as does the *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*.

In the light of the above discussion, Górecki words that 'I think my Third Symphony is the most avantgarde piece I have written so far',⁶⁶ although surprising when considering that the symphony remains one of the most accessible of his works, appears to be quite understandable. The sacred element determined the symphony's structure to such an extent that the traditional principles of the genre are hardly recognisable. The symphony's three movements are each in a similar tempo (very slow) and have a comparably sorrowful expression. Only the first movement is characterised by the organic growth of musical material thanks to the extended canon, contrasted with the homophonic middle section. However, there is nothing here like the strong opposition of the two balanced movements from the Second Symphony. On the contrary, Górecki's Third Symphony is far from the type of dialectical symphonism presented in his previous symphonic works.

However, the principle of symphonic dualism does find a realisation in this symphony, but on a different level. This may be seen in the opposition between the very limited musical material and extended formal outline of the piece on the one hand, and between the reduced material and heightened musical expression on the other. The contrast between the material and the structure, particularly strong in the first movement, creates the main dualistic tension of the piece. This opposition is so strong that it was even not acceptable to some commentators, who did not see any reason for

⁶⁶ Henryk M. Górecki, 'Powiem Państwu szczerze', pp. 43-48.

building such a large canonic structure from so simple a melodic theme.⁶⁷ The resulting tension, achieved by purely musical means (the solo voice only completes this process), assures the first movement the position of the most important part of the symphony, its centre of gravity. The following movements keep a similar musical expression but remain less powerful in both their musical development and sense of musical drama.

Therefore, in the middle of the 1970s, Górecki's symphony, besides its radical limitation of sound material and expanded time dimension, characterised also by the creative transformation of folk and artistic traditions (in the last movement Górecki consciously referred to Chopin and Beethoven⁶⁸), and openly referring to modality and tonality, might indeed be seen as avantgarde. Moreover, the basic meaning of the word 'avantgarde' fits perfectly the character of this symphony because it was also among the few works anticipating the stylistic shift in Polish music, as already discussed.

A fuller understanding of Górecki's Third Symphony came only in the early 1990s, when it received international acclaim and popularity not achieved by any other contemporary work.⁶⁹ Now, the symphony is placed among the most important Polish works of the second half of the twentieth century.⁷⁰ It also remains one of the most important symphonies in twentieth-century music, in which both the symphonic dimension and the principle of symphonic dualism were entirely determined by the element of 'sacrum'.

⁶⁷ Cf. Baculewski's opinion, see Strzelecki, 'Nowy romantyzm' w twórczości kompozytorów polskich po roku 1975, p. 459. See also Droba, 'Droga do sensu tragicznego', p. 4.

⁶⁸ Thomas, *Górecki*, pp. 92-93.

⁶⁹ For information on the reception of Górecki's Third Symphony see Luke Howard, *A Reluctant Requiem: The History and Reception of Henryk M. Górecki's Symphony No. 3 in Britain and the United States*, PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1997. See also David Drew, 'Górecki's Millions', *London Review of Books*, No. 16-19, 1994, pp. 9-10 and Brian Morton *The Blackwall Guide to Recorded Contemporary Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 238-244.

⁷⁰ Cf. Krzysztof Droba, 'Najwybitniejsze utwory pięćdziesięciolecia', *Muzyka polska 1945-1995*, eds. Krzysztof Droba, Teresa Malecka and Krzysztof Sz wajgier (Kraków, Akademia Muzyczna, 1996), pp. 340-356.

4.4. The symphony as a public statement

The beginning of the post-avantgarde period in Polish music coincided with significant changes in the political situation in the country. Since the late 1960s Poland had been tormented by protests and strikes against the communist regime, repressed cruelly and bloodily by the government. The years 1968, 1970 and 1976 were marked by the most significant protests, which finally led to the rise of the Solidarity movement in 1980. The increasing repressions culminated in the imposition of Martial Law in December 1981. The political situation in Poland caused many composers to express their political feelings through their music, either to demonstrate against the policy of the communist government or simply to encourage the audience by filling their works with some patriotic references.

During the 1980s particularly, marked by both the rise of Solidarity and the time of Martial Law (1981–83), the atmosphere in the country was extremely vibrant: the hope for regaining more freedom was mixed with fear and political repressions. This resulted in a situation where composers found themselves in a position similar to the times of partition in the nineteenth century. They could react either by stepping back from official life or by openly referring to the political situation in their music.

Lutosławski, who refused to take part in any concerts or other official cultural events and did not appear in the media, took the first solution, while the second way resulted in works which could be understood as public statements by carrying certain messages for the audience, serving as encoded patriotic symbols. These symbols were usually quotations of religious or national songs or dedication of the compositions to key national figures or events.

The most obvious and most elaborate example of such pieces is Penderecki's *Polish Requiem*, composed initially as a series of individual works, each dedicated to an important event in Polish history.⁷¹ Asked about the genesis of *Polish Requiem* some time later, Penderecki answered: 'I would not have created the *Requiem* were it not for the general political situation, for Solidarity, though this theme had interested me for a long time. By composing the *Requiem*, I wanted to take a certain position, to show on which side I stood'.⁷² Besides the *Polish Requiem*, other Penderecki works composed in the early 1980s were also seen as public statements, such as the *Te Deum* dedicated to the Pope, John Paul II, and the Second Symphony 'Christmas'.

As was already indicated, this symphony stylistically represents the trend of 'new Romanticism' and most likely it would have remained a purely abstract work had it not included short quotations from *Silent Night*. The appearance of *Silent Night*'s initial motif in the material of the symphony met a mixed reception among foreign critics who did not connect it with the Polish context.⁷³ Schwinger observed that 'for a few seconds the quotations may suggest a ray of hope, but they are foreign bodies whose peaceful, meek, idyllic diatonicism does not fit the melancholy chromaticism of the symphonic action'. He also added that '*Silent Night* sticks out like a sore thumb'⁷⁴ in

⁷¹ The 'Lacrimosa' for soprano, choir and orchestra (1980) was commissioned by the leader of Solidarity, Lech Wałęsa, to celebrate the opening of the Three Crosses memorial in Gdańsk, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Gdańsk and Szczecin protests that had been bloodily suppressed by the government in December 1970. The premiere of the piece on 16th December, 1980, in the presence of thousands of people, became a political event in itself. The 'Agnus Dei' for a cappella choir (1981) was composed after the death of the Polish Primate, Cardinal Wyszyński, and was performed at his funeral. The 'Recordare' (1983) celebrates the beatification of Father Maksymilian Kolbe, who offered his life in place of another prisoner in Auschwitz in 1941. The 'Dies Irae' (1984) is dedicated to the Warsaw Uprising (1944) and the 'Liberate me' (1984) to the Polish soldiers murdered by the Soviets in Katyn in 1940. Katyn was a particularly politically dangerous subject in Poland as the Soviets kept claiming that the murders in Katyn's forest were done by Nazis. It was not permitted to discuss the subject or even mention it during communist times in Poland.

⁷² Krzysztof Penderecki in interview with Małgorzata Janicka Słysz, 'W poszukiwaniu siebie', *Studio*, No. 8, 1993, p. 16.

⁷³ Cf. Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, pp. 248-249.

⁷⁴ Schwinger, *Krzysztof Penderecki: his life and work*, p. 158.

the musical material of the piece. Indeed, the melody of *Silent Night* is different from the material of the symphony but the composer introduces it as an allusion rather than as a real quote: the initial motif of the tune appears as from afar in the first part of the symphony (Ex. 4.7) and is repeated two times only later in the piece. Therefore, its function is not as obvious as the quotations of Polish patriotic songs in other works of the period, such as Meyer's Sixth Symphony, which will be discussed below.

Ex. 4.7 Penderecki, Second Symphony, *Silent Night* quote (first clarinet)

The musical score for Ex. 4.7 shows the first clarinet (cl 1) playing the initial motif of the 'Silent Night' tune. The tempo markings are 'meno mosso quasi in lontano sostenuto', 'poco rall.', and 'più mosso'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score includes staves for flutes (fl 1, ob 2), clarinets (cl 1, cl b), bassoon (fg 1,2), contrabassoon (cr 1-3, 4,5), strings (vn I, II, vl, vc, vb), and a triangle (tr 1). The initial motif of the 'Silent Night' tune is introduced in the first clarinet part, with dynamics like *pp*, *p*, and *f*. The string parts also show the initial motif in the lower strings.

However, by including this quote, the symphony gained its unofficial subtitle (it is not indicated in the score). Moreover, the composer provided a symbolic element referring directly to the Catholic faith. This was enough for Polish audiences during the

time of Solidarity to interpret the piece as a kind of public statement. This interpretation of the quote was particularly emphasised by Tomaszewski, who pointed out that

[...] the song opens up a realm of experience that encompasses equally the rebellion and triumph, the catastrophe and resignation of the funeral march. In Penderecki's homeland, Poland, the Second Symphony was immediately understood as national music, an immediately and subjectively 'romantically' affective tone, which gave expression to the painful memory of the struggle, suffering, and hope of the Polish people.⁷⁵

However, outside Poland the piece was not understood in this way, as Schwinger's opinion confirms. Moreover, even other Polish commentators did not stress the political meaning of the quote as strongly as Tomaszewski. Zieliński, for example, connected it rather with recalling the atmosphere of childhood, with its calmness and happiness, hence it worked as a symbol of something totally opposed to aggression, evil and brutality, but without particular reference to the political situation.⁷⁶ It should be added that not only the quotation from the *Silent Night* but also the Romantic tone of the symphony itself deepened the feeling that the piece was a significant public statement. Romanticism was in Polish tradition the time of fighting for the lost independence of the country, therefore by using so openly a Romantic musical idiom, the connection between distant and present political oppressions might have seemed closer for both audience and commentators.

More direct references to the recent political situation may be found in Meyer's Sixth Symphony 'Polish' (1982). Its subtitle openly indicates the programmatic content of the piece and, although the composer did not want to associate his symphony with any particular programme, he admitted that it 'was written in certain circumstances, in

⁷⁵ Mieczysław Tomaszewski, note in CD booklet for Wergo, WER 6270-2; also quoted and commented on by Thomas in *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, pp. 248-249.

⁷⁶ Zieliński, *Dramat instrumentalny Krzysztofa Pendereckiego*, p. 48.

the first days of Martial Law'.⁷⁷ For the programme of Warsaw Autumn in 1984, where the symphony had its Polish premiere (the world premiere took place on November 25, 1982 in Hamburg) the composer added:

Despite the inclusion of some historical melodies (e.g. *Bogurodzica* – *The Mother of God*), this is a work about contemporaneity, about the present day and problems preying on our mind, being the composer's view on everything we witness and experience.⁷⁸

The four-movement symphony has a monumental outline and reveals a dark tone close to Shostakovich's pieces (particularly in the second movement), a connection which is not surprising considering Meyer's great attention to the Russian master of symphonic writing.⁷⁹ The Polish character of the piece is assured by using quotations from three songs, serving in Polish history as patriotic anthems: *Boże coś Polskę* (God, Who has Protected Poland) in the first movement, *Bogurodzica* (Mother of God) in the third movement and *Rota* (Hymn of 1910) in the finale.

Each time the original melody appears very clearly and is introduced by a solo instrument (or group of instruments). In this respect, Meyer's references are much more obvious than those found in other contemporaneous or earlier Polish music. An immediate comparison is Penderecki and his allusion to *Silent Night*. Going further back, the quotations of Polish patriotic songs may be found in the symphonies by Noskowski and Paderewski.⁸⁰ However, in Meyer's symphony, the quotations are used in a different way. While in the symphonies by both Penderecki and Noskowski the motifs of the song (*Silent Night* in Penderecki and *Dąbrowski Mazurka* in Noskowski) were short and appeared surprisingly in the material of the piece, Paderewski in his

⁷⁷ Cf. (less), 'Symfonia polska Meyera', *Przekrój*, No. 2017, 1984, p. 12.

⁷⁸ Krzysztof Meyer, note in programme book of 27th Warsaw Autumn (Warszawa: Związek Kompozytorów Polskich, 1984), p. 181.

⁷⁹ Meyer is the author of a monograph on Shostakovich (*Szostakowicz*, Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1973, 1986), translated into several languages, including Russian and German.

⁸⁰ See Chapter Two, pp. 70-75.

Symphony 'Polonia' incorporated the melody of *Dąbrowski Mazurka* into his original musical material, which served to create an extended finale movement. In this respect, Meyer remains closer to Paderewski, though he goes further in presenting the original melodies obviously and in considerably longer versions. Only after being played *in crudo* are they incorporated into the musical material, forming the basis for that particular section of the piece (Ex. 4.8 shows the introduction of *Boże coś Polskę*). This is especially clear in the third movement where the first motif of *Bogurodzica*, introduced at the early stage, is woven between instrumental lines and counterpointed by percussion, resulting in an interesting play of textures and motifs. Therefore, in Meyer's symphony the quoted songs function as easily readable, strictly patriotic symbols which fill the symphony with national flavour.

Ex. 4.8 Meyer, Sixth Symphony 'Polish', first movement, introduction of *Boże coś Polskę* (after general pause)

The musical score for the introduction of *Boże coś Polskę* in Meyer's Sixth Symphony 'Polish', first movement, is presented in two systems. The first system includes staves for Violin I (vl), Violin II (vn I), Violoncello (vc), and Contrabass (cb). The second system includes staves for Violin I (vn I), Violin II (vn II), Violoncello (vc), and Contrabass (cb). The score includes various musical notations such as 'pizz', 'P', 'morendo', 'P.G.', 'espr. tenuto', and 'pp'. Measure numbers 5, 4, 28, 6, 4, and 5 are indicated below the staves.

The connection between Meyer's symphony and the symphonies by both Noskowski and Paderewski on one hand, and with Penderecki on the other, can also be seen in the musical language, close to the principles of late-Romantic, rotational symphonism, with its slow and continuous development of initial musical ideas.

A different approach was presented by Panufnik in his *Sinfonia Votiva* (1980–81), another symphony composed in the context of the Solidarity movement in Poland and serving as a public statement of the composer. Panufnik, who had lived abroad since 1954 but was never indifferent to the situation in his homeland, often referred his works to the political situation in Poland. Besides *Sinfonia Sacra*, dedicated to the millennium of Polish Christianity and statehood,⁸¹ he composed *Katyń Epitaph* (1969), a little orchestral piece commemorating a subject which it was still not possible to mention in his native country (Penderecki did it in 1984, however⁸²), and the Bassoon Concerto (1985), dedicated to the memory of Father Popiełuszko, a dissident priest murdered by the communist secret police in 1984. In these works Panufnik made clear his patriotic inspirations, either by the dedication or information included in the programme notes (usually by both). This concerns *Sinfonia Votiva* as well. According to the composer:

This symphony is dedicated to the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, the symbol for all Polish people of independence from invading powers, also of profound religious dedication. At the time that this symphony was commissioned, in the early 1980s, the Black Madonna had become the symbol of the insurgent Solidarity Movement, the non-violent rebellion within Poland against Soviet domination, which led eventually to the end of the Cold War.⁸³

⁸¹ See Chapter Three, pp. 231–235.

⁸² In *Polish Requiem*, see footnote 71 on p. 283.

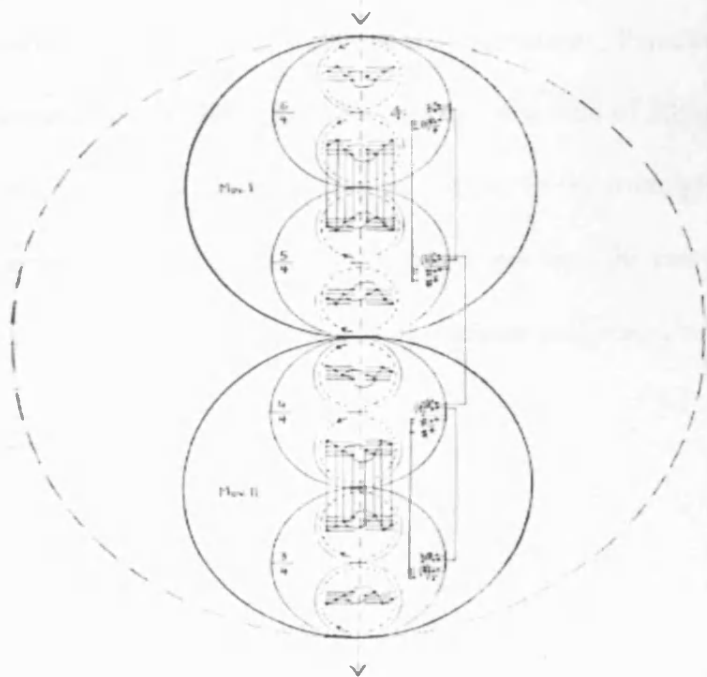
⁸³ Andrzej Panufnik, programme note published at the www.boosey.com/cr/music/Andrzej-Panufnik-Sinfonia-Votiva-Symphony-No-8-1555 (accessed 5 November 2008).

In his autobiography he added:

Through the centuries, Poles have prayed to the ancient icon of the Madonna and taken to her a great wealth of votive offerings, especially in times of national crisis when their country was threatened by foreign invasion. [...] I decided to write my new symphony as my own votive offering to the Black Madonna, joining my voice to the strikers' by invoking her aid on their behalf.⁸⁴

Fired by such an emotional inspiration, the composer provided in the symphony a reflection of the turbulence overwhelming his country through the expressive intensity, although it is typically controlled by an extremely precise musical structure. Panufnik, always fascinated by symmetry and geometry, decided to design *Sinfonia Votiva* by fitting it into the shape of two large circles combined into a figure 8 (see Ex. 4.9), which represents the two movements of the symphony (this is Panufnik's Eight Symphony).

Ex. 4.9 Panufnik, *Sinfonia Votiva*, composer's diagram



⁸⁴ Andrzej Panufnik, *Composing Myself*, p. 339.

The first movement, 'Andante rubato, con devozione' is slow and meditative, like a prayer. Its religious character is deepened by the inclusion of the first notes from *Bogurodzica* (Mother of God) in the solo instrumental lines of the first movements (e.g. the entrance of the tuba, Fig. 9) and an allusion to the atmosphere of Gregorian chorale close to the end of the movement (Figs. 10-12). The second movement, 'Allegro assai, con passione', is a kind of battle, marked by fast tempo, rhythmical vigour and dynamic intensity, often emphasised by the use of the orchestral tutti. The last, dissonant bars of the movement end the piece with a feeling of anxiety which, in the composer's opinion, was intended to express a screaming protest against the lack of independence of his native Poland⁸⁵ (see Ex. 4.10).

Sinfonia Votiva, despite its political inspiration, remains different from both Penderecki and Meyer symphonies, as public statements. This difference is not connected with the symbolic function of the piece but with the type of symphonism it represents. While both Penderecki's Second Symphony and Meyer's Sixth follow the path of late-Romantic rotational symphonism, Panufnik remained more Classical in his symphonic thinking. He planned the structure of *Sinfonia Votiva* with an architectural precision and care for detail, according to the principle of dialecticism and tension between two opposing forces, which are here the two contrasted movements of the symphony, each divided into two minor sections, also serving to create symphonic dramaturgy.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Ex. 4.10 Panufnik, *Sinfonia Votiva*, finale

64

Picc.

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Cl.

b.

fg.

Ct.

Tr.

Tb.

Tib.

Tb.

Uf.

Vib.

Camp. tub.

Plli.

Tmt.

Tutti: (in tempo!)

3 Arpe.

Vui.

Vle.

Vc.

Cb.

lunga

pendendosi

(c. 8')

The bells should be dampened down gradually, leaving the sound of unpitched percussion only for a very long duration.

Lincoln Center, August 1980 - August 1981, Riverside House, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Revised, 1984

The other significant symphony composed in the period of Martial Law is Lutosławski's Third (1981–83). Lutosławski, when asked about the possible influence of political events in Poland on the symphony, answered discreetly: 'I have never written programmatic music but I cannot deny that some outside events can find their reflection in music'.⁸⁶ However, there is nothing in the material, or even in the character of this piece, which would allow it to be interpreted as a public statement in any sense comparable to the three other symphonies discussed in this section.⁸⁷ In this context Lutosławski's Third Symphony remains basically an abstract work and as such indicates yet another line of development of Polish symphonic music in the late twentieth century.

4.5. 'Pursuing the abstract',⁸⁸

Besides references to either past musical traditions or the current political situation in Poland, in the post-avantgarde times it was indeed the line of symphonic music which continued a more abstract approach, one pursued by Meyer, Penderecki and Lutosławski. As observed by Thomas:

Traditional titles and genres, such as the symphony, concerto and string quartet, played an increasingly significant role in the music of many composers who during the 1970s and 1980s openly acknowledged their

⁸⁶ Witold Lutosławski in radio conversation with Andrzej Chłopecki (September 1st, 1981), quoted in Tomaszewski, 'Sonorystyczna ekspresywność i alegoryczny symbolizm: symfonia polska 1944–1994', p. 15. For more details about the possible connection between the events from the 1980s and Lutosławski's Third Symphony see Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 177–178, as well as Gwizdalanka and Meyer *Lutosławski. Droga do mistrzostwa*, pp.331–333.

⁸⁷ The interpretation of the Third Symphony in the context of the recent political situation was also deepened by the fact that in 1983 the piece was given the Solidarity Cultural Award by the Committee of Independent Culture in Poland.

⁸⁸ The term used by Thomas to describe music composed in Poland after the period of musical avantgarde. This is characterised by pieces not associated with extramusical arguments or symbols. See Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, pp. 225–252.

identification with the gestural and formal clarity of eighteenth-century practices.⁸⁹

A good example of a composer following this trend is Meyer, whose neo-Classical preferences were clear as early as in the 1960s, when he tried to combine traditional formal models with sonoristic musical language.⁹⁰ He continued this line in the 1970s and 1980s. His Fourth Symphony (1973) is a purely orchestral work (contrary to his earlier, vocal symphonies), large-scale and in three movements. Its musical language is still close to the stylistic idiom of the 'Polish School'. His Fifth Symphony (1978–79) is on a smaller scale than his previous symphonies, particularly in terms of orchestration, as it is scored for string chamber orchestra only. Its formal outline and time-span, however, is still extended: the symphony consists of five movements and lasts c. 30 minutes.

The symphony's structure refers to the traditional model with two contrasted musical ideas presented at the beginning (first movement) combined with Lutoslawski's idea of end-accented form with the more intense musical drama coming out in the finale. Therefore, after the dualistic first movement, the middle ones develop the initial musical material by focusing on a different aspect of musical language or expression, while the final, fifth movement creates a real musical drama growing out of the beginning. It is marked by the delicate *ppp* of cellos and double basses in dialogue with first violins, through a continuous tightening of musical material and expression until it reaches the climax at Fig. 62. After that, the accumulated tension is resolved by softening both texture and dynamic, until diatonic chords and the single note F in the double basses ends the symphony. Lutosławski's influence may be seen not only in the end-accented structure of Meyer's symphony but also in the way he approaches the

⁸⁹ Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, p. 226.

⁹⁰ See Chapter Three, pp. 187–188.

climax, with interchanging sections giving way to fast-moving homophonic passages played by full string orchestra in a dynamic crescendo until the climax is reached (Figs. 58-61).

Meyer's indebtedness to Lutosławski was replaced in his Sixth Symphony by the influence of Shostakovich and Penderecki, as already discussed. However, his basically Classical and abstract attitude to composing found its realisation not only in the symphonies, but also in the series of string quartets (twelve, 1963–2005) and concertos (Violin Concerto, 1965; two Cello Concertos, 1972, 1994; Piano Concerto, 1979; two Flute Concertos, 1964, 1983; Saxophone Concerto, 1993), as well as in trios and solo sonatas. Even if he has not reached such a mastery and originality of musical language as Lutosławski or Penderecki, his contribution to Polish music of the post-avantgarde era cannot be denied.

Penderecki, despite his stylistic shift towards late-Romanticism, as seen in the First Violin Concerto and the Second Symphony, has maintained a basically abstract approach in his symphonic writing. His aim, particularly after composing the Second Symphony, was to create a kind of symphonic synthesis rather than merely referring to the musical past and the late-nineteenth century in particular. As he admitted some time later: 'In full awareness of the difficulty of the task, I have turned to the form of the symphony in order to absorb and process the experience of our century'.⁹¹ Therefore, his next symphonies present a musical language which is less 'retrogressive' (as Tomaszewski called it) than that of the Second Symphony.⁹² This view, however, does not correspond in full with the opinion of Zieliński, who included both the Second and

⁹¹ Penderecki, *Labyrinth of Time*, p. 59.

⁹² Tomaszewski, *Penderecki – trudna sztuka bycia sobą*, p. 48.

Fourth symphonies in the trend strictly connected with the restitution of the late-Romantic idiom.⁹³

Indeed, the Fourth Symphony, entitled 'Adagio', fits perfectly the late-nineteenth century tendency to emphasise the slow movement of a symphony. The whole work is in one movement, which is a large-scale adagio, marked by long-breathed musical thoughts and depth of musical expression. It was initially composed as the slow movement of a planned larger symphonic work but finally the composer decided that it worked as a full-scale symphony on its own (it lasts c. 33 minutes). This is not a monolithic piece, as between the outer and central adagio sections the composer included two sections with scherzando material (*più animato*, Figs. 6-18; *Allegro molto*, Figs. 39-59), creating a contrast in the overall symphonic outline. As in Penderecki's other late symphonies, the whole structure is based on the initial musical motifs, which are repeated, developed and worked out during the symphony. The contrast is then created not by introducing new material but by giving it a different context and character (tempo, rhythm, timbre; see Ex. 4.11 a and b). The principle of dualism is therefore latent in the musical material and the dialectic tension is achieved through the continuous transformations and development of initial material.

⁹³ Zieliński discusses the Second and Fourth symphonies in the chapter devoted to Romantic symphonism, while the Fifth and Third symphonies are discussed in a separate chapter, as representing Penderecki's idea of 'great synthesis', see Zieliński, *Dramat instrumentalny Pendereckiego*.

Ex. 4.11a Penderecki, Fourth Symphony, opening

Adagio

4. Sinfonie für großes Orchester

(1989)

Krzysztof Penderecki
• 1933

4/8 Adagio (♩ = 64)

Piccolo

Flauto 1 2

Oboe 1 2

Corno inglese

Clarinetto pacc.

Clarinetto 1 2

Clarinetto basso

Fagotto 1 2

Contrafagotto

Corno 1 - 5

Tromba 1 - 3

Tromba 1 - 3

Trombone 1 - 4

Tuba

Timpani

Percussione

4/8 Adagio (♩ = 64)

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabbasso

Ex. 4.11b Penderecki, Fourth Symphony, opening of 'Allegro'

poco accel. **Allegro**

Picc.

Fl. 1/2

Ob. 1/2

Cl.

Clar. picc.

Clar. 1/2

Clar. b.

Fag. 1/2

Cr.

Perc.

cresc.

Più sospeso

poco accel. **Allegro**

Viol. I div.

Viol. II div.

Vla. div.

Vcl. div.

Cb.

con sord. arco

p

cresc.

pizz.

ff

This musical score page, numbered 47, contains staves for the following instruments:

- Picc.
- Fl. 1 and 2
- Ob. 1 and 2
- C.L.
- Clar. picc.
- Clar. 1 and 2
- Clar. b.
- Fag. 1 and 2
- Cr. 1
- Viol. I div.
- Viol. II div.
- Vla. div.
- Vcl. div.

The woodwind section (Piccolo, Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoon, and Horn) is highly active, featuring complex rhythmic patterns, triplets, and sixteenth-note passages. The strings (Violins I and II, Violas, and Cellos) are shown with long, sustained notes, indicating a harmonic or textural role in this section.

Both Penderecki's Fifth Symphony (1992) and Third Symphony (1988–95) follow the same line of symphonic writing. The Fifth Symphony is built as a single span, marked by a monumentality of sound and musical expression. Its late-Romantic associations remain strong, although it is driven by more energetic musical material and is marked by more contrasted sections compared to the character of both the Second and Fourth symphonies.

The Fifth Symphony starts slowly and in a dark, nearly funereal tone, emphasised by the repeated note F on violas, echoed by tam tams and later taken over by horns, juxtaposed with descending sequences of minor seconds on violins, starting a tritone away on B, followed by the adagio theme based on jumps of sixths and sevenths in cellos and double basses. These three elements of the initial idea not only create the initial tension but also form the basis for later developments. They are transformed either into scherzando material, based on animated motion of jumps of large intervals (Fig. 8), or into the majestic final passacaglia, using the sequences of semitones (Fig. 89) and bringing the musical drama of the symphony to a powerful end. It should be added that the first passacaglia model used by the composer in this symphony (Fig. 80) is based on a plain Korean melody (the symphony was commissioned by South Korea). Its musical material (three notes only – B flat, F and C – and rhythm limited to regular minims, see Ex. 4.12) is quite different from the rest of the symphony but its severe simplicity corresponds with the serious expression of the entire work.

Ex. 4.12 Penderecki, Fifth Symphony, Fig. 80, passacaglia on the Korean theme

(vc, 1st db, timp)

The musical score for Figure 80 of Penderecki's Fifth Symphony is a passacaglia on the Korean theme. It features a variety of instruments including Piccolo (4), Oboe 1, Clarinet in A (4), Timpani, Percussion (Tamtam, Campana tubolan), Violin I (1-4), Violin II (1-4), Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The score is marked with 'poco più animato' and 'solo'. The percussion part includes 'Tamtam' and 'Campana tubolan' with a 'pp' dynamic. The string parts are marked with 'con sord.' and 'pp'. The woodwind parts are marked with 'pp' and 'solo'. The score is numbered 80 in the top left corner.

The Third Symphony is created as a multi-movement piece, with five clearly contrasted movements: Andante con moto, Allegro con brio, Adagio, Passacaglia and Vivace (Rondo). It is also the longest of Penderecki's symphonies, lasting c. 45 minutes. Despite its number, the symphony is chronologically later than both Fourth and Fifth symphonies: the composer started composing the piece in 1988 but he produced then only the Passacaglia and Rondo, while the complete version was finished

in 1995. The musical idiom of this symphony is close to its predecessors, hence marked by the slowly evolving opening ideas, here characterised by the juxtaposition of the repeated syncopated note F in second cellos and doubles basses and the imitated sequences of ascending semitones in first cellos, violas and violins, later taken over by the bassoon. Vigorous scherzando material is introduced in the second movement, starting with a Beethovenian type of motto motif, the four-note repetition on B (cf. Lutosławski's motto in the Third Symphony, discussed below). The third movement is lyrical in a purely Romantic manner, the following Passacaglia brings the most condensed and intense musical drama, with its obsessively but haltingly repeated note D, and the final Rondo, with its dark orchestral colours and passages recalling the *danse macabre* 'ushers in the demoniac aura of *The Black Mask*',⁹⁴ the opera which preceded the symphony in 1984–86.

All Penderecki's late symphonies represent a symphonism which is deeply rooted in late-Romantic tradition. However, their musical language, particularly in the Third, Fourth and Fifth symphonies, is based on elements typical of a twentieth-century composer. When Penderecki refers to tonality, it is rather in the sense of tonal centralization than traditional major-minor tensions. Moreover, the musical material, as well as technical means, is based on carefully chosen intervallic combinations, with preference for dissonances, such as minor seconds (opening motif in the Fifth and Third symphonies), jumps of minor thirds, ninths, sevenths and tritones (opening of the Fourth Symphony), as well as perfect intervals and repetitions of single notes. Besides the rich and heavy orchestration, drawn from the styles of Bruckner, Mahler and Shostakovich, Penderecki shows a mastery of contrapuntal work in his polyphonic dialogues between

⁹⁴ Mieczysław Tomaszewski, note in CD booklet for Naxos, 8.554491.

single instrumental groups, realised in thin textures. A particularly interesting example of an unusual sound combination may be seen in the dialogue of cellos and rototoms in the Fourth Symphony (Ex. 4.13).

Ex. 4.13 Penderecki, Fourth Symphony, Fig. 47

The musical score for Figure 47 consists of two systems. Each system has two staves: Percussion (Perc.) and Violoncello (Vcl.).
 System 1:
 - Percussion staff: Starts with a 7/8 time signature, a circled 17, and a 'Rototom' label. The notation shows a series of rhythmic pulses.
 - Violoncello staff: Starts with a 'stacc.' marking. The notation shows a series of rhythmic pulses.
 System 2:
 - Percussion staff: Starts with a 7/8 time signature, a 'Rototom' label, and a 3/4 time signature. The notation shows a series of rhythmic pulses.
 - Violoncello staff: The notation shows a series of rhythmic pulses.

The other place in which Penderecki's timbral imagination, derived from his sonoristic experiences, is clearly apparent and makes an extraordinary impression is the Passacaglia from the Third Symphony. The expressive intensity of the broken repetitions of D natural, introduced by cellos and double basses, is extended by adding further instrumental groups with new pitches: the brass enter on a dissonant E flat while trombones and tuba add A flat resulting in a tritone (Ex. 4.14. shows the beginning of this process). The whole dissonant texture increases the expressive and dramatic tension of this short movement.

Ex.4.14 Penderecki, Third Symphony, beginning of 'Passacaglia' (fourth movement)

IV

3/8 Allegro moderato **2/4** **3/8** **5/8** **3/8** **3/4**

Timp.

Perc. *Gran Cassa* *Tam-tam*

Vc. *ben tenuto* *f sempre* *senza sord.*

Cb. *ben tenuto* *f sempre* *senza sord.*

Cl. b. **3/4** **5/8** **3/4** **3/8** **2/4** **3/8** **2/4** **7/8** **3/4**

Fag. 2

Cfg.

Cr. **3/4** **5/8** **3/4** **3/8** **2/4** **3/8** **2/4** **7/8** **3/4**

Timp.

Perc. *Gran Cassa* *Tam-tam*

Vc. **3/4** **5/8** **3/4** **3/8** **2/4** **3/8** **2/4** **7/8** **3/4**

Cb. **3/4** **5/8** **3/4** **3/8** **2/4** **3/8** **2/4** **7/8** **3/4**

The passacaglia model in the Third Symphony may be interpreted as a refined and extended version of musical ideas opening Penderecki's First Symphony (repetitions of frusta and vibraslap sounds, see Ex.3.26a) and *The Awakening of Jacob* (repetition of dissonant chord, see Ex. 4.3). The evolution of the composer's idea went from unpitched, sonoristic sounds, through a harmonically tight chord coloured by the unusual timbre of ocarinas, to the single note D, whose repetition forms the basis for the development of the fourth movement of Penderecki's Third Symphony. The passacaglia remains one of the most typical techniques used by the composer in his late music, assuring his music a specific, dark tone with an element of pathos. Its influence may be observed not only in the more extended forms of passacaglia, as seen in the later stages of the Third and Fifth symphonies, but also in the heavy repetitions of the single notes opening these works.

In terms of musical structure, Penderecki's late symphonies reinterpret the traditional model of the sonata allegro combined with a multi-movement sonata structure. Each symphony brings two contrasting thematic areas (although related in their musical material): the first is slow and serious in expression and the second has the character of a scherzando, although it should be noted that the composer's idea of scherzando is much heavier than that of many other composers, including Mahler, Bruckner and Shostakovich. The material of both musical thoughts funds the basis for later developments of each work. This is clear both in the single-movement Fourth and Fifth symphonies and in the five-movement Third Symphony, in which the first movement provides the first thematic idea and the second introduces contrasting scherzando material. Through the continuous development of the initial material,

Penderecki brings the musical drama of his symphonies to the main climax, which is always put in the finale.⁹⁵

However, his end-weighted structures have nothing in common with Lutosławski's formal idea but refer rather to the late-Romantic type of multi-movement symphony with the centre of gravity in the finale, which is treated as a synthesis of the musical material presented during the piece. Moreover, special emphasis is given also to the slow movement with its rich lyricism and atmosphere of contemplation. Therefore, Penderecki's contribution to twentieth-century symphonism is connected more with recreation of a late-Romantic sense of the symphony, seen as an extended, all-embracing musical drama, rather than with building innovative formal constructions, as in the case of Lutosławski. This concept corresponds also with Penderecki's understanding of the symphony as a 'big form'.⁹⁶

At the same time, Penderecki's late symphonies represent the abstract approach of the composer. Neither the Fourth or Third symphonies have extramusical associations. The Fifth Symphony, although using a quotation from a Korean song, could hardly be interpreted as a public statement in the sense discussed in the previous section, as the idea of including the song was the composer's friendly gesture to the country which commissioned the piece (South Korea). Penderecki was not interested in making any comments which could connect his symphonies with any outside inspirations. He rather preferred to make significant extramusical connections in other genres, not the symphonies. The best examples of such referential compositions are the *Te Deum*, the *Polish Requiem* and the Piano Concerto 'Resurrection' (2002), written as

⁹⁵ For more details about the dramaturgical structure of Penderecki's symphonies see Ewa Siemdzaj, 'The Symphonies of Krzysztof Penderecki: In Search of an Individual Way', *Krzysztof Penderecki – Music in the Intertextual Era. Studies and Interpretations*, ed. Mieczysław Tomaszewski and Ewa Siemdzaj (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 2005), pp. 287-304.

⁹⁶ Penderecki, *The Labyrinth of Time*, p. 78.

the composer's response to the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York on September 11th, 2001.

The abstract approach in symphonic writing during the post-avantgarde times is represented most significantly in Lutosławski's late symphonies. He was always distanced himself from any extramusical interpretation of his music. Instead, he concentrated on searching for highly individual solutions in both the formal aspect and the musical language of his works. He understood the symphony as a large-scale closed form with clearly constructed musical drama, which he called 'action'.⁹⁷ He had already tried to achieve this goal in his Second Symphony, which was the first orchestral realisation of the idea of end-accented form, and he continued this line in his later pieces.

In the late 1970s, when the Polish musical scene experienced the appearance of 'new Romanticism', Lutosławski was working on exploring his melodic language. The results appeared first in a little piece, *Epitaph* for oboe and piano (1979), marking the beginning of the late period in the composer's music. The melodic line, almost entirely avoided in his avantgarde works, began to reappear, giving his music a new dimension (cf. *Novelette*, 1979). It is also seen in his Third Symphony, the most extensive of all his symphonies and the result of many years of hard work.⁹⁸ The general structure of the piece follows the outline used previously in the Second Symphony. According to the composer:

The work consists of two movements, preceded by a short introduction and followed by an epilogue and a coda. It is played without a break. The first movement comprises three episodes, of which the first is the fastest, the second slower and the third is the slowest. The basic tempo remains the same and the differences of speed are realised by the lengthening of the rhythmical units. Each episode is followed by a short, slow refrain. The

⁹⁷ Chapter One, p. 40.

⁹⁸ For more details about the genesis of the symphony see Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 174.

third episode leads to a short, slow intermezzo which in turn is followed by the third and last refrain. The second, main movement is based on a group of toccata-like themes contrasting with a rather singing one: a series of differentiated tuttis leads to the climax of the whole work. Then comes the last movement, based on a slow singing theme and a sequence of rather dramatic recitatives played by the string group. A short and very fast coda ends the piece.⁹⁹

The two-movement structure indicated by the composer is, however, not as clear as in the Second Symphony. The whole work is composed as a large-scale single span, although with a division into sections. Compared to the structure of the Second Symphony, only the idea of episodes and refrain is similar, while the other elements of the structure are organised differently.

First of all, the main movement is not a purposeful, continuous organic growth of musical material, as in the Second Symphony's 'Direct', but it has a more fragmented character, which is described by the composer as 'a group of toccata-like themes' (starting at Fig. 32). They lead to the climax (Fig. 77), which functions in a different way than the climaxes in previous Lutosławski's compositions. Instead of an aggressive explosion of ad libitum texture, as in the Second Symphony and *Livre pour orchestre*, the climax in the Third Symphony is based on a chordal texture in woodwind, brass and percussion, combined with quasi-aleatoric figures in strings (although notated metrically) and descending steps in trumpets and trombones (see Ex. 4.15).

⁹⁹ Quoted in Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 166.

Ex. 4.15 Lutosławski, Third Symphony, climax

77
Tempo I (♩ = ca 108)

fl 1, 2, 3
ob 1, 2, 3
cl 1, 2, 3
fg 1, 2
trbe 1, 2, 3, 4
cor 1, 2, 3, 4
trbni 1, 2, 3, 4
xil
mar
cmp^{III}
cmp^{ac}
pf
vni I
vni II
vle
vc

dim. (multiple instances)
mp
f
p
musa in fl. picc. 1.
(l.v.)

Moreover, this moment in the symphony does not bring the musical action to its expressive end. On the contrary, what follows creates another and particularly significant stage of the musical drama in this piece. This is connected with the appearance of a *cantando* theme in strings at Fig. 84, a broad cantilena constituting the last section of the symphony, called by the composer an epilogue. Its function in the symphony's overall drama is, however, much more significant than merely being the epilogue. In fact, it creates an independent section of the symphony. This is also the place which reveals a feature not present in Lutosławski's earlier pieces: a melody, quite traditionally connected with the lyrical sound of strings, accompanied by melodic motifs on woodwind and harps, with regular crotchets on marimba (Fig. 84). By including this section at the end of his symphony, Lutosławski changed the character of the climax from 'concluding' (as in the Second Symphony and *Livre pour orchestre*) to 'transitional', as pointed out by Rae.¹⁰⁰ This allowed the composer to postpone the end of the entire musical drama to the last bars and to finish the whole symphony with an energetic allegro coda, quite different from the quiet ending of his previous symphony.

There is one more, structural feature not yet indicated in the present discussion, and surprisingly omitted in the composer's description of the symphony (quoted above). This is the four-note motif, a unison repetition of the octave E natural, which serves as a kind of 'motto' and structural thread for the symphony. It opens the whole piece and appears subsequently, separating the main sections of the symphony. Finally, its last tutti and *fff* appearance gives the piece a powerful closure in an almost tonal sense (see Ex. 4.16).

¹⁰⁰ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 174.

Ex. 4.16 Lutosławski, Third Symphony, last bars

1) Początki glissand i następujące po nich *pieno* nie muszą występować jednocześnie i być wskazane przez dyrygenta.
The beginnings of the glissandi and the following *pieno* are not supposed to be simultaneous, and must not be conducted.

The structure of Lutosławski's Third Symphony is a highly individual combination of his end-accented formal model, as invented in the middle of the 1960s, with some new ideas and expressive elements not previously used by the composer. In this sense, it remains a synthesis of his older and newer techniques. This characteristic resulted in Rae's opinion that the symphony is 'curiously hybrid'.¹⁰¹ However, the synthetic character of the Third Symphony becomes even clearer when compared with its successor.

The Fourth Symphony (1992) is Lutosławski's last orchestral piece. Referring to the structure of this work, the composer connected it again with the idea of two-movement, end-accented form. According to him,

the Fourth Symphony consists of two ordinary movements; this first movement is slow; the second, which is the main movement of the symphony, is relatively fast. In the form there are no appreciable innovations.¹⁰²

But in fact, the structure of this composition is different from Lutosławski's previous works and goes much further in deconstructing the basic two-movement model than did the Third Symphony. The piece, composed again as a single movement, starts with a purely lyrical thematic idea developed by strings and clarinet solo (see Ex. 4.17). The melodic beauty of this opening, recalling Lutosławski's *Mi-parti* (1976), though quite unusual for his music, seems to be a development or continuation of the cantilena theme from the epilogue of the Third Symphony (they both emphasise the note E natural).

¹⁰¹ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 176.

¹⁰² Nikolska, *Conversation with Witold Lutosławski*, p. 146.

Ex. 4.17 Lutosławski, Fourth Symphony, opening

IV SYMFONIA
SYMPHONY No. 4

M. Tadeusz Lutzowski
[1998]

(1)

5
4

loc. 55

ar. I.

Con sord.
pp

vle

con sord.
pp

vi. div.

con sord.
pp

ch. div.

con sord.
pp

(2)

d. I.

poco cresc. - 3

mf

ar. I.

ni I

ni II

vle

w. div.

ch. div.

The expressive quality of this cantilena opening is far from the idea of episodes, slowly engaging the listeners' attention in the introductory movement. Quite the opposite: the opening cantabile theme enchants and engages the listener straight from the beginning. It also provides the basis for the development of the first section of the symphony. After being interrupted twice by aggressive aleatoric figures in brass and woodwind (Figs. 4-6 and Figs. 9-13), it reaches a climax (Fig. 20), which is realised in a way typical of the Second Symphony and *Livre pour orchestre*: the fast rhythmical passages explodes in an ad libitum texture of superimposed aleatoric lines (see Ex. 4.18).

Ex. 4.18 Lutosławski, Fourth Symphony, climax of the first section

The image displays a complex musical score for the climax of the first section of Lutosławski's Fourth Symphony. The score is written for a large orchestra, with multiple staves for each instrument family. The top staves are for the brass section, including two tubas (Tb. 1, 2), four cornets (Cor. 1-4), and four trumpets (Tr. 1-4). Below these are the woodwind staves, including two flutes (Fl. 1, 2), two oboes (Ob. 1, 2), two clarinets (Cl. 1, 2), two bassoons (Bsn. 1, 2), and two contrabassoons (Cb. 1, 2). The bottom staves are for the string section, including two violins (Viol. I, II), two violas (Vla. I, II), two cellos (Vcl. I, II), and two double basses (Cb. I, II). The score is marked with a tempo of 'F. ca. 160' and a 3/8 time signature. The music is characterized by fast, rhythmic passages and a dense texture of superimposed aleatoric lines. The score is divided into measures, with some measures containing multiple staves for different instruments. The overall effect is one of intense, chaotic energy.

20

Handwritten musical score for a large orchestra, starting at measure 20. The score includes staves for woodwinds (flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons), brass (trumpets, trombones, tubas, horns), and strings (violins, violas, cellos, double basses). The notation is dense with many notes and rests, indicating a complex orchestral texture. The score is written in a single system across 20 staves.

15

However, while in both previous works this type of climax appeared at the late stage of the piece, concluding the drama of the whole composition, here the composer used it to close the first section of the piece only (resolved into three repeated tutti chords at Fig. 21). This makes a crucial difference connected with reinventing the composer's

structural procedures, allowing Thomas to see the structure of the symphony as a ‘front-loaded model’.¹⁰³ This idea is supported by what follows this first climax.

The next section, called by the composer the main one, is again not a straightforward musical action leading to the climax and resolution. The material of this section is rather based on developmental processes using the musical ideas presented in the first section: the aleatoric figures of woodwind and brass (e.g. Fig. 22) and the lyrical cantilena of strings (cf. *cantando* theme at Fig. 43). At Figs. 53-63 the composer introduces scherzo-like material, characterised by its flickering, kaleidoscopic texture based on very short motifs or single notes played by solo instruments: violins, piccolo flute and campanelli at the beginning, with other instruments joining in later (Ex. 4.19).

Ex. 4.19 Lutosławski, Fourth Symphony, Fig. 54

¹⁰³ Adrian Thomas, ‘One Last Meeting: Lutosławski, Szymanowski and the fantasia’, *Karol Szymanowski w perspektywie kultury muzycznej przeszłości i współczesności*, ed. Zbigniew Skowron (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 2007), p. 327.

The image shows a page of a musical score for the Fourth Symphony. It features six staves. The first staff is for 'fl. pic.' (flute piccolo). The second staff is for 'Caph' (Cello and Double Bass). The third staff is for 'Vib. cava' (Vibraphone). The fourth staff is for 'Vno I Solo' (Violin I Solo). The fifth staff is for 'Vno II Solo' (Violin II Solo). The sixth staff is for 'Vno alt.' (Violin Alto). The score includes various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte). There are also tempo markings like 'pizzicato' and '8. dura'. The page number '42' is written at the bottom left of the score.

This fragile passage leads to the more developed final section of the symphony (starting at Fig. 64), bringing the musical drama to the final climax starting with a strong unison A flat at Fig. 82 and extended until the *ff* chords at Fig. 85. After that, the musical tension is softened through the solo violin figures until the composer introduces a fast and energetic coda (starting at Fig. 92) which gives the symphony a powerful ending, similar to that of the Third Symphony.

Therefore, there is no single climax in the Fourth Symphony. The opening section creates the first climax in the piece, while the second culmination is achieved at the end of the second section, and the coda brings yet another climax, closing the whole symphony. The structure of Lutosławski's Fourth Symphony is hence different from his previous models. This causes different interpretations among commentators. While Rae indicates that the intense ten-note climaxing chord, consisting mainly of superimposed perfect fourths and tritones and achieved at the end of the second section, is 'a decisive moment of culmination' and crucial point for the symphony,¹⁰⁴ Thomas points out that

¹⁰⁴ Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, p. 244.

the composer in fact replaced his end-accented form by putting the emphasis on the opening section. Indeed, this section, besides its expressive power, introduces the main musical ideas, extended and developed in the second part of the piece. Moreover, in Thomas's opinion there is more sense to see this symphony as a single entity, in which 'any semblance of subdivisions is secondary to a less rigid fantasia of statement, variation and interlude.'¹⁰⁵

Lutosławski's Fourth Symphony remains thus a kind of testament, in which he looked beyond his previously refined models of both symphonic structure and musical language. The lyrical element, which dominates, is unusual compared to his other works. It gives this piece a new expressive dimension, assuring it an exceptional position in the composer's output. It may even be interpreted as close to the Romantic type of emotion, although far from the dark tone typical of Penderecki's symphonies. Moreover, in terms of structure and musical language both the Third and Fourth of Lutosławski's symphonies remain close to the line of Classical, syntactical symphonic thinking, with clearly divided sections based on the dualistic opposition of the musical material. This feature was clear in Lutosławski's Second Symphony and *Livre pour orchestre*, and it constituted the structure of his late symphonies as well.

* * *

As was indicated in Chapter One, the period from the late 1970s onwards brought the significant development of the symphony in many countries.¹⁰⁶ Polish composers contributed with their own ideas, resulting in symphonies which gained

¹⁰⁵ Thomas, 'One Last Meeting: Lutosławski, Szymanowski and the fantasia', p. 327.

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter One, pp. 36-37.

worldwide recognition, such as Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*, Lutosławski's Third and Fourth symphonies and Penderecki's Second to Fifth symphonies. After the years of musical avantgarde, where the development of symphonic music was dominated by exploration of new sound techniques and formal ideas, either entirely avoiding or radically challenging the main principle of symphonic dualism, the large-scale symphony reappeared in full, refreshed and with the aim of entering a new stage in its history. As discussed in the present thesis, the idea of symphonism constituted a large body of Polish contemporary music and the symphonic output of Polish composers of the second half of the twentieth century confirmed that both types of symphonic thinking, Classical and Romantic, remained strongly present in their artistic thinking and both bore highly valued artistic fruits.

POSTSCRIPT

There is no question that the middle of the 1990s, marked by the death of Lutosławski in 1994, brought the end of a certain epoch in the history of Polish music, including the development of the symphony. With the death of Lutosławski, Polish musical society lost the main authority, the composer who not only witnessed the main changes which occurred in Poland from the 1930s to the early 1990s but who contributed significantly to the development of Polish music, becoming a fully respected, international compositional figure. Without Lutosławski, Polish music entered a new period. This caesura is strengthened by several other arguments.

Panufnik died in 1991, leaving ten symphonies in his output. Górecki has not composed a symphony since finishing his Third,¹ Penderecki completed his Third Symphony in 1995, hence one year after Lutosławski's death, even though he had started composing this piece in 1988. With this work he stopped writing symphonies understood as large-scale orchestral forms. He has not yet produced the Sixth Symphony, while his oratorio *Seven Gates of Jerusalem* (1996) was later announced as his Seventh Symphony. He returned to the genre only in 2007 with the vocal Eighth Symphony 'Symphony of Songs'. Meyer did not produce his Seventh Symphony until 2002. Kilar, after producing symphonic poems and vocal religious works, turned to the genre of the symphony at the beginning of the twentieth-first century. His 'September' Symphony (2003) commemorating the terrorist attack on New York in 2001 was followed by *Sinfonia de motu* (2005) and 'Advent' Symphony (2007), with these two later symphonies being choral-instrumental works. Kotoński, after producing his series of symphonic poems, turned to a conservatively understood symphonic outline in his

¹ The premiere of his long-awaited Fourth Symphony has been announced for April 2010 in London.

First (1995) and Second (2001) symphonies. Knapik has been pursuing his ‘new Romantic’ musical language in the field of both opera (the trilogy *The Minds of Helena Toubleyn*, 1987–95) and large-scale songs with orchestra (*Up into the Silence*, 1996–2000, *Introduction to Mystery*, 2005), openly drawing upon the late-Romantic idioms of Mahler and Richard Strauss. Lasoń’s monumental choral Third Symphony ‘1999’ (1996–97) was his personal response to the atmosphere of the *fin de millénaire*, while its successor, *Sinfonia Concertante* for amplified guitar and chamber orchestra (2004), returns to the concertante idiom known from his Second Symphony ‘Concertante’ for piano and orchestra (1979–80), and the latest essay in the genre, *SATJA Symphony No. 4* (2006–07), reveals a clear connection with India, both in its character and concept of musical time.

The turn of the millennium witnessed therefore several symphonic works which will form the basis for future research on the Polish symphony and symphonic thinking. Some of them, composed by older and middle generations, have been indicated above. Among others pieces which should be included are the monumental *Symphony of Hymns* (1984–2004) by Rafał Augustyn (b. 1951), being a synthesis of not only his musical language but of the compositional idioms of the whole century, and symphonic works by Tadeusz Wielecki (b. 1954), such as *Id* (1996), *Taflę* (Surfaces, 2002) and *Schwärme* (2005), as well as *Spiętrzenia* (Heaps, 2007) by Jerzy Kornowicz (b. 1959).

Moreover, the early 2000s have witnessed the premieres of new symphonies by representatives of the youngest generation of Polish composers. Bartosz Kowalski-Banasewicz (b. 1977) presented his geometrically oriented *Symfonia okręgów* (Symphony of Circles) in 2002, gaining the fourth prize at the Kazimierz Serocki International Composers’ Competition in Warsaw later that year; he wrote his Second

Symphony in 2006. Wojciech Ziemowit Zych (1976) composed his densely harmonic and temporally extended Second Symphony in 2004, while Agata Zubel (b. 1978) contributed her spatial Second Symphony (2005), referring to the ideas of the musical avantgarde of the 1950s and 1960s. However, the main figure among the younger composers in Poland remains Paweł Mykietyn (b. 1971). After a period of postmodernist games with traditional conventions, he turned to more serious musical genres and musical idioms, looking for his own individual voice. His Second Symphony composed in 2007 and premiered at the Warsaw Autumn later that year brought the interesting restructuring of Lutosławski's end-accented model, with its purposeful and goal-oriented first part and more episodic second. This piece may be seen as the sign for a new dimension in Polish symphonic music, opening the door for later developments of the genre in Poland.

However, it is too early confidently to predict possible evolutions. Being aware of the rich twentieth-century symphonic tradition in Poland, composers might follow Mykietyn in writing significant symphonic essays, challenging or merely contributing to the genre with their own original and innovative musical ideas. Whether or not they will succeed in this task is a question which only future research will be able to answer.

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