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# **Structure and Expression. Logos and Ethos. On Polish and Lithuanian Music Before and After 1989. A Few Reflections<sup>1</sup>**

For many centuries, Poland and Lithuania formed a single state known as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This state originally came into being on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1569 as the Polish-Lithuanian Union and lasted until the Third Partition in 1795. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as both countries struggled to cope with major social and political transformations and endeavoured to regain their independence, music emerged as a “weapon” in their fight for freedom and national identity. Independent musical culture, developed in both countries in opposition to the rules of conduct imposed by the authorities, became a symbol of unity in the face of commonly professed but forbidden values.

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<sup>1</sup> This publication is a result of the research project DAINA 1 No. 2017/27/L/HS2/03240 funded by The National Science Centre (NCN) in Poland.

## I The key value: intensity of expression

One of these “forbidden” values was that of sincere and authentic expression, which also bore the emotional memory associated with the persuasive art of rhetoric. Many Polish and Lithuanian composers before and after 1989 revealed their desire to act as musical orators. They were aware that the power of a musical message lies in its character and orientation, which is supposed to move the listener and direct his or her attention and imagination towards specific important paths, providing what Kurt Huber so aptly called a “spherical experience.”<sup>2</sup> The texts of many works are thus equipped with suggestive rhetorical flourishes, belonging mainly to the repertoire of emphatic figures, characterised by a particular power of expression. At this point it is worth recalling the words of Leonard B. Meyer: “Music may thus evoke images and threads of thought which, because of their connections with the inner life of a particular person, may finally culminate in an affectation.”<sup>3</sup> We need only cite here such examples, written before 1989, as *Symphony No. 3 of “Sorrowful Songs”* (1976) by Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, or the oratorio *The Tree of the World* (1986) by Bronius Kutavičius – both of which are highly expressive works, which would directly affect the listener. Górecki referred in his work to tragic motifs present in Polish history, proposing the idea of decelerated, halted, contemplative time. The first movement of the *Symphony*, a dramaturgical and textural *crescendo* and *decrescendo*, was interpreted by Krzysztof Droba as leading the listener along tragic path, in the meaning understood by Max Scheler.<sup>4</sup> Kutavičius, in turn, reinterpreted the myth of pagan Lithuania, alluding to an archetypal ritual.

In twentieth-century musical and humanist thought, the notion, reinforced by Susanne Langer’s theory, that music is a significant

2 Kurt Huber, *Musikästhetik*, cf. incl. Mieczysław Tomaszewski, [entry] “Huber” in *Encyklopedia Muzyczna PWM, część biograficzna*, ed. by Elżbieta Dziębowska, Vol. 4 (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1993), 311. Cf.: Michał Bristiger, “O estetyce Kurta Hubera”, in *Spotkania muzyczne w Baranowie*, ed. by L. Polony (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1978), 125–136.

3 Leonard B. Meyer, *Emocja i znaczenie w muzyce*, trans. A. Buchner, K. Berger (Kraków: Biblioteka Res Facta, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1974), 310.

4 Cf. Krzysztof Droba, “Droga do sensu tragicznego. Jeszcze o III Symfonii Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego” [The Road to the Tragic Sense. More on Henryk Mikołaj Górecki’s Symphony No. 3], *Ruch Muzyczny* 15 (1978).

form for conveying and experiencing emotions<sup>5</sup> has resonated widely. As the author writes in her book, *Feeling and Form*: “The tonal structures we call ‘music’ bear a close logical similarity to the forms of human feeling – forms of growth and of attenuation, flowing and stowing, conflict and resolution, speed, arrest, terrific excitement, calm, or subtle activation and dreamy lapses – not joy and sorrow perhaps, but the poignancy of either and both – the greatness and brevity and eternal passing of everything vitally felt. Such is the pattern, or logical form, of sentience; and the pattern of music is that same form worked out in pure, measured sound and silence. Music is a tonal analogue of emotive life”<sup>6</sup>. Langer points out that the power of music also resides in the fact that it is able to convey the truth of emotional life in a way that is inaccessible to the nature of language itself. Schopenhauer alone wrote that music does not express “the phenomenon, but only the inner nature, the in-itself, of every phenomenon, the will itself. Therefore, music does not express this or that particular and definite pleasure, this or that affliction, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, or peace of mind, but rather joy, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, and peace of mind *themselves*, to a certain extent in the abstract, their essential nature, without any accessories, and so also without the motives for them.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, following this thread, the music of Górecki’s aforementioned *Symphony No. 3* expresses the essence of tragedy, while Kutavičius’ oratorio expresses the essence of the original pagan ritual. Langer also points out that music is neither the cause of feelings, nor a cure or antidote for them, but rather, she stresses, “their logical expression.”<sup>8</sup> She adds that because of the deep affinity between human feelings and musical forms, music “can reveal the nature of feelings with a precision and fidelity that language can never achieve.”<sup>9</sup> A musical symbol is not, however, arbitrary in nature: it has become an ambiguous formula, a pattern of a general character, a kind

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5 Susanne Langer, *Nowy sens filozofii. Rozważania o symbolach myśli, obrzędu i sztuki* [Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art], trans. A.H. Bogucka (Warszawa: Polski Instytut Wydawniczy 1976), 354.

6 Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 27, quoted in: Krzysztof Gućzalski, *Znaczenie muzyki, znaczenia w muzyce* (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 1999), 94.

7 Arthur Schopenhauer, “Metafizyka muzyki”, trans. J. Garewicz, *Ruch Muzyczny* 1 (1971) 11.

8 Susanne Langer, *Nowy sens filozofii* [Philosophy in a New Key], 324.

9 *Ibid.*, 347.

of invariant that can repeat itself in various forms over the course of different epochs, styles and compositional idioms. In Romantic musical symbolism there was a unity of expression (form) plan and content plan: a symbol became a synonym of symbolic expression, i.e., a direct expression of intuitive content, which is linguistically impossible to grasp. The Modernist definition of a symbol, on the other hand, merges the layers of sign and meaning. This kind of symbolic expression can be heard in such religious works composed after 1989 as Feliksas Bajoras' *Missa in musica* for soprano, piano, double bass and trombone (1992-1993) by or Krzysztof Penderecki's *Credo* for five soloists, boys' choir, mixed choir and orchestra (1997-1998).

According to Marta Szoka, as an independent composer Bajoras "seems to have followed the 'principle of internal necessity' from the very beginning. What does this mean in his case? Above all else, it denotes a deep organic connection with the musical culture of his ancestors. For him, Lithuanian national songs are not only an inspiration in terms of melody and rhythm, but also a source of distinctive, archaically raw expression [...]"<sup>10</sup> It is worth pointing out that Bajoras was not interested in quoting Lithuanian folk authenticity. Rather, like Karol Szymanowski, who called on Polish composers during the interwar period to write in the spirit of native music, he created his own musical scales. "The category of familiarity", Szoka states, "gives way to the construction of a synthesis."<sup>11</sup>

Penderecki's *Credo*, on the other hand, impacts the listener with its strong affectations: the course of the music is marked by citations from the plaintive song *Któryś za nas cierpiał rany* ("You Who suffered wounds for us") from *Gorzkie żale* ("Bitter Lamentations") and the Protestant psalm *Aus tiefer Not (Z głębokości wołam, co Ciebie, Panie* – "From the depths I cry out for You, O Lord"). Penderecki's evocation of familiar motifs is of colossal importance in shaping the listener's perception. As Regina Chłopicka, an outstanding interpreter of Penderecki's outlook and music, wrote: *Credo* "is therefore not only an artistic phenomenon. It is also the artist's act of courage in publicly professing his faith in

10 Marta Szoka, "Continuum czy novum? Twórczość Feliksasa Bajorasa po roku 1989" [Continuum or Novum. The Work of Feliksas Bajoras after 1989], in *Duchowość Europy Środkowej i wschodniej w muzyce końca XX wieku*, ed. by K. Droba, T. Malecka, K. Sz wajgier (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, 2004), 225.

11 Ibid., 227.

God as the message of his art at the end of the century"<sup>12</sup>. Here the composer complemented the canonical and liturgical text with other musically and textually significant components. For example: the hymn *Pange, lingua, gloriosi* (*Sław, języku, tajemnicę* – "Praise, o tongue, the mystery"), the antiphon *Crux Fidelis* (*Krzyżu Święty* – "O Holy Cross") or *Popule meus* (*Ludu, mój ludu, cóżem ci uczynił* – "My people, what have I done to you") from the improperias sung during the Good Friday liturgy. The music recomposes the verbal text: the composer singles out words and key moments from the musical narrative, following the example of the choral tradition and Johann Sebastian Bach's *Passions*. He makes generous use of the collective emotional memory, wanting to move the listener and compel him or her to reflect. He even becomes, in some fragments of the piece, a theologian. Indeed, he is above all an ecumenical composer: in 1970 he composed *Utrenja*, in which a Westerner, acting as a representative of Mediterranean culture – whose spirituality and influence Penderecki felt in Kraków – reaches out to an Easterner in a beautiful gesture of dialogue. The texts selected for musical interpretation are, naturally, of enormous importance during the process of creating music, because words carry specific meanings and senses. Although, as Raymond Monelle wrote notably, "no text or title is necessary for musical topics to carry signification"<sup>13</sup>.

Krzysztof Penderecki belonged to a group of contemporary artists who created their own recognisably original expressive style: beginning from his early period of rebellion against traditional values consolidated in culture and his creation of avant-garde music, up to his "late" style, marked by the reclaiming of values he had previously consciously neglected, and which are associated with (neo-)romanticism. Penderecki himself revealed: "In Mahler's words I could say that I relate my music to «the whole man» – «a man who feels, thinks, breathes, suffers». As the years pass and the subsequent thresholds are crossed, the imperative of retrospection becomes stronger and stronger."<sup>14</sup> The composer was known to have declared that synthesis,

12 Regina Chłopicka, "Credo", in *Twórczość Krzysztofa Pendereckiego. Od genezy do rezonansu*, Vol. 7 (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, 2013), 97.

13 Raymond Monelle, *The sense of music. Semiotic essays* (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 14.

14 Krzysztof Penderecki, *Labirynt czasu. Pięć wykładów na koniec wieku. Arka* [Labyrinth of Time. Five Lectures for the End of the Century. The Ark] (Warszawa: Presspublika, 1997), 60–61.

inscribed in the attitudes of many contemporary authors, “cannot consist in mechanically combining elements, but must result from a unifying experience. The old theme is only updated when new means of expression are found for it.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1968 Roland Barthes proclaimed the death of the author, stating that a text (work) annihilates its immanent subjectivity, destroys – which is fixed in Romantic poetics – the textual (work) self. This statement became both a manifesto and an appeal to remove the category of the author from interpretative discourse and replace it with the category of the scribe – an archetypal category. “We know now that a text consists not of a line of words, releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God), but of a multi-dimensional space in which are married and contested several writings, none of which are original: the text is a fabric of quotations, resulting from a thousand sources of culture.”<sup>16</sup> Barthes thereby shifted the emphasis away from authorial subjectivity or, in other words, severed the author from the text, and re-evaluated our thinking about the text as the work of an individual creator. Interestingly, as Andrzej Zawadzki, among others, notes: “Although Barthes does not explicitly renounce the thesis that the Text inevitably destroys subjectivity, he adds nonetheless that it is literature, writing, that is the author’s place of return, the space in which he or she can exist and persist.”<sup>17</sup> The “Lithuanian example” illustrates that it is thanks to music – independent music, music that was not caught up in official doctrine – thanks to, among other things, that powerful “trinity” of composers born in the 1930s, i.e. Bronius Kutavičius, Feliksas Bajoras and Osvaldas Balakauskas, that Lithuania was reborn.

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15 Krzysztof Penderecki, *Labirynt czasu. Pięć wykładów na koniec wieku. Passio artis et vitae* [Labyrinth of Time. Five Lectures for the End of the Century. Passio artis et vitae]. Anna and Zbigniew Baran talk with Krzysztof Penderecki (Warszawa: Presspublika, 1997), 67.

16 Roland Barthes, “Śmierć autora” [The Death of the Author], trans. M.P. Markowski, *Teksty Drugie* 1/2 (1999), 250.

17 Andrzej Zawadzki, “Rysy autora. Ślad jako nowa formuła obecności podmiotu w tekście” [The author’s traces. Traces as a new formula of the subject’s presence in the text], in *Oblicza Narcyza: obecność autora w dziele*, ed. by M. Cieśla-Korytowska, I. Puchalska and M. Siwiec (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2008), 461.

## II. Without indifferent and unnecessary sounds

The practice of strictly designing the structure of a musical work based on a system and numerical premises was visible in both Polish and Lithuanian music in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, two standout examples being the works of Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994) and Osvaldas Balakauskas (born 1937). Both were perceived as composers who created systems of a higher order, preserving in their music the organising power of the logos. It should be noted that in each of these two cases the logically assumed structure serves the expression. Significant in this respect is Lutosławski's well-known statement that everything in music is the fruit of inspiration. Let me quote the composer's own words here: "Even the tiniest detail must satisfy the composer's sensitivity to the greatest extent. In other words, there can be no indifferent sounds in music."<sup>18</sup> Lutosławski also emphasised the fact that in order to achieve the goal of "giving the most faithful expression to everything that inspires my composer's imagination and that satisfies my desires and tastes", it becomes necessary to "constantly work on enriching and renewing my own musical language."<sup>19</sup> This idea of necessary self-change or self-amendment and working on oneself became imperative for many Polish composers as well as Lithuanian composers, who fell under the influence of the "Polish School of Composition."

Worth mentioning at this point is the vision and work of Anna Zawadzka-Gołosz (born 1955), for whom the above-mentioned imperative of renewing musical language is a corner stone of creativity. "Lutosławski, when dealing with the composition of perceptual processes", Zawadzka-Gołosz remarks, "expands the awareness of the compositional field with abstract dialectical thinking, ambivalence, non-obviousness, with various types of illusions and simulations of narrative processes, strategic ideas such as the creation of 'important' and 'unimportant' places in the work or playing games with time. The eternal principle of relaxing and intensifying tension during the course of the form acquired a new,

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18 Quoted in: *Witold Lutosławski. Prezentacje, interpretacje, konfrontacje* [Witold Lutosławski. Presentations, interpretations, confrontations], ed. by K. Tarnawska-Kaczorowska (Warszawa: Związek Kompozytorów Polskich, 1985), 154.

19 Witold Lutosławski, *Zeszyt myśli* [A Notebook of Ideas], entry from 12 September 1965, quoted in: *Estetyka i styl twórczości Witolda Lutosławskiego*, ed. by Z. Skowron (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 2000), 21.

individual dimension in his work, shifting the focus to a zone that has not yet been discovered.”<sup>20</sup> She can be counted among those harmonists who, in the process of building an order of sound, includes pitches from outside the equal tempered system – quarter tones – in her works, which are not only the building blocks of the scale, but above all else offer a powerful means of intensifying expression. Her creative goal is to explore the nature of sound, to study its essence and space. Developing an individual language is a paramount feature of this composer’s creative process: “I would rather have no sound at all than be interpreted in terms of associations with, and borrowing from, the work of others.”<sup>21</sup> This approach is inspired by the ideas of Witold Lutosławski, in particular his notion of composing the listener’s perception. Anna Zawadzka-Gołosz, views it as a moral obligation to constantly search for appropriate solutions, derived from experience; this does not mean rejecting traditional means and techniques. After all, the latter can be re-read and placed in new contexts. Significant in this case is the absence of vocal-instrumental and stage works. The composer remains faithful to music as an autotelic art of sound: “eloquent” in its expression, but without the participation of words or the stage itself. This is because the latter would specify, or even programme the reception of the music at the level of semantic literalness, which in the case of *Suite of Space* for 17 instruments (2006) Zawadzka-Gołosz clearly did not want to do. What interests her is pure sound unsullied by words, its colour and existence in space, which may have a meaning, but not explicitly so.

Onutė Narbutaitė (born 1956), who is essentially from the same generation, revealed: “I compose little and without any hurry, I do not lock myself into any one system, even though I find similarities in the structural material of my pieces. I try to make each of my pieces homogeneous, free of unnecessary sounds. Composition as a profession is like a land, your land...”<sup>22</sup> In Lithuanian music Narbutaitė became a lyrical and sensitive narrator of her time, for example: the moving *Melody in the*

20 Anna Zawadzka-Gołosz, “O komponowaniu percepcji. *Casus* Witolda Lutosławskiego” [On composing perception: The case of Witold Lutosławski], *Teoria Muzyki. Studia, interpretacje, dokumentacje* 3 (2013), ed. by T. Malecka (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie), 64.

21 From a conversation with Małgorzata Janicka-Słysz in 2018.

22 Quoted in: Krzysztof Droba, “Młoda muzyka litewska” [Young Lithuanian Music], in *W kręgu muzyki litewskiej. Rozprawy, szkice i materiały* [In the circle of Lithuanian music. Papers, essays, and materials], ed. by K. Droba (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, 1997), 105.



*Garden of Olives* for trumpet and 2 string quartets (premiered during the “Velvet Curtain” festival in Kraków in 2000). The composer paid homage to the timeless lyricist Frederic Chopin, in the piece *Autumn ritornello. Hommage à Fryderyk* for violin, viola and piano (1999). The composition is an example of applying intertextual strategies to music: motifs, gestures and intonations derived from Chopin’s music function as quotations, allusions or reminiscences. They also undergo a process of decomposition or deconstruction and become part of the composer’s individual language. Referring to the Narbutaitė’s oratorio *Centones meae urbi* (1997) which is intertextual and “patchwork” in character, Audronė Žiūraitytė concludes: “The work suggests a ‘dramatic nostalgia’. This mood has often been criticized as unproductive and sentimental and is considered to be romanticizing – the temporal equivalent of tourism and the search for the picturesque.”<sup>23</sup> Žiūraitytė writes “Narbutaitė successfully handles one of the most intricate problems inherent in contemporary music” which, the author identifies as “the gap between the means of musical expression and its perception. This is because the means of artistic expression in her works are not abstracted from acknowledged rules of cognition and learned stylistic schemes. Her works may be interpreted not only as instances of some syntactic process, but also as communicative phenomena that inevitably melt into wider cultural context.”<sup>24</sup>

### III. Apotheosis of a system

“Every system is a work of art, the result of conscious creative activity,”<sup>25</sup> Ernst Cassirer wrote emphatically. Systemic thinking was developed by the composer and theoretician Osvaldas Balakauskas, who personally embarked on a search not so much for Lithuanian national values (which many regarded as constituting a key task during the years of mental enslavement in the Soviet Union), as a quest for universal ones. He

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23 Audronė Žiūraitytė, “Onutė Narbutaitė’s Oratorio *Centones meae urbi*: Cultural Memory and Its Musical Representation”, in *Constructing Modernity and Reconstructing Nationality. Lithuanian Music in the 20th Century*, ed. by R. Stanevičiūtė-Goštautienė, A. Žiūraitytė (Vilnius: Kultūros barai, 2004), 74.

24 Ibid., 79–80.

25 Ernst Cassirer, *Esej o człowieku. Wstęp do filozofii kultury* [An Essay on Man: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Culture], trans. A. Staniewska (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1998), 334.

found them in the nature of number, which, as the Pythagoreans put it: "allows one to know, directs one towards and reveals that which is obscure and unknown. Nothing could be understood, neither the things themselves, nor their connections, without a number and its essence. Number, when perceived, harmonises all things with the soul. It allows us to know these things and the relations between them, just like the functioning of the gnomon, that is to say, by rendering the essence and defining the limits of both the unlimited and the limited"<sup>26</sup>. Thus, for Balakauskas, number became a kind of substance, which is also recognised, in one with what the Pythagoreans themselves asserted, as the unity of diverse things and the conformity of opposing elements.

"I like complicated music the most," confessed the composer of a piece with the very meaningful title *Chopin-Hauer* (1990). And he added: "More precisely: complicated, but harmonious. This is where I see the greatest problem regarding creativity: to express myself as comprehensively as possible without destroying the integrity of the chosen form (in a broader sense)."<sup>27</sup> His goal was to combine alien or antithetical sound entities, such as diatony and dodecaphony in *Symphony No. 2* (1979) or in *Dada concerto* (1982).

Balakauskas became the architect of the harmonic system known as *Dodecatonics*, based on the perfect-fifth model and characterised by a relational approach towards orders of sound, including those of a diatonic nature. He published his study *Dodecatonics* – with the character of *Harmonielehre* – in 1997, in the publication *In the Circle of Lithuanian Music* edited by Krzysztof Droba. In the preface he explains: "Dodecatonics is a theory of harmony, presented here as a method of perfect-fifth projection, and at the same time a harmonic system that accommodates all known (empirical and artificial) systems, but also hides some untapped system-forming possibilities."<sup>28</sup> The author's aim was to create "an analytical apparatus allowing one to master 12-tone material, among other things, by means of diatonic systems [...]"<sup>29</sup> Danuta Mirka notes: "Dodecatonic harmony theory does not bring [...] an annulment of major-minor harmonics and other earlier

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26 Stobaeus from Stobi (in Macedonia): *Eclogae*, quoted in Enrico Fubini, *Historia estetyki muzycznej* (Kraków: Musica Iagiellonica, 1997), 31.

27 From a conversation with Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė, "Mene viskas galima", *Literatūra menas* 12 (1987), 17, quoted in *W kręgu muzyki litewskiej*, 96.

28 *W kręgu muzyki litewskiej*, 120.

29 *Ibid.*, 159.

systems of pitch organisation – for example, modal ones – but only their ‘extension’, and a consistent one at that [...].”<sup>30</sup> Dodecatonics is, as Mirka writes: “a structuralist theory. Like the founders of structuralism – Ferdinand de Saussure in linguistics and Jean Piaget in psychology – it focuses on relations rather than on the objects between which these relations occur.”<sup>31</sup> Balakauskas explains: “The idea of dodecatonics – as a method of structural approach to 12-tone musical material and the harmonic systems falling within its boundaries – came to me about 30 years ago, when I happened upon a book by the American composer and theorist Howard Hanson, *Harmonic Materials of Modern Music*. Thanks to this book, I became acquainted with the ‘perfect-fifth projection’, which stirred my imagination as a potential methodological instrument with a very broad range of possible applications.”<sup>32</sup> The works of Balakauskas confirm a line of thinking compliant with the dodecatonic model. The composer – contrary to the predictions of Igor Stravinsky, among others, that harmony was in decline – developed a harmonic language. He stressed that music created *here and now* needs a new repertoire of analytical and interpretative categories, which would liberate the methodological imagination and free the description of harmonic phenomena from outdated concepts. Balakauskas’ treatment of his musical material ensured that the composer “worked in sound”, that is within the substance itself, thereby ensuring artistic freedom and the expression of *musica libera*.

Balakauskas’ dodecatonic system enabled the creation of relationships of a tonal nature between all twelve notes: from single-note, monotonic series to twelve-note series. Of course, the composer has his personal preferences: he makes more frequent use of eight-note (octatonic) or eleven-note (enneatonic) groupings because of their modal and harmonic potential, as he himself points out. This may be seen as reflecting the composer’s desire to avoid either seventh-note associations (connotations with major-minor tonality) or twelfth-note associations (connotations with Schoenberg’s dodecaphony). It is important to stress here that for Balakauskas it is not only sounds that serve as components of such strictly structured series: their building blocks can also be motifs, chords or

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30 Danuta Mirka, “Postscriptum: piękno *Dodekatoniki*” [Postscriptum: the Beauty of “Dodecatonics”] in *W kręgu muzyki litewskiej*, 163.

31 Ibid., 164.

32 Osvaldas Balakauskas, “Dodekatonika” [Dodecatonics] in *W kręgu muzyki litewskiej*, 120.

fragments of existing music with a specific stylistic colouring. This is why the term “Balakauskas tonality” has appeared in studies and analyses of Lithuanian music, although in my opinion it would be more appropriate to use the term “Balakauskas’ modus or modi”. The composer himself also embraced the notion of “h a r m o n i c c o l o u r i n g”, as a means of distinguishing between individual compositional styles; Lutosławski also referred to “c o l o u r i n g h a r m o n y”. Balakauskas also adopted a systemic approach to rhythmic in his works – c a l c u l a t e d in an additive way, and often assuming the form of symmetrical progressions. In the composer’s music innovative strategies come together with traditional genres or forms such as the sonata or symphony. He is also no stranger to making i n t e r t e x t u a l r e f e r e n c e s, for example, to the Baroque style in *Flute Concerto “Bachjahr”* (1985), to timbral sensualism in *Impresonata* for flute and piano (1964), to jazz culture in *Bor-Art* (versions for various instruments, 1995) or to Bartók inspirations in *Music for Strings “Homage à Bartók”* for piano, harp and string orchestra (2006). Returning once more to the systemic ideas of Lutosławski, Arnold Whittall explained that “Lutosławski, it seems, came up with a new way of musically navigating the space between ‘chaos’ and ‘order’, expanding, as it were, the identity of material that could be described as ‘fixed’ and ‘free’, with what was already going beyond the typically modern sound environment. The new approach to fluidity allowed his discipline and control to be originally captured and externalized.”<sup>33</sup> The difference between the foreground (melody) and background (harmony) is one of the principal features of Lutosławski’s late style;<sup>34</sup> “l o c a l h a r m o n y” or a broad range of chords – these are just some of the typical features of the composer’s thinking, in which aspects of harmony, in the general sense of the term, occupied a key place. Adrian Thomas notes, significantly: “The compositional s e p a r a t i o n of pitch organisation and ideas about rhythm and duration is extremely important for understanding Lutosławski’s working methods. Moreover, the very model of moving from harmony to rhythm and then combining these elements into melodic

33 Arnold Whittall, “Między polaryzacją a syntezą. Nowoczesny paradygmat w „Koncercie wiolonczelowym” oraz w „Koncercie fortepianowym” Lutosławskiego” [Between Polarization and Synthesis. The modern paradigm in Lutosławski’s “Cello Concerto” and “Piano Concerto”], in *Estetyka i styl twórczości Witolda Lutosławskiego*, ed. by Z. Skowron (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 2000), 301.

34 Cf. Charles B. Rae, “Świat dźwiękowy Lutosławskiego: świat kontrastów” [Lutosławski’s Sound World: A World of Contrasts], in *Estetyka i styl twórczości Witolda Lutosławskiego*, 43.

and linear structures is a central feature of his creative process."<sup>35</sup> Arnold Whittall drew attention to the centric nature of the composer's music, noting "Lutosławski's tendency to preserve aspects of centrality alongside references to total chromaticism, or, conversely, to chordal structuring that resists [goes against] centrality."<sup>36</sup> Referring to the fundamental compositional strategy of the creator of *Venetian Games* or *Funeral Music*, Iwona Lindstedt explains: "The use of twelve-tone rows in Lutosławski's music stems from the interaction of horizontal and vertical structures, a fundamental division of consonances into complementary harmonic strands, which creates a completely new dimension of music: 'a kind of generalised polyphony, resulting from horizontally perceived chords, created after all as vertical objects' (Rae 1996, p. 171)"<sup>37</sup>.

#### **IV. Moderation in expression and contrasts**

A distinguishing feature of Balakauskas' philosophy, just as it was in the case of Lutosławski, is moderation in musical expression: control of the emotional element and artistic restraint or a balance between expression and structure. We can see a classical - in the broad sense of the term - component in this. We ought to mention here that the formation of Balakauskas' worldview was influenced by his studies in Kiev (1964-1969) – first under Boris Lyatoshytsky (1894-1968) and later under Myroslav Skoryk (1938-2020). They made him more open to the idea of undertaking a systematic search for order and discipline in the imagination. In the case of Lutosławski, it is worth recalling that the inspiration for developing his own compositional technique came from Witold Maliszewski (1873-1939), who taught his students the craft, beginning with the Viennese classics, i.e. the works of Joseph Haydn and Ludwig van Beethoven. It was in the classes of Maliszewski (in the years 1928-1937) that Lutosławski was first instilled with a classical sense of form and the art of leading the listener through the flow of music. As the composer emphasised: "Technique in art consists, among

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35 Adrian Thomas, "Gry weneckie: metody robocze" [Venetian Games: working methods] in *Estetyka i styl twórczości Witolda Lutosławskiego*, 267, trans. Z. Skowron.

36 Arnold Whittall, *Między polaryzacją a syntezą*, 301.

37 Iwona Lindstedt, *Dodekafonia i serializm w twórczości kompozytorów polskich XX wieku* [Dodecaphony and serialism in the works of Polish composers of the 20th century] (Lublin: Polihymnia, 2001), 275.

other things, in being able to reduce, by means of a number of familiar operations, the most difficult tasks to absolutely simple ones, ones in which the decision does not present any difficulties."<sup>38</sup>

Charles Bodman Rae described Lutosławski's universe of sound as one of contrasts: "intervals and their combinations, harmonic density, transparency and *blurring*, statics and motorics (both in the treatment of motifs as well as degrees of harmonic change), sound gestures (expansiveness and intimacy), and obvious contrasts of tension and relaxation."<sup>39</sup> These contrasts are harmonised at a higher level in the organisation of the dramatic purpose. Balakauskas emphasised that contrasting elements may be combined mechanically – as antitheses, as a consequence of which "their very contradiction will be the essence of the composition."<sup>40</sup> However, he also applied a second strategy, namely that of combining opposites, for example diatony and dodecaphony, in such a way as to achieve the expected synthesis. One of the features of the modernist ideological formation can be seen in these solutions, which Alicja Jarzębska formulated in categories of the cult of "scientism, novelty and experiment as the fundamental value."<sup>41</sup>

The "systemic" personalities of Lutosławski and Balakauskas – composers separated by more than two decades – is symptomatic of a tendency that persisted throughout the musical culture of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is still being developed today. They located the issues of technique, connotations of harmonic compositional strategies and the choice of the superior idea of order – the beauty of the crystal structure – at the centre of analytical and interpretative considerations. As Martina Homma writes: "the individual study of the material and its possibilities from the perspective of one's own inner needs becomes indispensable for the development of an individual

38 Witold Lutosławski, *Zeszyt myśli* [Notebook of Ideas], quoted in Adrian Thomas, *Gry weneckie*, 277.

39 Charles B. Rae, "Świat dźwiękowy Lutosławskiego", 31.

40 Quoted in Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė, *Znaczenie i wpływ nietradycyjnego myślenia Broniusa Kutavičiausa, Osvaldas Balakauskas i Feliksas Bajoras na kształtowanie się nowego oblicza muzyki litewskiej* [The significance and influence of non-traditional thinking of Bronius Kutavičius, Osvaldas Balakauskas and Feliksas Bajoras on the formation of a new face of Lithuanian music], 97.

41 Alicja Jarzębska, "Modernizm i postmodernizm w refleksji o muzyce" [Modernism and postmodernism in the reflection on music], in *Idee modernizmu i postmodernizmu w poetyce kompozytorskiej i w refleksji o muzyce*, ed. by A. Jarzębska, J. Paja-Stach (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 2007), 15.

compositional technique. This, in turn, was not at all mechanical in Lutosławski's approach; he understood technique as the result of inspiration, providing ideas which are substantial enough to be applied repeatedly. [...] He never [...] neglected this fundamental work, the study of musical technique."<sup>42</sup> The universals, to which both Lutosławski and Balakauskas were faithful, also direct attention towards the element of ethos, the sphere of values. Roger Scruton poses the following question: "I begin from the question whether musical idioms can exhibit moral virtues and moral vices. It is obvious that we describe musical idioms in this way, and it is worth reminding ourselves of some familiar examples. The idiom of the Gregorian chant is almost universally acknowledged to be spiritual and uplifting. [...] New Orleans Jazz is lively, invigorating, innocent. By contrast Death Metal is oppressive, dark, morbid. [...] those judgements are figurative: they involve applying to musical idioms terms whose sense is fixed by their application to human characters."<sup>43</sup> The unwavering stance of both artists, their devotion to predetermined ideals in their search for a new musical language or to the imperative of "refreshing" it, have become distinctive features of their authorial styles, recognisable in the panorama of high musical culture *here and now*.

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Structure and expression – this is a binary opposition, which was present in the music of Polish and Lithuanian composers before 1989 and continues to be so afterwards. It focuses on the relationships between them, for example: structure characterised by expression, as in the case of Osvaldas Balakauskas, or structured expression, when it comes to Krzysztof Penderecki. There are, of course, multiple examples of such relationships. Another pair of significant concepts – logos and ethos – draws attention to word-related issues, including, of course, the sounds associated with words as well as their ethical dimension. Music created in politically and socially complex contexts, illustrated by the compositions

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42 Martina Homma, "Studia Lutosławskiego nad seriami dwunastotonowymi" [Lutosławski's Studies in Twelve Tone Rows] in *Estetyka i styl twórczości Witolda Lutosławskiego*, 238-239.

43 Roger Scruton, *Muzyka jest ważna* [Music is an Art], trans. K. Marczak (Kraków: in Canto, 2020), 49.

in question, acquires a moral value integrally connected with the fundamental criterion of choice. This choice implies the idea of taking a particular side, as well as the question of what constitutes an authentic composer, whose works are part of the lifeblood of a national culture *sensu largo* and its ethos, which has become consolidated over the years. Mieczysław Tomaszewski<sup>44</sup> lists six media, i.e., the six means by which the category of nationality can be represented in music in a particularly expressive and meaningful way.

These are as follows: (1) the first medium – national language – mother tongue; (2) the second medium – national dance; (3) the third medium – national song (quotation repertoire); (4) the fourth medium – references to the motifs of national history; (5) the fifth medium – musical interpretation of the motifs of national literature; (6) the sixth medium – the musical evocation of the landscape of homeland. In the pursuit of freedom, independent Polish and Lithuanian music culture referred to emotional national memory. I use the word “national” here without any nationalistic connotations, within the categories of the system of fundamental properties and values constituting the culture and nature of a particular nation, and which is part of a vibrantly shaped tradition. It is worth recalling at this point the thoughts of many philosophers, for example Hegel, that freedom involves active interaction with the world, during the course of which one encounters and overcomes opposition and takes risks. Life in the realm of freedom can only be achieved through others. We are aware of ourselves only in contexts. Below are some notable examples taken from the music of both nations. The selection is subjective, based on experiencing the works cited and appreciating their beauty.

- **Ethos of the native language. Praise for the directness of expression**

Zbigniew Bujarski composed *Stabat Mater* for mixed choir and orchestra (2000) to Grażyna Zakrzewska’s literal Polish translation of the medieval sequence *Jacopone da Todi*. Forgoing Latin is vital to ensure the intense

44 Cf. Mieczysław Tomaszewski, *Kategoria narodowości i jej muzyczna ekspresja* (1982) [The Category of Nationality and Its Musical Expression], in *Interpretacja integralna dzieła muzycznego. Rekonesans* [Integral Interpretation of a Musical Work. The Reconnaissance] (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, 2000), 106–107.



expression of the music with the aim of directly affecting the listener in such a way, as Teresa Malecka explains “in order for the work to remain his deepest *c o n f e s s i o n*.”<sup>45</sup> This is because Latin objectifies the meanings carried by words: the use of the native language is supposed to eliminate this distance. Karol Szymanowski’s moving *Stabat Mater*, written to a Polish translation by the interwar poet Józef Jankowski, immediately springs to mind.

The use by Lithuanian composers of their native language was intended to confirm their national identity – especially during the totalitarian Soviet period. This compositional strategy of choosing the mother tongue stood as an expression of support for a certain side of national values. It is also worth mentioning works created after 1989 such as Vidmantas Bartulis’ *Bright Sun*, to a Lithuanian text by Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (2012), or Onutė Narbutaitė’s *kein gestern, kein morgen* (“no yesterday, no tomorrow”) with texts by Rainer Maria Rilke and Oscar Milosz in Lithuanian, German and French for mezzo-soprano, tenor and orchestra with five percussionists, celesta, harp and harpsichord (2015). Narbutaitė is known for her polytextuality and polylingualism – she reached her apogee in the aforementioned oratorio *Centones meae urbi* (1997), composed to texts by poets such as Adam Mickiewicz, Czesław Miłosz, Eugenijus Ališanka, Mathias Casimirus Sarbievus and Moshe Kulbak, among others, and the lamentations of Jeremiah in Polish, Lithuanian, Latin, Hebrew and Yiddish.

- **Choreic rhythm. Apotheosis of *ethnos***

The culture of Podhale with its primeval – both pure and coarse – barbarism has become a reservoir of motifs and gestures, fuelling the creative inventiveness of many Polish composers. We need only recall Wojciech Kilar’s famous choreic poems such as *Krzesany* (1976) or *Orawa* (1986). With their dance-like rhythm and energy they formed part of the “*e t h n i c t u r n*” in high culture. Zbigniew Bargielski also drew upon ethnic influences in his *String Quartet No. 5 “The Time That’s Passed”* (2001). In *Bagatelle* – the second movement of the nine-part cycle – he evoked the tone of highlander bandit melodies. The cycle of this Quartet assumes the character of a dramaturgy of purpose: in the final

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45 Teresa Malecka, *Zbigniew Bujarski. Twórczość i osobowość* [Zbigniew Bujarski. Work and Personality] (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, 2006), 97.

movement, *Fantaisie rustique*, we also “hear” a highlander band from Podhale.

The ritual, archetypal movement gave birth to Bronius Kutavičius’ earlier-mentioned pantheistic oratorios, such as *Magic Circle of Sanskrit* (featuring text by Sigitas Geda) for 10-12 vocal voices and folk instruments (1990). The composer ethnologised time and narrative in his compositions. It is worth quoting here Leszek Polony’s subsequent thoughts: “We can certainly talk about imagined and represented time. It is time simultaneously experienced and observed from a distance”. And the author adds: “[it is] a mythical time, evoked from the past, or transhistorical time, detached from physical world events. Music captures its colours and essence.”<sup>46</sup>

#### • Ethos of the song. The concept of lyrical significant time

The music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki became a phenomenon associated with the indigenous song in Poland, and the music of Feliksas Bajoras experienced the same fate in Lithuania. In the case of the cycle of Marian Songs entitled *Zdrowaś bądź, Maryja!* (“Hail Mary!”) for mixed choir *a cappella* Op. 54 (1985) Mieczysław Tomaszewski wrote: “This is the place where Górecki the composer meets Górecki a member of a community, with the aim of raising the singing he has breathed since childhood to the level of art that is not ashamed of either diatonicism or its own function.”<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Bajoras’ music “breathes” folk songs, inspired, from the very beginning of the composer’s artistic career, by Lithuanian lyricism with *sutartinės* at the forefront. It is enough simply to recall pieces representing two stylistic extremes, i.e. *Words and Magic* (1995) for an unusual ensemble – voice and trombone – and *Missa cantata* (2010) for mixed *a cappella* choir. Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė interprets Bajoras’ approach as follows, “His vocal music forces us to listen to the rough but noble intonation, which not only reveals the sources the composer drew upon but also, by generalising them, allows us to appreciate the importance of the voice of our ancestral culture.”<sup>48</sup>

46 Leszek Polony, *Czas opowieści muzycznej* [The Time of Musical Story] (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, 2004), 42.

47 Mieczysław Tomaszewski, “Słuchając muzyki Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego” [Listening to Henryk Mikołaj Górecki’s Music], *Res Facta Nova* 21 (2011); *Teoria muzyki. Studia, interpretacje, dokumentacje*, special edition: *Mieczysława Tomaszewskiego teksty różne* (2016), ed. by T. Malecka (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, 2016), 240.

48 Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė, *Znaczenie i wpływ nietradycyjnego myślenia*, 97.

For both Górecki and Bajoras, the song-like nature of music implies the idea of a culture of listening, or of listening in, set against the dangerous processes distracting the eye and the ear, and the workings of perceptual overstimulation. Roger Scruton explains: "Music in a culture of listening is the voice that springs from silence and that uses silence as a painter uses a canvass – silence is the kind of *materia prima* on which a work is built."<sup>49</sup>

### • Ethos of the native landscape. Iconicity

Zbigniew Bujarski's *Musica domestica* for string orchestra (1977) is a beautiful example of how music evokes the image of a familiar, safe and hospitable landscape. The composer's painterly imagination most definitely influenced the way in which the euphonic sound narration was shaped. However, in contrast to another composer-painter, Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis – who acknowledged the correlation between the arts<sup>50</sup> and the associated conviction that music can be "seen" with the ears and painting can be "heard" with the eyes – Bujarski did not admit to any relationship between the arts.<sup>51</sup> The "Polish" landscape – devoid of quotes, although with clear allusive and reminiscent references to the impressionistic use of the violin by Karol Szymanowski – is conveyed by the *Concerto for violin and orchestra* (1999-2000) of Krystyna Moszumańska-Nazar (1924-2008), characterised by lyrical colourism, and inscribed into an epic and powerful dramaturgy. The composer's intention was always to move the listener, not to leave him indifferent to sound "events".

Typical examples of works evoking the Lithuanian landscape can be found in the natural music of the generation of young Lithuanian romantics; among whom worth mentioning are Algirdas Martinaitis and his variations *Clavier of the Life-giving Water* for two pianos and synthesizer (1983) and Onutė Narbutaitė and her *Vijoklis* (Climber) for two pianos (1988). The idea contained in the title – a vine, an ivy or a bindweed – determined the narrative of the piece with its key strategy of "entwining" or "intertwining" the two voices/performing subjects, which

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49 Roger Scruton, *Muzyka jest ważna*, 49.

50 Cf. Danuta Mirka, *Idea korespondencji w poemacie symfonicznym „Morze” Mikalojusa Konstantinasa Čiurlionisa* [The idea of correspondence in the symphonic poem "The Sea" by Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis], in *W kręgu muzyki litewskiej...*, 13–27.

51 Cf. Teresa Malecka, *Zbigniew Bujarski*.

can be understood in terms of the unity of the sign and its designator. *Vijoklis* sets in motion interpretations of the illustrative character or mimesis of nature. It is worth noting that ecological thinking, or the need to protect the earth, was an idea cherished by both Martinaitis and Narbutaitė. Nature-related themes offered another example of escapism: an escape from reality and a return to the nature of things, the essence of man and humanity. Thus, they became, as it were, a natural expression of pantheism in the broadest sense of the term. Tomaszewski also draws attention to the semiotic aspect of the phenomenon, from which he came to the following conclusion: "It is worth distinguishing between the nationality that is revealed in the work at the level of significances and the nationality that is played out at the level of the senses. In the first case, it is about the elements of musical «language» and the message of «information» (such as the Lydian fourth or the mazurka rhythm) signifying (denotatively) a position in cultural space. In the second, it concerns elements of what might be termed musical poetics symbolizing (connotatively) the implicit meanings of the creative message (e.g., its tragic or hopeful expression)."<sup>52</sup> The author emphasises: "Something nationalistic cannot become national: national results from a love of one's own nation, nationalistic from hostility towards another. Nor can something that is conventional, i.e., imposed from the outside (for example, by fashion or a lucrative commission) become national. The category of nationality demands absolute authenticity."<sup>53</sup> He adds: "Our way of becoming part of the human family, of universality, has generally taken place over the course of history through – in one way or another – an understanding of nationality."<sup>54</sup> Even Karol Szymanowski wrote that, if music is genuinely sincere, man as an ethnic entity "disappears" and a universal man appears in his place. He also asserted: "Art, as long as it is true, will always be universal, all-human, even if it finds its expression in the most national form possible."<sup>55</sup> The music of Polish and Lithuanian composers, as cited in the text, confirms this view.

52 Mieczysław Tomaszewski, *Kategoria narodowości...* [The Category of Nationality...], 108.

53 *Ibid.*, 109.

54 *Ibid.*, 111.

55 Karol Szymanowski, "Współpraca narodów. Droga Karola Szymanowskiego" [Cooperation of Nations. The Path of Karol Szymanowski], *Sowieckie Iskusstwo* 52 (14.09.1933), trans. A. Figler, in *Pisma*, Vol. I. *Pisma Muzyczne*, collected and prepared by K. Michałowski (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1984), 440.

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## Structure and Expression. Logos and Ethos. On Polish and Lithuanian Music Before and After 1989. A Few Reflections

### Summary

Polish and Lithuanian music of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was involved, in a particular way, in its organic historical and political contexts. The composers' attitudes became an expression of emphasising artistic independence, e.g. Henryk Mikołaj Górecki or Feliksas Bajoras, courage to be oneself and freedom, which cannot be restricted or determined by aesthetic, or worse, ethical imperatives imposed from above, e.g. Krzysztof Penderecki or Bronius Kutavičius. Polish and Lithuanian composers – before and after 1989 – were deeply convinced that the essence of music does not lie in form and pitch constellations, or in providing the listener with superficial sensual pleasure. It lies in the meanings and senses that go beyond the world of sounds: emotional or symbolic, e.g. Anna Zawadzka-Gółoś or Onutė Narbutaitė. In aesthetic views, we had to do with a return to the thesis on the heteronomical, expressive-symbolic or semiotic nature of sounds. It was suggested that romantic emotionalism should be renewed, and the value of feeling and the subjectivity of composer and listener should be accentuated – in a new perspective, not a speculative-intellectualistic one, typical for the post-serialist avant-garde, but in the spirit of personalism. The phenomenon of strictly designing the structure of a musical work based on a system and numerical premises can be observed on two representative examples: Witold Lutosławski and Osvaldas Balakauskas. They were perceived as composers who created systems of higher order, saving in the music the organising power of the logos. It should be noted that in both cases the logically assumed structure serves expression.

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