

**THE PIANO MUSIC OF HENRYK MIKOŁAJ GÓRECKI:  
New Sources, Performance, and Introduction to his  
Posthumously-Published Piano Works (pub. 2021)**

By

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### **Abstract**

The recently published *Górecki Piano Album* presents Henryk Mikołaj Górecki's piano works that were unpublished during his lifetime. Some musicologists and performers who enjoyed close contact with Górecki and his family have known of or seen drafts of these works. The publication took place in 2021 through the publishing house Boosey and Hawkes and pianist-editor Anna Górecka who co-supervised this project. The publication of these works opens the door to research into primary sources, Górecki's stylistic periods, and performance approaches to the works themselves. It is also an opportune moment to re-examine solo piano works that Górecki published during his lifetime. This thesis presents Polish musicological research in translation, primary sources provided by Górecki's family, and the first introduction to Górecki's posthumously published piano works made in English.

### **Résumé**

Le *Górecki Piano Album*, récemment publié, présente les œuvres pour piano de Henryk Mikołaj Górecki inédites de son vivant. Certains musicologues et interprètes qui entretenaient des contacts étroits avec Górecki et sa famille ont connu ou ont vu des ébauches de ces œuvres. La publication a eu lieu en 2021 par la maison édition Boosey and Hawkes sous la direction de la pianiste-éditrice Anna Górecka, qui a co-supervisé ce projet. La publication de ces œuvres ouvre la porte à des recherches sur les sources primaires, ainsi que les périodes stylistiques de Górecki et leurs approches performatives. C'est aussi un moment propice pour réexaminer les œuvres pour piano de Górecki publiées de son vivant. Cette thèse présente la recherche musicologique polonaise en traduction, les sources primaires fournies par la famille de Górecki et la première introduction aux œuvres pour piano publiées à titre posthume de Górecki en anglais.

### **Streszczenie**

Wydany niedawno *Górecki Piano Album* prezentuje niepublikowane za życia kompozytora utwory fortepianowe Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego. Niektórzy muzykolodzy i wykonawcy, którzy mają kontakt z Góreckim i jego rodziną, znali i widzieli szkice tych utworów. Album został opublikowany w 2021 roku za pośrednictwem wydawnictwa Boosey and Hawkes oraz pianistki-redaktorki Anny Góreckiej (Anna Górecka współnadzorowała ten projekt). Publikacja tych utworów otwiera drzwi do badań nad źródłami, epokami stylistycznymi Góreckiego (lub nowymi do odkrycia) oraz wykonaniami jego utworów. To także dobry moment na ponowne przyjrzenie się wydanym za jego życia utworom fortepianowym. Niniejsza praca przedstawia polskie badania muzykologiczne w przekładzie, źródła przekazane przez rodzinę Góreckiego oraz pierwszą analizę do wydanych pośmiertnie utworów fortepianowych Góreckiego w języku angielskim.

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I thank Boosey and Hawkes (B&H) and Polski Wydawnictwo Muzyczny (PWM) for their promptness in granting permission to reproduce excerpts of Górecki works.

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My deepest thanks to Anna Górecka for entrusting me with new sources and information about Górecki's piano music. Anna's unfailing support gave me the motivation to study, articulate, and represent Górecki and his works faithfully. *Dziękuję Annie, bez Ciebie ten projekt nie byłby możliwy.*

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## Introduction and Purpose

During his lifetime, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (1933, Czernica – 2010, Katowice) published two of his many solo piano works: *Four Preludes, Op. 1* and *Piano Sonata Op. 6*. In 2021, the publication of the *Górecki Piano Album* brought more of Górecki's piano works to public attention. The *Album* is a posthumous publication of Górecki solo piano works previously unseen except by individuals with access to his autograph manuscripts. The *Górecki Piano Album*'s publication is an opportunity for new discovery. New primary sources and piano works are now available and no research has been written in English about them. The research period (2020-2022) overlapped with the *Górecki Piano Album*'s publication.

The purpose of this thesis is to address Górecki's solo piano repertoire in its present state. The posthumously-published works mark an advancement in knowledge of Górecki's musical style, works, and creative development.

This thesis is a source and performance study of Górecki's piano music, including:

- (1) Source review and translation of relevant concepts from Polish sources.
- (2) New readings of the *Preludes Op. 1* and *Sonata Op. 6*, with insight into Górecki's composing practices and ideas.
- (3) Introduction to Górecki's posthumously-published piano works through primary sources (manuscripts, composer comments) and score reading.
- (4) Presentation of advisable practice, performance, and teaching approaches to this music.

The research prioritizes Górecki's documents (incipits, drafts of compositions, written comments, etc.), Polish scholarly research on Górecki, and piano performance training as integral to understanding of Górecki's piano music. The editor of the *Górecki Piano Album*, Anna Górecka (Górecki's daughter), co-supervised this project. Prof. Górecka

provided performance training, review Polish-English translations, and access to Górecki primary sources (manuscripts, documents). English research on Górecki piano works has been limited by two factors: (1) his solo piano works are mostly unknown beyond Górecki experts or persons who knew him, and (2) the main research about these works is written in Polish (Górecka 2012).

Each chapter begins with an abstract and introduction to the topic(s) or question(s) the chapter explores. The order of chapters and concepts is designed to move smoothly from theoretical-historical content to practical-performance content. The inclusion of translated material allows readers to approach Górecki's music with Polish research and English research in mind.

Chapter 1 is a literature review of Polish and English resources most relevant to understanding Górecki's piano works and musical style. Future scholarly work may see English translation of Polish sources, illuminating Górecki's life and contributions to 20th and 21st century music in more detail. Until then, this project informs readers of Górecki's posthumously-published piano works and their significance.

Chapter 2 draws on the literature review to reassess Górecki's musical style and periodization, with the updated knowledge provided by the posthumously-published piano works. Chapter 3 applies stylistic concepts to Górecki piano works published during his lifetime.

Turning to practical matters, Chapter 4 introduces Górecki's posthumously-published piano works. Chapter 5 is a discussion of practice, teaching, and performance approaches to Górecki's piano works. Chapters 4 and 5 contain primary sources illustrating the histories of these works. The conclusion is a list of research findings.

## Research Questions

The research questions for this project are listed below. Responses to these questions and relevant findings of this research are found in Conclusion: Research Findings (page 164).

1. Which sources are the most relevant to researching Górecki's life, musical style, and piano works?
2. What elements define Górecki's musical style and his approach to piano music?
3. How do scholars typically periodize Górecki's music and what elements of his periods (Early, Crystallization) are relevant to his piano music?
4. Which details of Górecki's Early period works point to the influence of his predecessors (eg. Chopin, Bartók, Szymanowski)?
5. What details in Górecki's piano works published during his lifetime correlate to the posthumously-published music?
6. Does knowledge of Górecki's posthumously-published piano works from his Early period and Crystallization period works enhance understanding of his style?
7. Do Górecki's posthumously-published piano works align with Górecki's style periods as they are known or do they resist/complicate them?
8. Would translating Polish-language research benefit those studying Górecki's piano music?
9. What practice or performance approaches are advisable when working with Górecki's repertoire?
10. What do primary sources for the posthumously-published piano works show?
11. What can be gained by studying this music with experts?

## **Limits of this Research**

This research project does not include Górecki's works for piano and orchestra, piano with orchestra, solo piano music written in the last period of Górecki's career, or other chamber music/ensemble works. The focus of this research is the posthumously-published piano music written during Górecki's Early and Crystallization periods. This thesis does not address the last three posthumously-published piano works or other Górecki's piano works still unpublished as of today.

Given the unique combination of father-daughter and composer-performer relationships between Anna Górecka and Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, I did not consult other musicians about performance or pedagogical issues. Didactic approaches are limited to consultation with Prof. Górecka because she is able to comment on Górecki's personality, piano works, and performance practice from a highly qualified standpoint.

Finally, the translation of Polish sources into English required that selection criteria be used to determine which data to include and which to exclude. The selection criteria are explained in Chapter 1. This research is not intended to eliminate the language barrier between Polish resources and non-Polish communicators. Translations are intended to show the practical value of data that is currently available in Polish.

## Author Biography

**Jarred Dunn** won first prize and concerto award at the Lithuanian International Chopin Competition (Vilnius) and was a prize winner at the 1st Jan Hoffman International Competition (Kraków). He is also a prizewinner of the D. Vitti, Verona Zinetti, and Rome Premio International Piano and Chamber Music competitions. He has been described by critics as “a piano sound-colour magician” (Muzikos Barai, Vilnius), “evocative and mystical” (New York Classical Music), “a brave interpreter of Mozart with fresh ideas,” (OperaProms), and “technically perfect” (Belarus First Radio). He has been heard on CBC/Radio-Canada, New Classical 96.3FM, WQXR New York, Belarusian First Radio, and Madison Freethought Radio/TV, including his albums, live broadcasts, interviews, and recitals. He has recorded two solo albums: *Chopin and Debussy* and *Brahms in Solitude*.

He has performed in Europe, North America, and Australia, including concerto appearances with the Lithuanian Chamber, Vilnius Cantus, Budapest Chamber, Belarusian Radio/Television, NOSPR Katowice, Toronto Sinfonia, Niagara Symphony, and many others. He has cooperated with the Ątma Quartet in Europe and Canada, and with the Brahms International Master Classes and Festival in Pörschach, Austria.

Noted as a “revered pedagogue” (Tonebase Piano), he has taught master classes, lectures, and research papers at the Bydgoszcz and Katowice Academies, the universities of Toronto, Carleton, Laurier, McGill, Ottawa, Queen’s, and Puget Sound (Seattle), and teacher associations across the United States and Canada. He is the recipient of awards, grants, and scholarships from Canada Arts Council, FRQSC, Aspen Music Festival, and CFMTA for his pianistic, scholarly, and pedagogical achievements. He is published in *Clavier Companion*, *Canadian Music Teacher*, and *CMEA Journal*. He was invited to teach piano at McGill University Schulich School of Music while pursuing his doctorate.

He graduated from the Feliks Nowowiejski Academy of Music where he studied with Prof. Katarzyna Popowa-Zydroń. He completed his Master’s degree and Performance Diploma with Distinction from the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice, where he studied with Prof. Anna Górecka. He took Professional Studies at The Juilliard School with Jacob Lateiner and Yoheved Kaplinsky. He received important teaching from Andrei Gavrilov, Maria João-Pires, Dorothy Taubman, Andrzej Jasiński, Robert Levin, and David Dubal. He is a Yamaha Artist.

## Górecki Photographs



**Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, age 18<sup>1</sup>**



**Henryk Mikołaj Górecki<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Górecki family archive. Photographer unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Górecki family archive. Photo: Andrzej Zborski. No date given.





**Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, 1972<sup>3</sup>**



**Henryk Mikołaj Górecki,  
Katowice<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup> Family archive. Photo: Marek Holzman, 1972.

<sup>4</sup> Family archive. Photo: Anna Chojnacka. No date given.



## Chapter 1 Literature Review

Which sources are the most relevant to researching Górecki's life, musical style, and piano works? This literature review examines twenty-four Górecki items, twelve in Polish and twelve in English. Sources reviewed are: (1) documentary films, (2) album liner notes, (3) editor comments in scores, (4) theses and monographs, (5) peer-reviewed papers, and (6) chapters or books. One passage from each Polish source is translated into English, with the original Polish in footnotes or parenthesis.

### I. Introduction

This literature review confronts two key issues in Górecki research: first, more sources exist in Polish than in English, creating a language barrier between the data and anyone unfamiliar with Polish; second, the piano music itself is relatively under-represented in the literature. The number of English sources increased over the past twelve years (Malecka 2011, 2012, 2017, Versluis 2018; Bias 2019; Chilvers 2019, 2022), yet the literature rarely mentions Górecki's piano music as an integral part of his oeuvre. Historically speaking, this is a significant oversight: Górecki's first music purchases were piano works (Chopin *Impromptus*, Szymanowski *Mazurkas*<sup>1</sup>) and his first instrument was the piano. Compared to scholarly attention paid to Górecki's ensemble works, his piano music is hardly noticed.<sup>2</sup>

Translating sources from Polish into English is crucial to accessing key information on Górecki. During the review process, it became clear that translations of entire Polish sources into English would be an advancement of knowledge accessibility for musicians unfamiliar with Polish. Beyond the data to be gained, philological issues in the translation process are theoretically and practically useful. Polish grammar, cases, and idioms are markedly different from those in English. As such, Polish terms and phrases about Górecki's personality, his music, or a researcher's position lose resonance if translated verbatim into English. The full context of a phrase, setting, or

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<sup>1</sup> Malecka, *Górecki at the Keyboard*, 262.

<sup>2</sup> McVey 2004; Górecka 2012, Dumitriu 2016, Malecka 2017, Kijanowska 2020.

thought is needed for translations to resonate. Often, translating entire sources is required, even for simple concepts. Therefore, selection criteria were followed to determine sources included in the review.

## **II. Selection Criteria**

A critical-practical approach was taken to the data and sources included in the review. Sources were assessed for information about Górecki's piano music that are understandable without requiring Polish language expertise. Data included from Polish sources provides:

- (1) a view of Górecki's life or works in Polish contexts and expressions,
- (2) practical approaches to studying and performing his piano works,
- (3) observations that help musicians read his scores more knowingly.

This review does not assert a standard "Polish" viewpoint based on Polish scholarship. It asserts that non-Polish speakers profit from cultural associations, local experiences, and frameworks offered by Polish research. Interviews with Górecki are cited in many Polish and English sources: these are an established knowledge base. This review focuses on new knowledge and translations of previously untranslated data, therefore interviews are excluded (see bibliography). Four total criteria determined the Polish and English sources included in this review.

<b>Source Content</b>	<b>Author Credentials</b>
1. Górecki's piano works, their histories, and/or performance approaches to them.	1. Musicologist claiming specialized knowledge of Górecki and/or Polish music (through personal connection or extensive work).
2. Górecki's musical style and/or evolution, including piano works and/or other works.	2. Performer claiming specialized knowledge of performance issues in Górecki's music.

**Fig. 1.1. Criteria used to determine sources reviewed.**

The literature review proper is divided into three sections: annotated Polish sources (Part III), annotated English sources (Part IV), and comparisons between the two languages (Part V). Each annotation contains:

- (1) The source's topic, research question, or theme;
- (2) Górecki works researched and reported in the source;
- (3) The source's claims or conclusions.

The review concludes with a comparison between Polish language research and English language research for two reasons. First, some scholars base their research on personal contact with Górecki, some do not. Górecki's life and career intersected with musicians who remain active professionals: sources based on direct contact with Górecki require clarification on the nature of that contact and research claims based on it. Second, Polish and English research can be categorized into approaches used or questions posed based on the author's direct connection (or none) to Górecki himself. Critical review revealed that some sources pertain to Górecki's piano music, others pertain to broader contexts, e.g. Górecki's personal life, non-piano works, Poland in the postwar decade, or 20th century Polish music. Sources related to broader domains are excluded from this review but cited in the bibliography for reference.

### **III. Górecki Research in Polish**

- 1. Górecka, Anna. *Rola fortepianu w życiu i twórczości Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego*. Katowice: Akademia Muzyczna im. Karola Szymanowskiego w Katowicach, 2012.**

**English: *The Role of the Piano in the Life and Works of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki*.**

The most important source specific to Górecki's piano music, Anna Górecka's habilitation monograph covers each work that includes piano in Górecki's repertoire. Performers and researchers would benefit from a translation into English. Górecka's comprehensive look at the piano in Górecki's life and works includes chapters on (1) Górecki's Early Fascinations and Musical Path, (2) Solo Piano Music, (3) Two-Piano Works, (4) Chamber Works with Piano, (5) Ensemble Works with Piano, and (6) Large Orchestral Works with Piano. Górecka's summary of the piano's importance to 19th-century composer-virtuosi places Górecki in context. The anecdotes Górecka relates accent the piano's importance in Górecki's early life, for example:

“During the time of his studies in the Rybnik school, he [Górecki], began collecting a music library. One of the first scores he bought was Chopin's *Mazurkas*, whose music he [Górecki] loved throughout his life. (After the 1951 release of Aleksander Ford's *Młodość Chopina* [*Chopin's Youth*], Górecki became probably the most faithful viewer — he remembered going to the theatre about twenty times to see the film.)<sup>3</sup>

In addition to biographical details of the composer's life, Górecka lists the pieces Górecki wrote before he published *Preludes Op. 1* (1955). She comments on the form, tempo, folk rhythms, and sound characteristics of Górecki's earliest works. These topics invite comparison between Chopin's *Mazurkas* and *Preludes* and Górecki's first piano works, the still-unpublished *Mazurkas* and *Preludes*. Górecka's discussions of the piano works published during Górecki's life — *Cztery Preludia Op. 1* (*Four Preludes, Op. 1*) and *Sonata Op. 6* — focus on form (specific attention given to climaxes in each

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<sup>3</sup> Górecka, 15. “W czasie nauki w rybnickiej szkole Szafranków rozpoczął gromadzenie biblioteczki muzycznej. Jedną z pierwszych partytur, jakie kupił, były *Mazurki* Chopina, którego muzykę przez całe życie darzył prawdziwym uwielbieniem. (Po wejściu w 1951 roku na ekrany filmu Aleksandra Forda “*Młodość Chopina*” stał się chyba jego najwierniejszym widzem — wspominał, że był na nim w kinie ponad dwadzieścia razy.”

movement), tonal design (bitonality, implied keys, breakdown of tonality), and sound structures (clusters, dynamic ‘eruptions’).

Górecka’s comments on performance and interpretation focus on rhythmic energy and tempo, especially in the *Sonata Op. 6* and *Concerto Op. 40*. The chapter of Górecki’s unpublished Juvenilia profiles works that as of today are unpublished and connects Górecki to important piano composers whose juvenilia became essential parts of their careers (Chopin, Scriabin, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Bartók).

**2. Bolesławska-Lewandowska, Beata. *Górecki: Portret w Pamięci*. Krakow: Fundacja Universitatis Varsoviensis, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne SA. 2013.**

**English: *Górecki: Portrait in Memory*.**

Bolesławska-Lewandowska interviewed Górecki’s closest relatives and colleagues: this captivating source is a compilation of those interviews. The volume begins with Górecki’s family and expands into a broader picture of him as a composer, teacher, professor, and contributor to the music field. Among those interviewed are composers, conductors, and performers, many of whom speak English and are available for discussion and comment. An English translation of source would be tremendously valuable to researchers. Relevant to pianists are interviews with Górecki’s wife, son, and daughter, in which episodes in Górecki’s private life are connected to his piano compositions and his opinion of performances he heard.

Elżbieta Chojnacka’s perspective is valuable to research on Górecki’s piano music. Chojnacka (1939 - 2017) was the dedicatee of Górecki’s *Concerto for Harpsichord or Piano, Op. 40*. Chojnacka recollected her surprise at the simplicity of the *Concerto*, yet admired Górecki’s “unbelievable sense” for the harpsichord. She reports, “For a pianist, and after all, Górecki played the piano, the approach to harpsichord and understand[ing] its specificity is always difficult...Górecki somehow intuitively

understood it.”<sup>4</sup> Chojnacka recollected that Górecki was irascible when he disliked her interpretation of his *Concerto*, sometimes Jadwiga Górecka (Górecki’s wife, whom Chojnacka describes as gifted with “saintly patience”) was the only person who could calm Górecki’s temper during rehearsal disagreements between Górecki and Chojnacka. Chojnacka finds that Górecki made unique choices in the use of the harpsichord by exploiting its largely-untapped potential for timbral effects, roughness and aggressiveness to great effect in the *Concerto*. The harpsichord’s material affixes this work an important contribution in the keyboard literature.

**3. Siedlik, Włodzimierz. “Henryk Mikołaj Górecki i jego muzyka.” *Pro Musica Sacra* 10: 89-103. 2012. <https://doi.org/10.15633/pms.341>.**

**English: Henryk Mikołaj Górecki and his music.**

Siedlik’s main concern is Górecki periodization, punctuated by symphonic and choral works. His essay is organized into two sections: (1) Characteristics of Górecki’s Creativity and (2) Górecki in the light of self-reflection. Siedlik organizes the first topic into four periods of Górecki’s compositional life, helpful to pianists to contextualize the piano works alongside the broader scope of Górecki’s musical language.<sup>5</sup> The four periods align with Górecki’s “solutions” (*rozwiązanie*) for expression of musical sounds:

1. 1955-57, Motorism: Górecki uses the fullest possible dynamic ranges in short forms (*Preludes Op. 1, Toccata for two pianos, Op. 2, Variations for Violin and Piano, Op. 4*). The culminating work, *Pieśń o radości i rytmie, Op. 7* (Songs of Joy and Rhythm) is a double-concerto in four movements for two piano and chamber orchestra, to the words of Julian Tuwim. This period coincides with Górecki’s music studies in Katowice.

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<sup>4</sup> Bolesławska-Lewandowska, 226. “On miał niesamowite wyczucie. Dla pianisty, a przecież Górecki grał na fortepianie, podejście do klawesynu i zrozumienie jego specyfiki jest zawsze trudne...Górecki jakoś intuicyjnie to rozumiał.”

<sup>5</sup> Krzysztof Droba “Górecki” in *Encyklopedia Muzyczna PWM*, ed. Elżbieta Dziębowska (Kraków: PWM, 1987), Vol. 3: 420-33.



2. 1957-61, Constructivism: Górecki is concerned with articulation and pointillism, assigning small motifs to small instrumental groups. He prioritizes percussion, notably in *Scontri*, featuring forty-eight percussion instruments; the tam-tam is the dominating instrument of this period. Górecki's musical language is built on short motifs that disintegrate internally, serialism, rapidly changing dynamics, textures, and extreme registers. This period coincides with the end of Górecki's studies.

3. 1962-1963, Sonorism: Górecki focuses on contrasts over longer stretches of melody. He continues searching for new sound possibilities, including varieties of tremolo, bowing techniques, and glissandi: the core of this period is intensity of sound and expression.<sup>6</sup>

4. 1964-1970, Reductive Constructivism: Górecki's musical language simplifies fundamentally: form (ABA, AB), sound content (essential materials only), and spacing (texture) are reduced to the simplest terms. Górecki reduces sound materials through an "intense process of "shaping the form using sharp agogic, dynamics, and expressive contrasts...chords are combined with the principle of octave multiplication."<sup>7</sup> Siedlik posits that Górecki's dominant quality as a composer is "simplicity, logic, clarity of form, and form-creating repetitiveness."<sup>8</sup>

The second section, *Henryk Mikołaj Górecki w świetle autorefleksji* (HM Górecki in the light of self-reflection), is based on various interviews with Górecki about his personal life, studies, and career. There are reports from his colleagues about the significance of his compositions at important Polish music festivals and events, as well as his traits as a Professor and Rector of the Katowice Music Academy (similar reports can be found in *Górecki: Portret w Pamięci*).

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<sup>6</sup> Tamże, 66.

<sup>7</sup> Siedlik, 94. See Part 2 of this literature review for Danuta Mirka's 2005 proposed revision of Droba's periodization.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 95. "W muzyce Góreckiego dominuje niezwykłą prostota, logika, przejrzystość format, a także formotwórcza repetytywność."

**4. Tomaszewski, Mieczysław. "Słuchając Muzyki Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego." Teoria Muzyki : Studia, Interpretacje, Dokumentacje R. 5, Nr 8/9 (2016), S. 235-242 (2016).**

**English: Listening to the Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki.**

Tomaszewski's reflections on hearing Górecki's works stems from three sources: (1) conversations with Górecki, (2) Górecki's public speaking (Academies of Music in Katowice, Kraków; Theological Academy at the University of Warsaw), and (3) aesthetic theories (Tinctoris, Aristotle). Tomaszewski finds in Górecki's music, "one of the most significant trends in Polish music of our time...a surprising, elementary force that works by referring not to the surface, aesthetic consciousness of contemporary man[kind], but to his deeper consciousness."<sup>9</sup> To explain the ways Górecki's music accesses "deeper consciousness" in listeners, Tomaszewski connects the shared conviction between Górecki, Tinctoris, and Aristotle that music should inspire spiritual, ethical, or reverent experiences. Tomaszewski observes in Górecki's music the opportunity to break away from the "here and now" (*tu i teraz*), elevating the listener into meditative contemplation. Górecki's music proposes a new paradigm between listeners and their acoustic experience of music: the listener should hear "existential and transcendent" (*egzystencjalny i transcendentalny*) messages. Tomaszewski hears these messages in sound elements (tempo, echo, sound vibration), sacred texts or hymns in *Ad Matrem*, *Symphony Nr. 2*, *Symphony Nr. 3*, *Beatus Vir*, *Lerchenmusik*, and the late sacred works (*Totus Tuus*, *Amen*, *O Domina nostra*, etc). Tomaszewski includes Górecki's *String Quartets* as a locus of folk topics (dusk in a Podhale village, highlander bands), noting that although his last works do not include texts of Polish folk or sacred origins, Górecki never stopped understanding music as speech, and with titles alone, can "open a window to the world in which his music takes place."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Tomaszewski, 235. "Sile zadziwiającej, elementarnej, działającej przez odwoływanie się nie do powierzchniowej, estetycznej jedynie świadomości współczesnego człowieka, lecz do jego świadomości głębokiej."

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 241. "Już samymi tytułami otwiera Górecki przed słuchaczem okno na świat, w którym rozgrywać się będzie jego muzyka."

5. Malecka, Teresa. "Tam, gdzie podążał Szymanowski, zmierzam i ja." *Pro Musica Sacra* 11: 123-134. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=660041>. 2013.

English: "Where Szymanowski went, I went too."

Malecka responds to a famous Górecki statement, "Where Szymanowski went, I went too," by comparing the landmark sacred works of Szymanowski and Górecki according to these composers's reflections on Podhale (highlander) music. Malecka's focal point is a comparative reading of Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* Op. 53 (one of his few sacred works) and Górecki's *Symfonię pieśni żałosnych* Op. 36 (Symphony of Sorrowful Songs). Although these composers had divergent personalities, Malecka connects Górecki to Szymanowski through their mutual love of nature and homeland, quoting Górecki: "Because we walk on this earth, we are also responsible for it, and there is something of it in us. Miłosz, Słowaczki, Szymanowski, Chopin — they are like that because they come *from* somewhere."<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, Szymanowski was fond of highlander music (*muzyka góralska*) due to its bond with nature, pride in its origins, and original harmonic system. Malecka observes similarities in Szymanowski's and Górecki's reactions to Polish folk music, because both composers were "equipped with similarly oriented 'sensors'"<sup>12</sup> for recognizing complex subtleties of harmony, melody, and rhythm in Górale (highlander) folk music, although neither composer was born into that culture.

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<sup>11</sup> Malecka, 123. "Skoro chodzimy po tej ziemi, to jesteśmy też za nią odpowiedzialni i coś z tej ziemi w nas jest. Miłosz, Słowacki, Szymanowski, Chopin — oni są tacy, bo skądś pochodzą." Quoted from *Już taki jestem zimny drań (I am an old bastard): H.M. Górecki rozmawia W. Widłak* (*HM Górecki speaks to W. Widłak*), in "Vivo. Pismo studentów Akademii Muzycznej w Krakowie", Kraków (1994), 38.

<sup>12</sup> Malecka, 127. "Wydaje się, że obaj kompozytorze wyposażeni zostali w podobnie nastawione 'czujniki'".

**6. Malecka, Teresa. "Kontekstualizacje muzyczne w twórczości Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego" in *Musica inter artes. Muzyka – sztuki plastyczne – teatr – literatura – filozofia*, Akademia Muzyczna, Katowice 2013.**

**English: Contextualizing the music and creativity of H.M. Górecki**

Malecka discusses "threads"<sup>13</sup> of Beethoven, Chopin, and Szymanowski in Górecki's music based on three elements of Tomaszewski intertextuality theory: "inspirations, context, and resonance" of musical works that evoke the music of future composers.<sup>14</sup> Malecka's charts connect Górecki works with those of Beethoven, Chopin and Szymanowski, exemplifying Górecki's recollections of his first steps as a musician:

I had a ping-pong racket then — a great prize in those times. I exchanged this racket for a score of the 9th Symphony. I did not know what a score was, I did not know who Beethoven was. I have this score to this day...I bought Chopin's *Impromptus* and Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*...and my strange story begins with them: Beethoven's *Ninth*, Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*, Chopin's *Impromptus*.<sup>15</sup>

Malecka finds Beethoven, Chopin and Szymanowski threads in Górecki's music in structural, textural, and titular ways (as does Thomas, 1997). Beethoven's *Sonata Op. 27 nr. 1: "Quasi una fantasia"* resonates in Górecki's *Terzetto quasi una fantasia*, an early work, and his late *String Quartet II: "Quasi una fantasia."* Chopin's *Piano Sonata Op. 35* directly connected to the fourth prelude in *Preludes Op. 1*. Malecka observes that although Szymanowski and Górecki were opposites in personality, worldview, and lifestyle, their similarities are important: friendships with highlanders, engrossment in highlander music, and learning to play *Górale* (highlander) music in folk ensembles. This source is important for the forthcoming discussion of Górecki's posthumously-published piano music, *Mazurki Op. 41* (composed 1980, published 2021).

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<sup>13</sup> Malecka, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 2, cit. Tomaszewski, *O muzyce polskiej w perspektywie intertekstualnej*. Studia i szkice, Akademia Muzyczna, Kraków (2005), 15.

<sup>15</sup> Malecka, 3. "Miałem wtedy rakietkę pingpongową – wielka zdobycz na owe czasy. Zamieniłem tę rakietkę na partyturę IX Symfonii. Nie wiedziałem, co to jest partytura, nie wiedziałem, kto to jest Beethoven. Mam tę partyturę do dziś...Kupiłem Impromptu Chopina i Mazurki Szymanowskiego(...) I te nuty mam do dziś i od nich zaczyna się moja dziwna historia: IX Symfonia Beethovena, Mazurki Szymanowskiego, Impromptu Chopina."

**7. Malecka, Teresa. "Wokół ostatnich dzieł Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego. Styl późny a styl ostatni" in *Styl późny w muzyce, literaturze i kulturze*, Uniwersytet Śląski, Katowice 2016**

**English: A Few Words about the Last Works of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki**

Malecka reflects on Górecki's last public speech, given during the ceremony at which he was awarded a Doctorate *Honoris Causa* by the Kraków Academy of Music in 2008. Her topic is aesthetic differences between late and last styles in Górecki's music. Malecka agrees with Sławek about the concept of the composer's last style: "face to face with all I am, what I have only now been able to see."<sup>16</sup> Malecka's research questions are interrelated: (1) composer self-reflection: how did Górecki judge his works?, and, (2) what Silesian traditions shaped prevailing notions of "last" or "late" style? Quoting Tomaszewski, Malecka frames the "last style" of a composer as audible only by comparison to their earlier works, because listeners sense the changes in a composer's work(s). Compositions discussed include Górecki's final works, *Song of the Katyń Families* (2004), *Kyrie Op. 83* (2005), and the unfinished *Fourth Symphony "Tansman Episodes"* (2006), completed by Górecki's son, Mikołaj Górecki Jr.<sup>17</sup>

Malecka chooses these works because they adhere to Tomaszewski's assessment of typical features in the "late style" of a composer: "crossing aesthetic boundaries, courage to be oneself, introversion, reduction of resources, increased spirituality, preference for sacred themes or ignoring the pressures of the environment."<sup>18</sup> Malecka concludes that Górecki's late style has much in common with his early works: meditative and unconventional chamber works, choral music of Polish religious and folk traditions, and nostalgic moods.

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<sup>16</sup> Malecka, 173, cit. Sławek, 2006: "twarzą w twarz z tym wszystkim, co za mną i co dopiero teraz mogę ogarnąć wzrokiem."

<sup>17</sup> Nonesuch Records. Mikołaj Górecki on Henryk Górecki's Symphony No. 4. <https://youtu.be/tt39eSv2C2Y>. Accessed Apr. 1, 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Malecka, 174. "mają w sobie także coś z cech stylu późnego wyróżnionych przez Tomaszewskiego i uznanych za typowe: przekraczania granic estetycznych, odwagi bycia sobą, introwertyczności, redukcji środków, wzmożonego uduchowienia, preferencji dla tematyki sakralnej czy nieliczenia się z presją środowiska." In this context, *środowiska* (environment) refers to prevailing musical trends of Górecki's epoch.

8. Stojewska, Agata. "Głos" Karola Szymanowskiego w muzyce Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego, Zbigniewa Bujarskiego i Grażyny Pstrokońskiej-Nawratil. *Muzyka w muzyce — muzyka z muzyki — muzyka o muzyce. Rekonesans.* *Pro Musica Sacra* 14: 37-48. 2016. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=527812>.

English: The Voice of Karol Szymanowski in the music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Zbigniew Bujarski, and Grażyna Pstrokonski-Nawratil. Music in music - music from music - music about music. Reconnaissance."

Stojewska questions whether Szymanowski's expectations of his Polish successors are reflected by their music. Szymanowski's successors are noted here as Górecki, Bujarski, and Pstokońska-Nawaratil. This essay is ordered into three topics: (1) *O programie Szymanowskiego* (About Szymanowski's Program/Message), (2) *W stronę metody* (Towards a Method), and (3) *Wysłyszeć głos Szymanowskiego* (Hearing Szymanowski's Voice). Stojewska underlines three tasks Szymanowski expected future Polish composers to accomplish: (1) know Chopin's works as representations of Polish culture (ambitious, sensitive, spiritual<sup>19</sup>); (2) establish creative intercultural dialogue with Europe by writing music that moves beyond the present norms; (3) find new ways of expressing themselves through their predecessors and the voices of composers from other nationalities.

To understand the attitudes and appearances of Szymanowski's voice in the works of his successors, Stojewska cites Tomaszewski's three categories for works which resonates within other works: (1) Music in Music: a composer quotes a predecessor's music in the present work; (2) Music from Music: a composer's work is generated by the works of other composer's; and (3) Music about Music: a general link of shared genres or creative tendencies. Stojewska finds each type of resonance in Górecki's *Symphony Nr. 3 Op. 36* (1976) when viewed through the lens of Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater Op. 53* (1925-26).

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<sup>19</sup> Stojewska, 38. "Ambitnego, wrażliwego, uduchowionego."

**9. Kopińska, Agnieszka. “Uniwersum fortepianu w muzyce współczesnej – refleksja aksjologiczna” in *Wartości w Muzyce*. Katowice: University of Silesia, 2014. 143-155. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=268277>.**

**English: Universe of the Piano in Modern Music – Axiological Reflections**

Kopińska poses an essential question for pianists today: what is valuable in contemporary piano playing? To answer this, Kopińska suggests methods for depicting aesthetic values in piano music (especially of the past two centuries) and challenges faced by pianists performing that music, namely: (1) Stylistic Trends in Modern Piano Music, (2) the Piano’s Function in Modern Works, (3) The Piano’s Sonoristic Properties: (4) Quality, (5) Creativity, (6) Future Paths, (7) Versatility, and (8) Expression.

Górecki is noted as an example of artfully minimalistic film music (alongside Wojciech Kilar, another prominent Silesian composer born one year before Górecki) and as an example in a list of uses for piano in contemporary music, among them: “contemporary piano concertos (from Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Bartók, through Poulenc, Schnittke, Barber, Ligeti, Glass, to Polish music: Górecki, Lutoslawski, Penderecki, Kilar).”<sup>20</sup>

This source is valuable for its inclusion of basic aesthetics of ‘modern’ piano music, jazz intersections with 20th-century classical pieces (e.g., Herbie Hancock’s 1998 recording of Ravel’s *Concerto in G Major*) and interpretive ideas rooted in improvisation as performance. Kopińska also notes the increased visibility of female pianists whose interests expand beyond the standardized classical concert career (Helene Grimaud, Joanna MacGregor). This essay provides readers a number of references to recordings, repertoire, and new schools of thought in research on contemporary piano music.

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<sup>20</sup> Kopińska, 146. “Fortepian w muzyce ostatniego stulecia znajduje szerokie zastosowanie, pojawiając się w następujących rolach koncertowych:

— solo;...

— we współczesnym koncercie fortepianowym (od Sergiusza Rachmaninowa, Igora Strawińskiego, Dymitra Szostakowicza, Sergiusza Prokofiewa, Béli Bartóka, poprzez Francisca Poulenc’a, Alfreda Schnittkego, Samuela Barbera, György Ligetiego, Philipa Glassa, do muzyki polskiej: Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego, Witolda Lutosławskiego, Krzysztofa Pendereckiego, Wojciecha Kilara.”

**10. Bolesławska-Lewandowska, Beata. “Łzy lejąca” w arcydziełach muzyki polskiej XX wieku” in *Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Warszawie*. Warsaw: Symposium Nr. 1 vol. 40, May 31, 2021, 67-82.**

**English: ‘Mother weeping’ in the masterpieces of Polish music of the 20th century**

Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* Op. 36 (1976) is rooted in the relationship of mothers to their children. Bolesławska-Lewandowska examines maternal themes in relation to Polish composers of the 20th century (Szymanowski, Panufnik, Padlewski, Penderecki, Górecki). In the text of each movement of *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* Bolesławska questions whether Górecki held religious beliefs contributing to their use of the Sorrowful Mother<sup>21</sup> topic in his music, or whether the inclusion of this topic was an artistic choice. Bolesławska-Lewandowska finds that because of the interconnectedness of Polish religious traditions and Polish folk music, it is nearly impossible to separate sacred overtones from general receptions because the the topic and its musical potential are ubiquitous in Polish culture (e.g., the Virgin Mary at the crucifixion of Christ is an image known to Polish composers with and without religious affiliations). Motherhood as a topic is not found in the solo piano music but its centrality to Górecki's other works renders it an essential element in the composer's style.

Elements of *Symphony* Op. 36 are found in the slow solo piano music: “the simplicity of the melody...emphasized by the asceticism of the musical means used: soprano leads its phrase against the background of only the delicate accompaniment of the orchestra...passionate expression...subtle pulsation of harmonious chords...repetition of the musical material and the extremely slow time of the musical narrative.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> In Polish, *Matka Bolesna*. This topic can also be translated as *Weeping Mother*.

<sup>22</sup> Bolesławska-Lewandowska, *Łzy lejącą*, 75. “Prostotę melodii – pojawiającej się po narastającym, rozbudowanym kanonie całej orkiestry smyczkowej – podkreśla asceza użytych śród- ków muzycznych: sopran prowadzi swoją frazę na tle delikatnego tylko akompaniamentu orkiestry. Żarliwa ekspresja, melodyjna prostota głosu solowego i subtelna pulsacja harmonijnych w brzmieniu akordów, aura tradycyjnej tonalności i modalności, połączone z powtarzalnością muzycznego materiału i ekstremalnie spowolnionym czasem muzycznej narracji.”



**11. Tomaszewski, Mieczysław. "[Wszystko ma swój początek]." Teoria Muzyki : Studia, Interpretacje, Dokumentacje R. 5, Nr 8/9 (2016). 243-250.**

**English: "Everything has its origins"**

This source is a speech Tomaszewski delivered at the Krakow Academy of Music in 2008 for the ceremony at which Górecki was awarded an Honorary Doctorate. From the outset, Tomaszewski identifies four roots of Górecki's music: the first: "the voice of personal, human suffering, pain and resentment, carried within itself from childhood," the second: "the Silesian school of life...a grey and rough reality, requiring craftsmanship at work and insurmountable stubbornness to survive," the third and fourth: "Polishness, both folk and patriotic (his grandfather died at Dachau concentration camp), and the Catholic faith."<sup>23</sup>

Tomaszewski prefers not to categorize Górecki into stylistic epochs, but to chart notable works along Górecki's creative path.<sup>24</sup> Tomaszewski recalls the premiere of *Sonata for Two Violins Op. 10* (Kraków, 1956) as the end of Górecki's Early period, marked by fascination by Stravinsky and Bartók.<sup>25</sup> Tomaszewski calls Górecki's stylistic evolution through the subsequent years as "the era of peak creativity, in which monologue — self-invented, mature constructions — is not enough. Dialogue must come into play" including major works such as *Ad Matrem Op. 29*, *Symphony Nr. 2 "Copernican" Op. 31*, *Symphony Nr. 3 "Symphony of Sorrowful Songs" Op. 36*, and

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<sup>23</sup> Tomaszewski, *Wszystko ma swój początek*, 243-44. Original: "Najwcześniejszym z utworów znaczących...Głos osobistego, ludzkiego cierpienia, bólu i rozżalenia, niesionego w sobie od lat dziecinnych...Druga warstwa, w której zdaje się być zakorzeniona muzyka Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego, to śląska szkoła życia...szarej i szorstkiej, wymagającej dla przetrwania rzemieślniczej perfekcji w pracy i uporu nie dającego się pokonać...jeszcze o dwu głębokich elementarnych zakorzenieniach musi tu być mowa: o zakorzenieniu w polskości, zarazem ludowej i patriotycznej (dziadek zginął w obozie w Dachau) i w katolickiej wierze."

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 244l. Original: "chciałbym poszczególne etapy drogi twórczej Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego opisać i zinterpretować."

<sup>25</sup> Here he cites Droba's periodization "motor constructivism."

*Beatus Vir Op. 38*.<sup>26</sup> An important trait in Górecki's late style is wordless music: works feature musical "allusions to music existing earlier,"<sup>27</sup> heard in *Lerchenmusik Op. 53*, which Górecki describes as containing the same "masculine lyricism" of Beethoven's *Piano Concerto Nr. 4 in G, Op. 58*.<sup>28</sup> The second composer connected to Górecki's final period is Charles Ives, connected by sounds of transcendence and elements used to generate a calming sound world (slow tempi, revolving motifs representing recollection, and expansive silences).

**12. Rotter-Kozera, Violetta, *Please Find - Henryk Mikołaj Górecki*. Instytut im. Adama Mickiewicza/Silesia Film/Telewizja Polska (Adam Mickiewicz Institute/Silesian Films/Polish Television). 2012.**

**English: "Please Find Henryk Mikołaj Górecki"**

This documentary film is in Polish (English content is subtitled in Polish). It presents Górecki's life and music through interviews with Górecki's family, closest friends, colleagues, professional contacts, musical experts, and footage of his successes (1972 Warsaw Autumn Festival), and accounts of the *Third Symphony Op. 36* in the 1990s and after.

Rotter-Kozera seems to have angled specific interviews as responses to Palmer's *Henryk Górecki: The Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* (2010), a film presenting Górecki and *Symphony Op. 36* as a memorial to human suffering and genocide, intentional emblems of Górecki's aesthetic and creative intentions. Rotter-Kozera's testimonials come from persons present throughout Górecki's life and career. One key argument is Górecki's direct response to Górecki's *Third Symphony* as a representation of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 246. Original: "Epokę twórczości szczytowej. W moim rozumieniu, znaczy to takiej, w której już monolog kompozytorski – czyli budowanie wymyślonych przez samego siebie, dojrzałych i własnych konstrukcji – nie wystarcza. W grę musi wejść dialog."

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 249. Original: "Mówiący do nas – bez słów – poprzez muzykę instrumentów oraz poprzez aluzje do owej „muzyki zaistniałej wcześniej."

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 249. Original: "*Lerchenmusik* odwołała się do Beethovena (czyniąc to zresztą dopiero niemal w samym finale utworu), do „męskiego liryzmu” jego IV Koncert fortepianowego."

suffering, the Holocaust and Auschwitz: “simply nonsense...its contents are the relationship between mother and child, in all three movements: this is the content of the *Symphony*.”<sup>29</sup>

Two accounts contribute to understanding the composer’s nature as a listener and critic of performances of his music. One important English-language account is given by pianist Robert Thies, who discusses Górecki’s insistence on dynamics in his *Piano Sonata Op. 6*: “everything he wanted seemed to be in the score, but just much more... no matter how loudly I might have played for him, it wasn’t enough.”<sup>30</sup> Górecka recalls, “He never controlled my way of playing his works: the earliest he heard my playing was at concerts...He spoke to us many times about the way others played his works, what he liked and didn’t like, such that it was simply encoded in us about some things: there was no doubt and we always knew “from the cradle” what was important to him and what we should pay attention to...I knew he did not always like my fast tempos, but he never criticized me too harshly for it and survived it somehow.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> In Polish: “Nonsens, po prostu, nonsens. Treścią jest zupełnie co innego: treścią jest relacja matki z dzieckim, w każdej z trzech części, i to jest treść tej symfonii.”

<sup>30</sup> PWM Kultura, Rotter-Kozera. *Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: Please Find*. 2012.

<sup>31</sup> In Polish: “Nigdy nie kontrował mojego sposobu grania jego utworów i najczęściej słyszał moje wykonania wyłącznie na koncertach...On tyle razy przy nas mówił jak ludzie grają jego utwory i co mu się podoba i co mu się nie podoba, że myśmy mieli zakodowaną po prostu niektóre rzeczy i nie było wątpliwości, bo wiedzieliśmy od zawsze, od kołyski na czym mu zależy, czego trzeba pilnować...Tempa mu się pewnie czasami za szybkie jakiś nie podobały, ale nigdy mnie jakoś ostro za to nie objechał tak że w sumie ścierpiął jakoś.”

#### **IV. Górecki Research in English**

##### **1. Thomas, Adrian. *Górecki*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1997.**

This is the most reliable biography of Górecki available in English. A specialist in Polish music, Adrian Thomas is a friend of the Górecki family and appeared in the TVP documentary *Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: Please Find* (2012),<sup>32</sup> which corrected widespread, incorrect hermeneutic receptions of Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* as Górecki's memorialization of Auschwitz, the Holocaust, and human cruelty.<sup>33</sup> Having written about Polish music extensively, Thomas is an informed author on Górecki, family life, and personality. Thomas's narration is comparable to Alan Walker's *Chopin: A Life and Times* in the way it relates Górecki's works with episodes his life. While the solo piano works are not discussed in as much detail as the later and larger works, Thomas gives considerable space for discussion of the *Concerto Op. 40*, commenting on Górecki's evolution as his life changed from a prominent composer in Poland to a major international figure. The volume concludes with a list of all of H.M. Górecki works published in 1996 and the works still unpublished at that time (*From a Bird's Nest, Op. 9a, Mazurkas, Op. 41, Sundry Pieces for Piano, Op. 52*).<sup>34</sup>

##### **2. Thomas, Adrian. "The Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: The First Decade" in *Contact*, 27 (1983): 10-20.**

Thomas weaves Górecki's biography into his works of 1955-1965. This important period for Górecki led to his most significant early works *Scontri, Op. 17* (1960) and *Refren, Op. 21* (1965). The latter Thomas claims was "the work that paved the way for

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<sup>32</sup> PWM Kultura, Rotter-Kozera. *Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: Please Find*. 2012. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bc\\_mOQkoJ2Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bc_mOQkoJ2Y).

<sup>33</sup> See Cizmic's chapter on this subject: "Music, Mourning, and War" in *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas, 150-174.

yet more individual achievements in the next 20 years.”<sup>35</sup> Thomas observes that the qualities defining Górecki’s first decade of composing were productivity, self-criticism, and assimilation of techniques prevalent in Poland during the post-war decade.<sup>36</sup> Górecki’s works of this period feature deliberately aggressive dissonance, repetitive hammering chords and clusters, and rhythmic momentum achieved by successive statements of “a single, extended phrase.”<sup>37</sup>

Among Górecki’s early works, Thomas identifies *Pieśni o radości i rytmie, Op. 7 (Songs of Joy and Rhythm, Op. 7)* as the most deserving of attention. At the time Thomas wrote this paper, *Op. 7* was unpublished. A concise set of passages and figurations from *Op. 7* exemplify key features in Górecki’s early style. Likewise, Thomas’s examples taken from *Monologhi, Op. 16* and *Scontri, Op. 17* evince Górecki’s early interests in new approaches to performance, orchestral seating plans, and sound structures (especially in *Scontri*). Thomas emphasizes Górecki’s early interest in percussion, bowing techniques, and extreme dynamic ranges: these pertain to reading the expressive indications in his piano music, including the posthumously-published works (some written during Górecki’s early period).

### **3. Thomas, Adrian. *Polish Music Since Szymanowski*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.**

This volume features Thomas’s ‘personal canon’ of important Polish compositions and associated contexts in the second half of the 20th century. Thomas connects Górecki’s career with three topics that shaped his music over time: (1) the “New Polish School” of sonorism and electronic music (Penderecki, Szalonek, and Schaeffer); (2) musical symbolism: sacred and patriotic, and, (3) classical iconography. Thomas’s comments on Górecki’s *Harpsichord Concerto* are brief but recover it from the misnomer of

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<sup>35</sup> Thomas, 19.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 12.

“minimalism” in favour of its Polish folk-chorale origins.<sup>38</sup> Still, Thomas finds that in Górecki’s compositions, the folk material is “unadorned” and “unassuming” but with vigorous Bartókian reshaping of folk dance gestures.<sup>39</sup>

**4. Malecka, Teresa. “Górecki and the Keyboard: The Piano Music in his Compositional Output” in *Górecki in Context: Essays on Music*, ed. Maja Trochymczyk. Moonrise Press, 2017, 262-274.**

Malecka’s research question is whether or not “the variety of the piano’s functions within Górecki’s music runs parallel to stylistic changes in the successive phases in the composer’s life and work, or whether other factors come into play — such as categories of genre or the type of expression.”<sup>40</sup> Whereas Górecki’s crystallization of his compositional language emphasized small groups of instruments and motifs (Siedlik 2012), he took little interest in prepared piano, a popular concept in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s. Malecka designates the 1970’s as the “apogee” of Górecki’s musical language, including representative compositions that are “music-with-text filled with a clearly religious message.”<sup>41</sup> The four works defining the Apogee period are: *Ad matrem*, Op. 29 (1971), *Symphony Nr. 2*, Op. 31 (1972); *Symphony Nr. 3*, Op. 36 (1976), and *Beatus Vir*, Op. 38 (1979): Malecka argues that in writing these large works, Górecki’s employment of the piano as a tool of expression for “a symbolic function of creating color...the part of the piano or pianos has become essential to create a tonal aura necessary to convey a *transcendent dimension*.”<sup>42</sup>

Malecka’s findings are useful when reading slow-tempo piano works, their sound qualities and general characteristics.

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<sup>38</sup> Thomas, 265.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 277-278.

<sup>40</sup> Malecka, 262, in *Górecki in Context: Essays on Music*.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 264.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 265-266. My emphasis.

**5. Malecka, Teresa. “Górecki and the Polish Musical Tradition” in *Górecki in Context: Essays on Music*, ed. Maja Trochimczyk. Moonrise Press, 2017, 234-261.**

Malecka charts Polish sources of Górecki's works, beginning with a broad scope of materials referenced in his larger works, such as *Już jest zmierzcha* (Already it is dusk) by Wacław of Szamouły, the Lentian hymn *Oto Jezus umiera* (Behold, Jesus is dying), and Kolberg's *Dzieła wszystkie* (Complete Works of Polish Folk Music). Three subsections classify five sources in Górecki's compositions: (1) Around *Already it is Dusk*, (2) Górecki-Chopin, (3) Górecki-Szymanowski, (4) Folk Songs and Patriotic Songs, and (5) Church Songs. The Górecki-Chopin subsection is the most pianistically relevant, each of the Chopin works Malecka observes are taken his solo piano literature and appear in some form in Górecki's works: *Piano Sonata Nr. 2 Op. 35*, *Mazurka in A Minor, Op. 17 nr. 4*, and *Polonaise in D Minor, Op. Post.*<sup>43</sup>

Malecka finds motherhood and “Marian” topics in Górecki's music are prominent tropes, but rarely in the solo piano works. A significant connection between Chopin's piano music and Górecki's *Symphony Nr. 3* lies in the opening chords of Chopin's *Mazurka in A Minor, Op. 17 nr. 4*, which Górecki sets as basis of the third movement of *Symphony Nr. 3, Op. 36*.<sup>44</sup> This chapter shows crucial connections between Górecki's works and those of his Polish predecessors, demonstrating he was a knowing recipient of Chopin-Szymanowski tradition.

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<sup>43</sup> Malecka, *Górecki and the Polish Musical Tradition*, 250.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas 1998, Cary 2005.

6. **Dumitriu, Leonard. “Concerto for harpsichord (piano) and string orchestra op 40, by Henryk Mikołaj Górecki. Timeless expression, modern solutions, baroque richness” in *Bulletin of the Transylvania University of Brasov, Series VIII, Nr. 2*, 2016. 29-42.**

Dumitriu’s aim is to enhance understanding of the “architecture and artistic devices”<sup>45</sup> in Górecki’s *Concerto Op. 40*. He unpacks the score from a conductor’s standpoint. Crucial findings in the concerto’s architecture are its similar tempi in both movements, repetitive rhythmic gestures, and static orchestral scoring. The rhythm “is one of the elements that most contribute to the success of this concerto”<sup>46</sup> because it is the basis of the melodic expression. In the first movement, contrasting polyrhythmic structures, between the piano (in two-beat bars) and orchestra (in three-beat bars), lead to an “austere atmosphere.”<sup>47</sup> That austerity transforms into felicitous, “open, evidently warmer” overtones when the final measures of the first movement land in D major (Picardy third) and the second movement continues *attacca* in the same key. Górecki’s small rhythmic fragments continue in the second movement, grouped and accented differently in the piano than in the orchestra.

Dumitriu compares *Concerto Op. 40* and Stravinsky’s *Le sacre du printemps*, “especially in the persistent repetition by the orchestra of the same sounds.”<sup>48</sup> This source’s findings are useful to pianists in their first reading of *Op. 40*.

7. **Cary, Christopher. *Darkness and Light: Henryk Mikołaj Górecki’s Spiritual Awakening and its Socio-Political Context*. MA Thesis, University of Florida, 2005.**

Cary’s justification for this thesis is that twentieth-century Poland shaped Górecki’s “turn to a more lyrical and spiritual language in the 1970s,” so his works cannot be understood without knowing Polish contexts and situations common to the post-World

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<sup>45</sup> Dumitriu, 30.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 38.



War Two period.<sup>49</sup> Following historical overview of important events from 1945-1968 (Socialist Realism, “The Thaw”, 1956 October Revolution), Cary surveys of Górecki’s life and catalogues his compositional language as it developed during the postwar period.

Chapter 5 describes specified style traits Górecki favoured, from his dissonant early pieces, to his “Lyrical and Spiritual Turn” (1970-1986),<sup>50</sup> and his trends at the turn of the 21st century. Cary attributes Górecki’s late period to “the change in the socio-political climate in Poland” which provided Górecki the freedom to write works that reflected his faith.<sup>51</sup> That freedom followed the Solidarity movement, which Górecki openly supported by dedicating *Miserere Op. 44* to the city of Bydgoszcz, following an assault on Bydgoszcz Solidarity members on March 19, 1981 by the Polish *militia* (the PZPR police force).

Cary singles out *Concerto for Harpsichord or Piano Op. 40* as a work that contradicts its period: Górecki’s vocally-inspired decade, the 1970’s. Brash, dissonant, and aggressive, *Concerto Op. 40* has more in common with Górecki’s highly dissonant early period solo piano works than works contemporary to it which are marked by simplicity, consonance, contemplation. Cary concludes that Górecki’s compositions confront “Polish issues, and through music, transcending the difficulties of an embattled past with dignity.”<sup>52</sup>

Cary’s conclusion is important: Górecki translates his Polishness into broader, applicable terms, through his musical interest in depictions of contemplation and transcendence rather than depictions of suffering.

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<sup>49</sup> Cary, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 70.

**8. Chilvers, Alex. "Foreign Models, Familiar Themes: The Aesthetic Function of Folklore in Works by Szymanowski and Górecki." *Musicology Australia* 1-23 (2022): 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08145857.2021.2006869>.**

Chilvers shows folk music connections between Szymanowski and Górecki through shared composition practices rather than Polish political agendas. Chilvers convincingly argues that politicizing Polish folk music has limiting effect on scholarly inquiry into that music and the work of composers who use folk music in their compositions.

Chilvers's unravels the "Chopin Myth": Liszt's assertion that Chopin's *Mazurkas* are rooted in authentic Polish folk-music tradition.<sup>53</sup> Chilvers finds strong evidence for "reverse engineering" of Szymanowski's patriotism as a key reason his works are rooted in Polish heritage, not the exoticism of African and Asian music with which Szymanowski was fascinated.

Chilvers links Szymanowski to Górecki based on their early works: "Górecki's music, like that of Szymanowski, demonstrates that he was extremely progressive in his early years as one of the early exponents of serial techniques in a country that was just beginning to free itself from socialist realist aesthetic policy."<sup>54</sup> Then, Chilvers rescues Górecki's music from generalized criticism of his later works as containing "gritty *nationalism*, depressive and unrelenting."<sup>55</sup> Since Górecki's use of Polish historical references appears in his music subtly and abstractly, it is unlikely Górecki intentionally imbued his works with nationalistic agendas, even if they are based on Polish folk sources. This bears directly on future discussions of the posthumously-published piano *Mazurki, Op. 41* in its resemblance to mazurkas of Chopin and Szymanowski.

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<sup>53</sup> Milewski (1999), Pekacz (2000), and Goldberg (2016) revise and reposition the relationship between Polish folk music and Chopin.

<sup>54</sup> Chilvers, 13.

<sup>55</sup> Chilvers, 14, cit. Fisk, 'The New Simplicity: The Music of Gorecki, Tavener and Pärt', *The Hudson Review* 47/3 (1994), 394–412, at 403.

**9. Mirka, Danuta. Górecki's *Musica geometrica*, *The Musical Quarterly*, Volume 87, Issue 2, Summer 2005, 305–332, <https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdh013>.**

Mirka observes that from his student years, “the geometric organization of performance space interested Górecki,”<sup>56</sup> and her main questioning of periodization in Górecki's work is groundbreaking. Mirka observes that Górecki's unique compositional traits differ sharply from his contemporaries (Serocki, Penderecki, and Lutosławski): their large-scale works are based on spatial relationships between different ensembles (eg. orchestra and choir), whereas for Górecki, “such relations are instead the individual performers, and the network of spatial interdependences is therefore more highly developed.”<sup>57</sup> Mirka includes the diagrams of instruments in the scores of *Monologhi* (1960), *Muzyczka II*, Op. 23 (1968), *Genesis* cycle (1962-63) and *Choros I*, Op. 20. Examples demonstrate Górecki's interest in symmetrical arrangements of instrumental groups around the centre of the performance space. Mirka likewise finds graphic symmetry in Górecki's scores through “reflections (mirror symmetry) and displacements (translation)”<sup>58</sup> in *Monodramma* (1963).

Górecki's frequent use of symmetry in sound material in the “reductive constructivism” leads Mirka to propose re-naming of the 1960's to Górecki's “Geometric” period, relegating Droba's “Sonorist” and “Reductive” periods as sub-phases of the Geometric period (1962-70). Mirka's new periodization is based on Górecki's 1960's compositional technique: “axes, figure, one- and two-dimensional patterns, and symmetry—‘pan-symmetry’—including operations of reflection, translation, and dilation.”<sup>59</sup> Mirka notes that Górecki abandoned the organization of performance space by graphic representation in his later works, but that “musical symmetry was preserved only where it yielded audible results.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Mirka, 305.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 306.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 309.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 329.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 332.

Mirka justifies her proposal to change Droba's long-accepted periodization based on the sound material Górecki wrote during the period itself:

what changes is the sound material and, with it, the notation: instead of points placed on horizontal axes and linked with lines, we now have notes written as quavers, situated not on the staff joined with beams...the change of material it self results from *the geometric character of sound construction*. Precise geometric figures can be drawn only with the help of a scaled ruler and a sharp pencil, the musical counterpart of which is the tempered sound system of definite pitch.<sup>61</sup>

Mirka's observations are crucial to ongoing dialogue about Górecki's creative periods, especially considering the recent publication of his piano works. Mirka's research can be paired with Karwaszewska's (2016) research on terminological classifications of 20th century Polish music.<sup>62</sup>

**10. McVey, Roger. *The Solo Piano Works of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki*. University of Kansas, diss., 2004.**

McVey's claim is that "an examination of the piano works of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki reveals a variety of styles and influences,"<sup>63</sup> and his discussions of Górecki's *Preludes Op. 1* and *Sonata Op. 6* rely on Thomas (1997) and his own pianistic observations. McVey mentions Górecki's sources in his discussion of the first *Prelude Op. 1*:

*from the very beginning one can hear folk influences, such as open fifths in the bass register, irregular meter and phrase lengths, and the mixing of different scales or modes...modal or polymodal writing, flavored with chromaticism, which...often results in a quasi-octatonicism.*<sup>64</sup>

These elements are found in the *Prelude*, but McVey's discussion excludes the sources themselves. There is no mention of Górecki's first musical contact with Beethoven, Szymanowski, Chopin, Bartók, Messiaen, or Polish folk music. The folk influences in

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 330-31.

<sup>62</sup> Karwaszewska, 2016.

<sup>63</sup> McVey, ii.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 8.

Górecki's piano music are described generally: "chords are built on two different pentatonic scales, again lending a *folkish*, polymodal flavor."<sup>65</sup>

McVey's objective is a "better understanding Górecki's music," but this is not entirely borne out by his conclusion, in which he introduces sources and influences that might be better if placed at the outset of the analysis and woven into it through each example. There is no data given that compares Górecki's sources or influences with his piano works (even within his own oeuvre) and no Polish sources are consulted.

**11. Kijanowska, Anna. "The Music of Contrasts and Tradition. From Barbarism to Spirituality in Górecki's Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 6 (1956, Rev. 1984, 1990) and Recitatives and Ariosos 'Lerchenmusik' Op. 53 (1984-85) for Piano, Cello and Clarinet" in *Contemporary Piano Music: Performance and Creativity*, ed. Madalena Soveral. Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021.**

Kijanowska's contact with Górecki informs her argument that in Górecki's works, "emotions are clear...each note is placed for a reason and has a meaningful role to play." This chapter compares *Piano Sonata Op. 6* and *Lerchenmusik Op. 53*.

Kijanowska mentions her discussions with Górecki confirmed that *Sonata Op. 6* is influenced by "Bartókean barbarism...particularly the *Allegro Barbaro*."<sup>66</sup> In the third movement, Kijanowska finds the *Przyśpiewka* (one-stanza couplet) native to Górale (mountaineer) music: this folk element links Górecki and Polish folk music. Kijanowska cites her interviews with Górecki to verify her readings of the music, if its contents imply Polish folk sources.

Kijanowska objects to Thomas's assertion that the third movement in *Op. 6* is a Mazurka, because "Górecki rejected this notion...during the conversation I had with the composer in Bielsko-Biała in autumn 1999."<sup>67</sup> Kijanowska's reading of *Op. 6* unpacks its "Bartókean barbarism" through examples of the work's dynamic extremes,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>66</sup> Kijanowska, 55.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 57.

sudden silences, and thick chordal textures. Her assertion of the accompaniment as rooted in Podhale folk music is persuasive. Kijanowska compares the third movements of *Op. 6* and *Op. 53*: “both third movements are rooted in the composer’s deep convictions: one in folk material, the other in a Polish prayer and spirituality. Both movements also share some barbaristic [sic] elements.”<sup>68</sup>

**12. Górecka, Anna. “Preface” to *Górecki Piano Album*. London: Boosey and Hawkes, 2021.**

Górecka’s introduction is two pages in length, but includes important first-hand information about Górecki’s composition process. A summary of her 2012 book, the preface reflectively questions what the piano meant to Górecki (memories of his mother, a pianist), Górecki’s plans for writing larger cycles for piano (eg. *Mazurki*), and comparisons to his later works that coincided with his “return” to the piano music in the 1990s. Górecka concludes that the 2021 *Album* “gives us a glimpse of Górecki’s musical language and...occupies a distinct place in the world of piano music.” This is the most recent summary of H.M. Górecki’s piano music and the piano’s importance to him (written November 2019, pub. 2021).

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 64.

## **V. Comparing Polish and English Sources**

The following comparisons between the Polish- and English-language sources reviewed above consider the present author's:

- (1) Polish and English language capacity;
- (2) Knowledge of Polish music, sources, and culture.

The main difference between Polish and English sources is their foci: Polish sources tend to catalogue empirical details of a composition more often than English sources do. Exceptions are found in sources by Polish musicologists fluent in English (T. Malecka, D. Mirka). Except Adrian Thomas's work, English sources tend to describe Górecki through his place in Polish history (A. Chilvers), or his musical language using comparisons between his earlier and later works or folk topics (R. McVey, C. Christopher). Topics in Polish sources tend toward more direct reflection on Górecki as a personality, professional, or influence, due to his familiarity among musicians (family, friends, colleagues, performers).

Polish sources regarding the piano music are useful: their translation into English would benefit future Górecki research. Górecka (2012) is the most exhaustive source, with important details regarding structure, content, history, and performance of Górecki's piano works. The multiplicity of angles presented by Bolesławska-Lewandowska (2013) of Górecki's life and work include performers who worked closely with him in concert halls and teaching studios. While useful to understanding Górecki's rehearsal process and conducting of his major symphonic works, Pociąg (2005) is not reviewed here but is worth consulting.

Tomaszewski's work recalls his experience with Górecki as a colleague and fellow expert on Polish music history. Tomaszewski's concepts of Polish style, interpretation methods, and approaches to understanding aesthetics are valuable in Górecki research. Rich in their invocation of musical and historical treatises, English translation of Tomaszewski's research would enhance the literature.

The most exhaustive English resources are those of Adrian Thomas (1983, 1997, 2005), Danuta Mirka (2005), and Teresa Malecka (1984, 2013, 2017). These writings feature concise biographical details relevant to performing Górecki's works based on his personality and musical style. Adrian Thomas is a leading expert on Górecki, owing to his relationship to the Górecki family (friend, researcher, writer). His specialized knowledge of Polish music is the basis for his readings and discussions of Górecki's music. Mirka's theoretical and historical expertise are joined in her reshaping of fundamental understandings of Górecki's evolution as a composer. Malecka demonstrates Górecki's stylistic development but within the framework of the composers who preceded him. Her methods draw on existing research to test Górecki's statements regarding his influences, methods, and creative intentions.

While both English and Polish resources address meaningful research questions, there is a sense of familiarity felt by Polish authors who use considerable space analyzing why his music connects to other Polish composers (Chopin, Szymanowski, Penderecki, Kilar, Bacewicz). In English, this admiration is communicated through sales statistics of the *Third Symphony Op. 36* as a commercial success, but its scholarly value is sometimes limited due to the lack of contact between the author(s) and Górecki himself. In Polish, admiration for Górecki is found in author accounts of Górecki's human qualities (frustrations with government, work ethic, Silesian roots, obstacles, family life, faith) and professional qualities (work ethic, artistic convictions, composing processes). It was possible for researchers such as Kijanowska and Górecka to discuss their impressions of Górecki's music with him: the validity of their claims is cited in terms such as "conversation with the composer [H.M. Górecki]."

The following chart summarizes general qualities of Polish and English sources.



Topic/Aspect	Polish Sources	English Sources
Górecki Biography	Specific: concepts, topics, episodes, connections	Broader: catalogues, perceptions of Polish identity
Górecki Persona	More familiar, human	More “halo effect”, distant
Contexts Applied	Górecki as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Parent, Spouse, Friend</li> <li>— Educator (Rector, Professor)</li> <li>— Coach, Conductor</li> <li>— Musical “Hero”: championed Solidarity, Polish Struggles</li> <li>— Composer of transcendence and uncommon musical clarity</li> </ul>	Górecki as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Influential Composer</li> <li>— Sensation/Famous Figure</li> <li>— Educator (Rector, Professor)</li> <li>— Scholar-Historian of Polish musical and political history</li> <li>— Spiritualist, Catholic</li> </ul>
Main Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Impact of his music?</li> <li>— Stages of his artistic process?</li> <li>— Works as sound or works as graphic/topographical representation?</li> <li>— Relationship of his words to his music?</li> <li>— Relationship of self-critique to aesthetic theories?</li> <li>— Importance of his contact with various spheres (personal, professional)?</li> <li>— Influence of Polish tropes, themes, and folklore?</li> <li>— Development of piano’s potential for expression?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Impact of his music?</li> <li>— Development of his style?</li> <li>— Impacts of his origins on his compositions?</li> <li>— Stability or suitability of periodization labels?</li> <li>— Contributions to piano literature?</li> <li>— Role/place in the Polish canon of composers?</li> <li>— Uses of vocal and dance music in smaller and larger works?</li> <li>— Types and degrees of political engagement through his music/public speaking?</li> </ul>

**Fig. 1.2. Qualities of English and Polish sources.**

The next chapter introduces Górecki’s piano works and periodizes his stylistic development as a piano composer.

## Chapter 2 Górecki's Piano Works

What elements define Górecki's musical style and approach to writing piano music?

This chapter offers a brief periodization of Górecki's piano music, based on resources from Chapter 1. I organize Górecki's piano works into two style periods: (1) 1955 - 1961: Górecki's education and early career, and, (2) 1980 - 1990: Górecki's crystallization as a composer. Part IV presents contexts and features in the posthumously-published piano works found in the *Górecki Piano Album*. Periodizing Górecki's posthumously-published piano works is important to understanding their place in his repertoire.

### I. Introduction

Assigning periods to Górecki's works is complex because Górecki unequivocally opposed periodization of his music. Jacobson (1996) describes Górecki's style as "a frank acceptance of mystical extremism...delight in the exploitation of music's fundamental sonorities for their own sensual affect, *quite distinct from any element of intellectual elaboration*."<sup>69</sup> Intellectual elaboration appears to have been antithetical to Górecki, who wryly corroborated Jacobson's claim in a 1993 interview with Mieczysław Kominek: "You, the writers, have several Góreckis because you like boxes and labels: this one for *Scontri*, that one for the *Sonata*, still another one from *Refren*, and one more from the *Third Symphony*...the true reality is somewhat different...I do not see any reason to distinguish any phases...*in all of my works you can hear many similarities*."<sup>70</sup>

Despite Górecki's reluctance to strict periodization, four contrasting studies address his evolution. Periodization research on Górecki's music shows that he preferred using some musical materials in the Early period, other materials in the Crystallization period,

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<sup>69</sup> Jacobson, *A Polish Renaissance*, 178. My emphasis.

<sup>70</sup> Trochymczyk, *Górecki in Context*, 16. My emphasis.

and some materials are found in both periods.<sup>71</sup> Periodizing the posthumously-published piano works confirms some of them fit into his Early period (1955-61), some in his Crystallization period (1970-1980), and some that he wrote in his Early period and refined in the Crystallization period.<sup>72</sup> The next three paragraphs outline four useful periodization research findings.<sup>73</sup>

Casken's *Music from Silesia* (1972) was the first English research into Górecki's early piano music, motivated by Casken's conclusion that Polish music was "frequently misunderstood in Britain."<sup>74</sup> Thomas followed with his periodization of Górecki's early works (1983, 1984). Casken and Thomas found musical elements common to Górecki's Early and Crystallization Period (alternating chords, mirrored melodic structures). These constants demonstrate Górecki's lifelong preference for specific motifs or sources, while his approach to broader elements such as form, texture, and sound quality changed. When Thomas studied the works of Górecki's first decade and periodized them, the Crystallization period was present-day and had not yet been defined.

Mirka (2005) proposes that Górecki's works of the late 1950's and early 1960's (Górecki concentrated on ensemble works) justify a 'geometric' period. This Geometric period is based on Górecki's specified seating plans of instrument groups and large ensembles in performance spaces and geometric designs in music notation.<sup>75</sup> In *Monologhi, Op. 19*, Górecki uses a cymbal motif whose notational shape creates symmetrical reflection: "the original, the inversion, the inverted retrograde, and the retrograde. Due to this *order of the transformations* (O—I—IR—R), symmetry also characterizes the overall geometric pattern in the cymbals because...the second half of the part is a

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<sup>71</sup> Bolesławska-Lewandowska, *Górecki: Portret w pamięci*, 37.

<sup>72</sup> Malecka, *Górecki at the Keyboard*, 263.

<sup>73</sup> Casken 1972, Thomas 1983, Mirka 2005, Siedlik 2012, Górecka 2012, Malecka 2013.

<sup>74</sup> Casken, 21.

<sup>75</sup> Mirka, *Musica geometrica*, 306.

mirror image of the first.”<sup>76</sup> Mirka’s “Geometric” period is important because it aligns with aspects of *Preludes Op. 1* and *Sonata Op. 6*: this periodization thus accounts for aspects of the sonic world of these Early works.

Górecka (2012) and Malecka (2012, 2017) group Górecki’s piano repertoire by genre (solo piano, piano with orchestra, piano and voice, chamber music). Górecka confirms that Górecki disagreed with prevailing notions that his Early period works were less stylistically evolved than his Crystallization period works.<sup>77</sup> The first piano works (*Preludes Op. 1*, *Toccata Op. 2*, *Sonata Op. 6*) predate and coincide with Górecki’s studies at the Katowice Higher School for Music (1954-1961) but not peripheral. The Crystallization period piano works coincide with Górecki’s resignation from the Rectorship of the Higher School for Music (1978) and the Communist Party’s ban on his music.<sup>78</sup> Górecka and Malecka focus on local contexts or events concurrent to the works themselves.

These sources show two approaches to periodizing Górecki’s works:

- (1) Observations of shared characteristics between compositions.
- (2) Significant events connecting Górecki’s life to his works.

Section II and Section III use both approaches to show specified traits in a given period and long-range evolution in Górecki’s musical style. Each section concludes with a chart outlining Górecki style traits specific to the period followed by commentary on the musical elements common in both periods and related contexts (other composers, styles, and works). Sections II and III describe musical elements that define Górecki’s approach to writing piano music in his Early and Crystallization periods.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>77</sup> Bolesławska-Lewandowska, *Górecki: Portret w Pamięci*, 37.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas, *Górecki*, 94-95.

## **II. The Early Period: Education, Enthusiasm, Integration**

Górecki's first piano works were written after his troubled childhood, which was marked by the death of his mother, Otylia Górecka. She died on Henryk's second birthday, and left her upright piano to the family. While the young Henryk was fascinated by the piano, his father and stepmother forbade him to study it. Jadgiwa Górecka and Anna Górecka emphasize that Górecki's childhood (motherlessness, strict father) caused tension between Henryk and his family.<sup>79</sup> From 1952-55, Henryk studied in Rybnik Music Secondary School, where he also taught elementary classes. Students of Górecki's age typically began undergraduate degrees at the State Higher School of Music, but his medical history and upbringing disallowed this. Still, he made enough progress in Rybnik to be admitted to the composition program at the Katowice State Higher School of Music by 1955. It was during this period that Górecki wrote the two solo piano works to be published during his lifetime: *Preludes Op. 1*, *Sonata Op. 6*.<sup>80</sup>

That Górecki's wrote his first works during this period had two outcomes: (1) they were written for the instrument that most fascinated him, and, (2) they feature the signature styles and composers he was inspired by at the time. These composers were Bartók, Chopin, Szymanowski, Beethoven, and Ives. Górecki's first purchases were the Chopin *Impromptus* and Szymanowski *Mazurkas Op. 50*, he considered these his primary influences. Bartók's *Piano Sonata Sz. 80* and *Allegro Barbaro* were also important to him.<sup>81</sup>

Górecki's early piano music aligns with avant-garde trends of the 1950's, including "strong, ardent expression and dynamism...these qualities were equally strange to the experimental 'asceticism' of Western music in the 1950's and hence were all the more noticeable in the music coming from Poland."<sup>82</sup> Mantzourani connects this "strong,

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<sup>79</sup> Bolesławska-Lewandowska, 21; 46.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas, *Górecki*, xiii-xviii.

<sup>81</sup> Kijanowska, *Music of Barbarism*, 55.

<sup>82</sup> Mantzourani, *Polish Music since 1945*, 159.

ardent expression” with Soviet occupation of Poland in the Postwar Years: composers were limited to topics approved by Socialist artistic policies at precisely the time they were reflecting on World War Two. Górecki did not accept censorship, writing brutalism into his Early solo piano works (eg. *Preludes Op. 1 nr. 2*, *Sonata Op. 6*).

Though written during his student days, *Preludes Op. 1* and *Sonata Op. 6* are neither dry nor derivative. Thomas calls Górecki’s earliest works “particularly revelatory” and “far from incidental to the main thrust of his development.”<sup>83</sup> Malecka observes the piano is “present in his early works up to Op. 13.”<sup>84</sup> Tomaszewski defines Górecki’s early style as “aggressive sound, to the limit,” influenced by Stravinsky’s *Soldier’s Tale* (1918) and Bartók’s *Allegro Barbaro Sz. 49* (1911).<sup>85</sup> Górecki’s earliest works exemplify “neo-classicism written in the post-war decade by older Polish composers such as Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-69), Kazimierz Serocki (1922-81), and Tadeusz Baird (1928-69).”<sup>86</sup> The table below details Górecki’s Early style according to secondary sources.

Source	Style Traits
Adrian Thomas: “Górecki: the First Decade” in <i>Contact</i> (1983), 10-20.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Four-square metric patterns</li> <li>— Uncomplicated formal structures</li> <li>— Harmonic contexts based on perfect intervals, tritones</li> <li>— Frequent use of piano and violin</li> <li>— Influences: Bartók, Chopin, Szymanowski, Ives, Stravinsky</li> <li>— Pitch palindromes, fascination with mirror structures</li> <li>— Potent dynamic contrasts, created by texture or sound</li> </ul>

<sup>83</sup> Thomas, *Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: the First Decade*, 10.

<sup>84</sup> Malecka, *Górecki at the Piano*, 263.

<sup>85</sup> Tomaszewski, *Wszystko ma swój początek [Everything has its beginning]*, 245. In Polish, the entire passage: "Na początku stoi utwór już wspomniany, *Sonata na dwoje skrzypiec*. Do dziś mam w uszach i oczach ten moment. *Te brzmienia agresywne, do granic wytrzymałości* (*The aggressive sound, to the breaking point/to the limit.*"

<sup>86</sup> Thomas, 1.

Anna Górecka: <i>Rola fortepianu w życiu i twórczości Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego</i> , 2012.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Bartókian textures (e.g., <i>Allegro Barbaro</i>, <i>Piano Sonata</i>)</li> <li>—Folk elements (e.g., <i>Sonata II</i> and <i>Prelude Nr. 2</i>)</li> <li>—Lydian harmony, kujawiak melody and rhythm</li> <li>—Enthusiasm for dynamically extreme contrasts</li> <li>—Forms tend to be predictable</li> <li>—Academic exercises re-written and realized into repertoire</li> <li>—Lyrical melodic lines either run over “wide layers of chords” or are “internals” of harmony (46)</li> </ul>
Anna Kijanowska: “Music of Contrasts and Tradition. From Barbarism to Spirituality” in <i>Contemporary Piano Music: Performance and Creativity</i> , ed. Madlena Soveral (2021), 51-72.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Emotional range: anger, sadness, spirituality, tenderness</li> <li>—Drastic contrasts, barbarism to contemplative spirituality</li> <li>—Sparse elements with extreme emotional depth</li> <li>—Extreme dynamics held over long periods</li> <li>—Sharp differences between individual movements of multi-movement works</li> <li>—Rhythmic energy, syncopation and vivacious tempi</li> <li>—Phrases in classical/symmetrical units</li> <li>—Folk elements, e.g. <i>przyśpiewka</i>-couplets</li> </ul>

**Fig. 2.1. Górecki's First Period: Style Traits.**

Comparing Górecki's works to those of his predecessors, peers, and his own future works has been a common practice since Górecki research began. Casken groups Górecki's piano music of 1955 with his early ensemble works, *Scontri*, *Monologhi*, *Genesis*, *Choros I*, *Refren*, *Muzyczka 2*, *Old Polish Music*, and *Canticum Gradum*, concluding that “Górecki has, from the very start, been outstandingly original.”<sup>87</sup> Thomas detects Górecki's influences in his early piano works: “Bartók's *Bagatelles*, early Stravinsky, and a touch of Poulenc's brand of *moto perpetuo* brought together in a harsh amalgam.”<sup>88</sup>

Broader context for Górecki's Early style is found in his orchestral works, which can be helpfully compared to his piano works. Casken calls *Monologhi Op. 16* “strangely similar in the forces employed and in the instrumental textures” to Berio's *Circles* (both

<sup>87</sup> Casken, *Music from Silesia*, 24-26.

<sup>88</sup> Thomas, *Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: the First Decade*, 10.

compositions premiered in 1960).<sup>89</sup> Thomas corroborated Casken's observation: "in *Monologhi op. 16* (1960), Górecki allowed the influence of the western European avant garde fuller (and final) rein, treading the path of Boulez, Berio, and Nono."<sup>90</sup> Górecki came into contact with these composers through his studies in Berlin and Paris, and regularly heard their works premiered at the Warsaw Autumn, founded in 1956 by Baird and Serocki.

The Warsaw Autumn had a "golden age" in the Socialist era: it created a platform on which "the most varied forms of invention were possible. That created a sense of general freedom of expression, and the Festival was seen as a form of political protest. Audience attendance reached 120 per cent; Warsaw Autumn made the headlines, and there were several hundred international guests, both from the East (for Soviet citizens, it was the only opportunity to experience new currents in music) and the West."<sup>91</sup> Górecki's significant premieres at the early Warsaw Autumn festivals were *Epitafium* (1958) and *Symphony No. 1, Op. 14* (1959): by 1960 he was "synonymous with Polish radicalism...both [works] were singled out in the Polish musical press the most interesting, forward-looking presented at the early Warsaw Autumn festivals."<sup>92</sup>

Thomas finds Górecki's *First Symphony* (1959) "by any standards, remarkable" because its advanced employment of "registrable displacement...limited interval content in the chords, akin to Lutosławski's development in this domain...Its stark juxtaposition of the developing string recitative with punctuating percussion is the first Polish example of such single-minded concentration on textural qualities."<sup>93</sup> Casken groups Górecki with two other Silesians, Witold Szalonek and Wojciech Kilar, a trio of Silesian composers working to re-establish Polish music and art "after the Nazis tried

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<sup>89</sup> Casken, 24.

<sup>90</sup> Thomas, 16.

<sup>91</sup> Warsaw Autumn Festival, <https://warszawska-jesien.art.pl/en/2022/o-festiwalu/warszawska-jesien>.

<sup>92</sup> Jakelski, *Górecki's 'Scontri' and the Avant-Garde Music in Cold War Poland*, 212.

<sup>93</sup> Thomas, 15.



ruthlessly to wipe out all traces of Poland's culture.”<sup>94</sup>

Górecki's Early and Crystallization periods share one crucial commonality: Górecki as a receiver of Polish musical traditions. Malecka notes, “Gorecki's music — individual and original — is visibly rooted in the European and Polish traditions. The most important sources of inspiration include an attachment to the native country, complete with an interest in its nature, landscape, and people; and, above all — a deep rootedness in Polish history, arts (poetry, literature, music), but also in a simple almost folk-like religiousness.”<sup>95</sup> Jabłoński links Górecki's early style to the late style because the early works “show immanent features of the composer's later styles: the expressive metre, the presence of contrasts - especially dynamic (often extreme: *ppp—fff*), operating with large registers, strong expression, violent gestures. This music is characterized by dynamism, flow (resulting from a strongly emphasized pulse) and clear melodic contours.”<sup>96</sup>

### **III. The Crystallization Period**

In 1978, Górecki's composing career became emblematic of the Polish struggle for independence from the Soviet Union. Górecki accepted a commission from Cardinal Karol Wojtyła (who became Pope John Paul II) to write a work for the 900th anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Stanisław by the order of King Bolesław. The story highlights tensions between church and state, and in 1978, it drew an unacceptable level of attention to the same tensions in Socialist Poland. By accepting the commission, Górecki put himself in a terrible position: he was Rector of the Academy of Music, a state institution. Consequently, the PZPR became more intrusively involved with

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<sup>94</sup> Casken, 21.

<sup>95</sup> Malecka, “Górecki and the Polish Musical Tradition” in *Gorecki in Context*, 236.

<sup>96</sup> Jabłoński, *Górecki*, PWM Encyclopedia 2011. Original: “zaznaczają się w nich immanentne cechy późniejszego stylu kompozytora: wyrazista metryka, obecność kontrastów - zwłaszcza dynamicznych (nierzadko skrajnych: *ppp-fff*), operowanie dużym ambitusem rejestrów, silna ekspresja, gwałtowność gestów. Muzykę tę cechuje dynamizm, potoczność (wynikająca z silnie uwypuklonego pulsu) i wyraźne kontury melodyczne.”

Academy affairs: controlling the staff Górecki could hire, monitoring his phone calls and letters, removing his name from the Academy's lists of alumni, and deleting him from films about the Academy. Górecki was ostracized by his peers, unable to fulfill his commission while acting as Rector of the Academy of Music. He resigned from the post in 1979.<sup>97</sup>

Jacobson observes that in his *Crystallization*, "Górecki's imagination achieves a clear backward leap to an earlier, more innocent phase in the human condition"<sup>98</sup> which he justifies by pointing to Górecki's use of the following:

- (1) blocks and sheets of harmony
- (2) smudged lines
- (3) dynamic masses
- (4) subordinating the above to an individual note in a sonic unit.<sup>99</sup>

These contribute to what Jacobson calls a "quasi-mystical sense of immobility."<sup>100</sup>

Górecki wrote four of his largest works in the 1970's: *Ad matrem*, Op. 29 (1971), *Symphony No. 2* Op. 31 (1972), *Symphony Nr. 3* Op. 36 (1976), and *Beatus Vir*, Op. 38 (1979); *Beatus Vir* was the commission over which Górecki resigned from the Academy. These works are the core of his *Crystallization* period.<sup>101</sup> Thomas observes a strong presence of the Skierkowski turn motif: a rising third followed by a descending minor second.<sup>102</sup> Skierkowski was a collector of Polish folksong, for whom this intervallic pairing resonated deeply.<sup>103</sup> Mirka observes that in this period, Górecki imbued his

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<sup>97</sup> For a complete description of these events, see Thomas, *Górecki*, 94-95, and Bolesławska-Lewandowska, *Górecki: Portret w Pamięci*, 21.

<sup>98</sup> Jacobson, *Polish Renaissance*, 203.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 203.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 204.

<sup>101</sup> Malecka, *Górecki at the Keyboard*, 263.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas, *Górecki*, 85-86.

<sup>103</sup> Thomas, *Intense Joy and Profound Rhythm*, Polish Music Center. <https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/publications/polish-music-journal>. 2003.

music with geometrical melodic shapes and mapped out symmetrical placements of instruments on stage.<sup>104</sup>

Source	Style Traits
Adrian Thomas, <i>Górecki</i> (2005), 70; 85-86.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Interest in and return to the human voice</li> <li>— Opening phrase expression similar to Tchaikovsky <i>Symphony Op. 74</i> or Rachmaninoff <i>Piano Concerto Op. 30</i></li> <li>— Prominent use of the Skierkowski Turn motif</li> <li>— Distinct use of musical imagery and themes</li> </ul>
Teresa Malecka, “Górecki at the Keyboard” in <i>Górecki in Context</i> (2012), 265 - 273.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Repeating resonances favoured through use of pedal to create colour</li> <li>— Motorism, especially seen in <i>Concerto Op. 40</i></li> <li>— Unconnected with virtuoso technique</li> <li>— Peculiar tonal auras in broadening spaces</li> <li>— Repeating chords and figures “stops time” or “slows time”</li> <li>— “Flash of intuition” rather than intellectual discourse</li> </ul>
Bernard Jacobson, <i>A Polish Renaissance</i> (1996), 200.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Obsessive repetition of notes</li> <li>— Taste for simplicity</li> <li>— Unadorned Polish folk elements/quoting Polish sources</li> <li>— Bringing together listeners with performers</li> <li>— Progressively simplifying material in the course of a piece</li> <li>— Soft, luminous concentration</li> <li>— Revolving, repetitive structures</li> </ul>

**Fig. 2.2. Górecki Crystallization Period Style Traits**

Górecki’s Crystallization Period is marked by a new state of metre and time: phrasing is liberated from Classicism and Neoclassicism. Comparing *Piano Sonata Op. 6* with *Lerchenmusik Op. 53*, Kijanowska finds “Górecki’s approach to form and metre has changed relative to his earlier style...Both elements become freer and less predictable.”<sup>105</sup> This quality is evidenced in the piano repertoire, for example phrase lengths and approach to metre in *Preludes Op. 1* (1955) and *Sonata Op. 6* (1955-56).

<sup>104</sup> Mirka, *Musica geometrica*, 306-311.

<sup>105</sup> Kijanowska, 65.

#### **IV. The Posthumously-Published Piano Works**

Górecki's early works show an integration of the styles of Bartók, Szymanowski, and Chopin, with a decided slant toward Neoclassicism. Górecki's posthumously-published solo piano works also demonstrate Bartókean influence, especially *Z ptasiego gniazda Op. 9a* (*From a Bird's Nest*) when compared to Bartók's short works (*For Children*, *10 Easy Pieces*, and *Bagatelles*) and Górecki's *Piano Sonata Op. 6* when compared to Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro* and *Piano Sonata*.

The *Górecki Piano Album* included the first publication of the following posthumous works of the Early period:

- (1) *Kołysanka / Lullaby for piano Op. 9* (1956, rev. 1980)
- (2) *Z ptasiego gniazda / From the bird's nest Op. 9a* (1956)
- (3) *Różne utwory / Sundry Pieces for piano Op. 52* (1956—61; revised 1988)

Górecka supposes a connection exists between Górecki's Op. 9a and his education, "Perhaps this was an assignment given to him by Szabelski, or maybe he was inspired by his fiancée Jadwiga's pupils...these pieces are an interesting attempt at creating very distinct, different moods using very short forms and simple material."<sup>106</sup> One plausible connection is Bartók's suite *For Children*, Sz. 42 with *Z ptasiego gniazda Op. 9a*, a connection not made by scholars but justifiable by observations of Thomas and Górecka. The following Bartók works are comparable to Górecki's Op. 9a in length, character, dynamics, and pianistic challenges:

<b>Górecki - Birds Nest Op. 9a</b>	<b>Comparable Bartók Works</b>
1: Marsz (March), <i>Allegro non troppo</i>	
2: Piosenka ludowa (Folk Song), <i>Bardzo wolno—molto adagio</i>	10 Easy Pieces Sz. 39, Nr. 8: Slovakian Folksong, <i>Poco andante</i>
3: Stara melodia (Old Melody), <i>Andante con moto</i>	<i>For Children</i> , Book 1 Nr. 31: <i>Andante tranquillo</i>
4: Scherzo, <i>Allegro energico</i>	<i>Bagatelles Op. 6</i> , Nrs. 2 and 5, <i>Vivo</i>

<sup>106</sup> Górecka, *Preface*, iv.

Górecki - Birds Nest Op. 9a	Comparable Bartók Works
5: Druga piosenka ludowa (Second Folk Song), <i>Andante molto</i>	For Children, Book 1 Nr. 3: <i>Quasi adagio</i>
6: Interludium, <i>Lento pesante</i>	10 Easy Pieces Sz. 39, Nr. 1: Dedication, <i>Molto sostenuto</i>
7: Bagatela (Bagatelle), <i>Vivo</i>	Bagatelles Op. 6, Nrs. 2 and 5, <i>Vivo</i>
8: Drugi marsz (Second March), <i>Lento funebre</i>	Bagatelles Op. 6, Nr. 13: Elle est morte
9: Finale à la danse, <i>Presto</i>	Bagatelles Op. 6, Nr. 14: Valse <i>Presto</i>

**Fig. 2.3. Górecki Op. 9a and Bartók Sz. 42: Comparison. Further discussion of Op. 9a and comparable features in Bartók's works is found in Chapter 3.**

The *Górecki Piano Album* contains the first publication of *Mazurki Op. 41 / Mazurkas Op. 41* (1980), a work from the Crystallization period. Op. 41 was part of Górecki's return to keyboard writing after resigning from the Academy. That same year, harpsichordist Elżbieta Chojnacka commissioned Górecki to write *Concerto for Harpsichord or Piano Op. 40*; the keyboard was on Górecki's mind.

Górecka considers *Mazurki Op. 41*, "important enough to be published in its own right as Op 41. A mystical, crystalline piece, it is more a contemplation than a dance, although its form is very clear...three different characters in a conversation enclosed in a delicate formal frame."<sup>107</sup> This was intended to be the first work in a cycle of *Mazurkas*, but Górecki never finished it.<sup>108</sup> Op. 41 features Górecki's crystallized style as described by Jacobson and Górecka: short, simple melodies moving gently.

*Mazurki Op. 41* is an example of Górecki's tendency to use "limited elements and simple material" but preserving Polishness in the music.<sup>109</sup> Kijanowska observes that Górecki is a natural "extension of the Chopin—Szymanowski 'family' of Polish

<sup>107</sup> Górecka, *Preface*, iv.

<sup>108</sup> Archival research. Drafts unavailable for public viewing.

<sup>109</sup> Kijanowska, 70.

composers.”<sup>110</sup> Górecki was often “at home playing mazurkas by Chopin and Szymanowski. He spent some time almost every day at the piano playing his beloved composers’ music,” a memory of Górecka’s that reinforces Górecki’s attachment to Polish musical traditions.<sup>111</sup> Górecki’s *Mazurkas Op. 41* are his piano contribution to the Polish Musical Tradition: a continuation of Chopin and Szymanowski: “the sounds are the same, yet differences abound.”<sup>112</sup>

Górecki’s posthumously-published piano works contribute new understanding to his Early and Crystallization periods. These piano works prove that Górecki was interested in piano works even when his mainstream repertoire was orchestral. There are contrasts between the posthumously-published works (Fig. 2.1) compared to the *Sonata Op. 6* and *Four Preludes Op. 1*. Scholars hear Górecki’s early works as barbaristic<sup>113</sup>, dynamic to the extreme,<sup>114</sup> and sharply-articulated,<sup>115</sup> with strongly-emphasized pulse.<sup>116</sup> The posthumously-published early piano music contains gentler, introspective, experimental, even childlike works: new dimensions in Górecki’s Early period.

The next chapter discusses the Górecki piano repertoire published during his lifetime. Sources in Chapters 1 and 2 will be used to enhance structural, stylistic, aesthetic, and historical understanding of these works.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>111</sup> Górecka, iv.

<sup>112</sup> Malecka, *Górecki and the Polish Musical Tradition*, 245.

<sup>113</sup> Kijanowska, 51.

<sup>114</sup> Thomas, 10.

<sup>115</sup> Górecka, 45.

<sup>116</sup> Jabłoński, 2011.

### Chapter 3 Górecki's Piano Works Published During his Lifetime

Górecki's early style was described in Chapter 2 as aligned with avant-garde trends of the 1950's and influenced by Bartók. Which details of Górecki's early works point to these conclusions? Stylistic tendencies in Górecki's early works are discussed here: dynamics, form, melodic shape, harmony, and phrasing.

#### I. Introduction: Works Published pre-2021

The solo piano works published during Górecki's lifetime were *Four Preludes Op. 1* (1955), *Piano Sonata Op. 6* (1956, rev. 1980).<sup>117</sup> The first piano works are comparable to works Bartók, Szymanowski, and Bacewicz, sharing common harmonic choices, tempi, and textures.<sup>118</sup> Thomas observes, "the compositions of 1955-6 show an assimilation of techniques prevalent in Poland in the post-war decade: a Classical control over form and a Parisian approach to style...it produces an impressive handling of changing metre and a rhythmic vitality."<sup>119</sup>

The influence of composers whose works inspired Górecki during his studies is found in his early piano works. As noted above, Thomas explains that "the earliest published work, the short *Toccata op. 2* (1955), wears its influences confidently on its sleeve — Bartók's *Bagatelles*, early Stravinsky, and a touch of Poulenc's brand of *moto perpetuo* brought together in a harsh amalgam."<sup>120</sup> Górecki amalgamated his interest in Bartók, Szymanowski, and Bacewicz — especially harmonic, melodic, and textural elements — in his piano works of 1955-56.

Evidence for Górecki's assimilation of Bartók, Szymanowski, and Chopin comes from

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<sup>117</sup> There is also an *Intermezzo* published in 2003, which was not written in the Early or Crystallization periods and therefore is not discussed here.

<sup>118</sup> Thomas 1997, Górecka 2012, Tomaszewski 2016, Malecka 2017.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas, *Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: the First Decade*, 10.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas, *ibid.*, 10. See footnote 85. *Toccata Op. 2* is written for four hands.

multiple sources: (1) Górecki's acknowledgment of them as inspirations, (2) performer observations, (3) scholarly observations, and (4) Polish traditions Górecki inherited through his studies. Górecki's composition professor was Bolesław Szabelski, "very much the practical craftsman, steeped in Baroque and Classical procedures, but he had also had the rare benefit of Szymanowski's insights...Szabelski's own predilection up to the mid-1950's, for modal and polymodal writing was to resurface significantly in his protege's [Górecki's] work...made a powerful and immediate impact on Górecki's thinking through his ready adoption of twelve-note procedures."<sup>121</sup>

Górecki remained connected to his National musical roots throughout his career, as evidenced by his use of Polish sources in the *Second Symphony "Copernican" Op. 31* *Third Symphony Op. 36*. As will be seen, his posthumously-published piano works establish Górecki's connectedness to the Polish piano tradition. Interviews consistently point to Polish composers, as well as Grażyna Bacewicz, as central to Górecki's sense of his Polishness.<sup>122</sup> However, other composers of central importance to Górecki were JS Bach, Charles Ives, Béla Bartók, Olivier Messiaen, Franz Schubert, Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Claudio Monteverdi.

The next two sections are readings of the *Preludes Op. 1* and *Sonata Op. 6*, focusing on elements in the scores that relate to Górecki's Early period.

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<sup>121</sup> Thomas, *Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: the First Decade*, 10.

<sup>122</sup> Tomaszewski, *[Wszystko ma swój początek]*, 243-44.



## **II. Preludes Op. 1: Sonoristic Extremes**

Drafted just before he began his first composition degree at the Katowice Higher School of Music, *Four Preludes Op. 1* was Górecki's first published solo piano piece. Earlier sketches of solo piano works exist but there are no plans to publish them.<sup>123</sup> *Four Preludes Op. 1* are connected with 'Sonorism' as defined by Chomiński and Zieliński.<sup>124</sup> Zieliński lists the hallmarks of Sonorism as follows:

- (1) sound colour enriched by new means of articulation
- (2) extreme dynamic contrasts
- (3) sound shape in time and space (length, width, thickness, pattern)
- (4) various means of motion and stasis, motion in three-dimensions
- (5) combinations and simultaneous layers of sound
- (6) integration and variability of sound image through time.<sup>125</sup>

Though the *Preludes* predate Sonorism, they contain some of its hallmarks. Thomas calls Górecki's Early piano works "sound-mass music," which became classified in the 1970's as music of the "New Polish School." The New Polish School was defined by a change in musical values: "in place of melody, harmony, metre and rhythm, sound became the form-creating, tectonic agent. Pitch class ceased to have a vital role: colour became the dominant factor in music, sound shape became the essential architectonic unit instead of a motif."<sup>126</sup> Each of Górecki's *Four Preludes Op. 1*, contains "sound-mass" elements, although they were written sixteen years before Thomas defined 'sound-mass music' as a term. Op. 1 shows that as a student, Górecki integrated Sonorism into his Early works, which became identifiable with the "New Polish School" of the 1970s, closer to his Crystallization period.

Górecka notes that Op. 1 "creates a distinct mini-sonata cycle. This understanding of

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<sup>123</sup> Thomas, *Górecki*, 150-174. Confirmed by Górecka in 2022.

<sup>124</sup> Thomas, *Polish Music Since Szymanowski*, 160-1.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 161. Cited from Zieliński 1966.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 161.

the whole of Op. 1 is supported by the mutual relationship of all four pieces, the role of harmonics, common features of melody and tempo, and the character of individual preludes.”<sup>127</sup> Thomas corroborates that Op. 1 as a sonata cycle, including a first movement in modified sonata form, a slow second movement, a scherzo, and finale.<sup>128</sup> Specific features link the *Four Preludes* with Sonorism and the New Polish School: dynamic extremes, combined sound layers, sharp articulations mixed with smoothness, and experimentation with space-time relationships between sound masses.

### Prelude 1: Molto Agitato

The most developed of the cycle, this *Prelude* is monothematic, rooted in a rhythmic-harmonic relationship between the first theme and the rest of the *Prelude*.



**Fig. 3.1. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, I. Allegro energico (mm. 1-8).**

<sup>127</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 29. Original: “Za takim rozumieniem całości opus 1 przemawia wzajemny stosunek wszystkich czterech utworów, rola harmoniki, wspólne cechy meliki oraz tempa, a także character poszczególnych preludiów.”

<sup>128</sup> Thomas, *Górecki*, 5.

By the seventh measure, Górecki introduces a repeating perfect fourth motif, which is the basis of the *Cantabile, meno mosso* theme in the development.

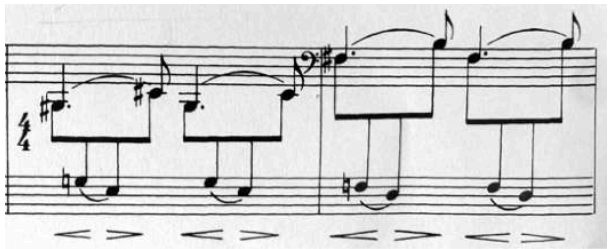

Exposition: Theme 1	Development: Theme 1
	

Fig. 3.2. *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, I. Allegro energico* (mm. 7-8, mm. 30-31).

The exposition (Fig. 3.3) culminates in a descending chromatic scale in fourths separated by an octave, followed by clangorous double-diminished chords leaping four octaves and subsiding into silence after the major second A — G-sharp in octaves. The dynamics of this passage are of an extreme volume, from *fff* to *sfff* (one of Górecki's commonest habits is to add the letter "s" before the dynamic *ff* or *fff*, symbolizing a sharper attack following a crescendo). This drastic textural and registral change closes the exposition.



Fig. 3.3. *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, I. Allegro energico* (mm. 25-29).

in the development (Fig. 3.4), Górecki explores harmonic possibilities by widening the basic motif from a perfect fourth to a perfect fifth, major sixth, and major seventh. The accompaniment (alto-tenor-bass ranges) spans the majority of the piano's registers.

A) Theme Basic Form (mm. 30-31)	B) Expansion to Major 7th (mm. 32-33)
<p><i>Cantabile, meno mosso (andante)</i></p>	
A) Theme Basic Form (mm. 34-35)	B) Expansion to Major 7th (mm. 36-37)

**Fig. 3.4. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, I. Allegro energico* (mm. 30-33, mm. 34-37). Sound shapes broaden from perfect fourth to perfect fifth, then major sixth to major seventh.**

Górecki thickens the texture to the extent that three staves are required to represent the sound masses used. Here, he reuses the fourths from the exposition codetta (Fig. 3.4, 3.3): while the global texture of this passage is wide, local ranges in single voices are within one octave. The bass offers a third sound plane (a link to Sonorism), but the undulating motion created by ascending and descending melodic gestures is germane to the New Polish School. Sound layers are part of Górecki's construction in three-bar structures, one structure from mm. 38-40, the next from mm. 41-43.



**Fig. 3.5. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, I. Allegro energico* (mm. 38-43).**

Rising quartal chords and octaves (Fig. 3.6, mm. 48-49) lead to a bursting *Allegro e ritmico* quasi-cadenza climax in bitonal harmony: C major chords intertwined with B-major quartal chords (Fig. 3.6, mm. 50-54). Harmonic alterations between C major and B major are tightly wound: the prominent tones — C major, accented — on the white keys, the interspersed B major quartal chords on the black keys. Sonorism is indicated by accents on one sound mass (C major chords). This passage is poised between Górecki's Early works and his developed preference for revolving, repetitive sound structures. That preference is exemplified by repeated double-diminished chords that conclude the development (Fig. 3.6, m. 55).

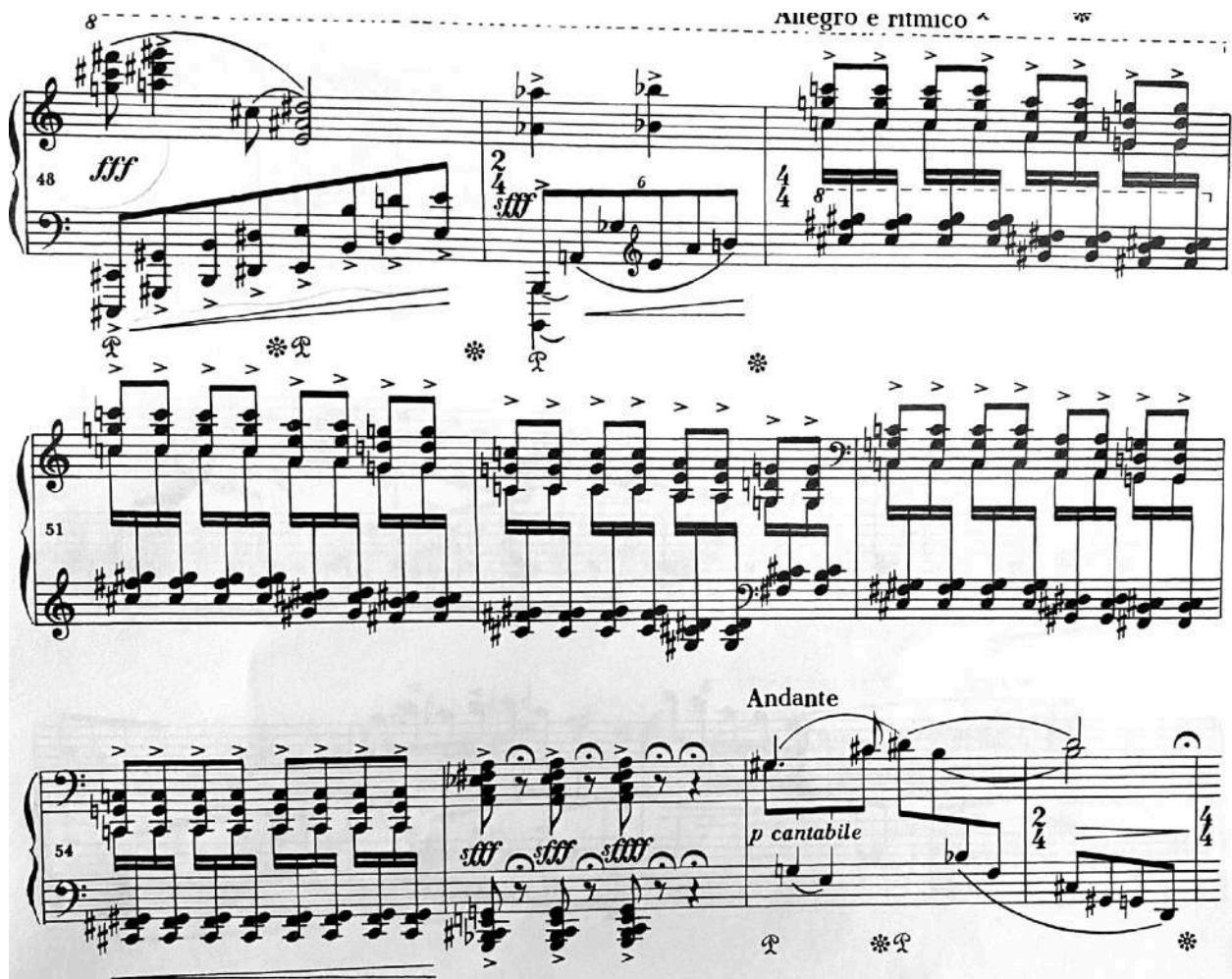


Fig. 3.6. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, I. Allegro energico* (mm. 48-57). Cadenza from mm. 50-55.

Górecki's high-intensity dynamic markings followed by another set of high-intensity dynamic markings are a stylistic signature: the final bar of alternating C-major and B-major chords makes a crescendo toward *fff*, but the dynamics again intensify over the last chords (the loudest of the development), marked *ffff*. Górecki then contrasts high-intensity dynamics with devices of pervasive stillness. Górecki uses repeated rests with fermatas which produce an entirely silencing effect, and transitions using the development first theme (Fig. 3.4) before arriving at a pair of *pianississimo* bitonal chords (G major and C-sharp key centres).



**Fig. 3.7. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, I. Allegro energico (mm. 58-61). Dynamic swelling within the quietest possible extremes.**

### Prelude 2: Lento - recitativo

The folk-inspired melody of this *Prelude* is accompanied by archly-articulated sevenths, moving toward a harshly dissonant culmination. Górecka hears a sad mazurek or “direct kujawiak”, an impression deepened by the *Prelude*’s triple meter.<sup>129</sup>



**Fig. 3.8. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, II. Lento - recitativo (mm. 1-12).**

<sup>129</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 31. Original: “Melodia o ważnym kolorycie ludowym, jakby smutny mazurek czy nawet wprost kujawiak (to wrażenie pogłębia również metrum 3/4).”

This work includes fifth-fourth chords and accompaniments that are almost clusters. These accompaniments feature vertical structures that occasionally have horizontal movement in one voice, creating quasi counterpoint.



Fig. 3.9. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, II. Lento - recitativo* (m. 7-8).

However, the element that most often indicates Górecki's move toward coloristic music that became typical of the "New Polish School" is found in the second statement of the theme, when a high-register quartal chord resonates over a mid-range fifth and bass pedal point.



Fig. 3.10. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, II. Lento - recitativo* (mm. 12-15).



Harmonies are important at the climax, where Górecki reserves his boldest gestures. Aside from the *ff*- and *fff*-markings, the dense seventh chords and voice exchange at this culmination are punctuated by dense textures (m. 24).



Fig. 3.11. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, II. Lento - recitativo* (mm. 20-24).

Górecki introduces a device he used in elsewhere: the extension of a chord through one of its pitches, held for a long duration after the chord has dissipated or potentially with additional length through a fermata (Fig. 3.12, m. 25-26). Mozart used this technique in *Violin Sonata in E minor*, among other pieces. After the chord dissipates in bar 25 (the chord is marked *fff*), a single note bridges the gap between the chordal texture and single-line kujawiak melody.<sup>130</sup> Górecki cyclically repeats himself, the melody of the last phrase is taken from the first (mm. 1-4), this time one octave lower and accompanied by a new bass, *il basso marcato*.



Fig. 3.12. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, II. Lento - recitativo* (mm. 25-32).

<sup>130</sup> The slowest of the five Polish national dances (Polonez, Mazurek, Oberek, Krakowiak, Kujawiak), Kujawiaks sound swaying, calm, lyrical, typically in *tempo rubato*. Furthermore, Górecki does not hear this as a “single-line” but as a polyphonic structure that begins on the G in m. 25 and continues with the addition of the bass voice in m. 27.

At 44 bars, *Prelude 3: Allegro scherzando* is the shortest in the set. It is bitonal, beginning in F-sharp major and G major (later in C major and B major). It features frequent metric changes and connects *attacca* to the fourth *Prelude*. The third *Prelude* is Neoclassical, with triads defining the tonal centres of bitonal sections in four-bar structures articulated à la Mozart (two one-bar phrases plus one two-bar phrase).

**Prelude 3: *Allegro scherzando*, mm. 1-4, bitonal G major and F-sharp major**



**Prelude 3: *Allegro scherzando*, mm. 5-8 bitonal G major and F-sharp major**



**Fig. 3.13. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, III. *Allegro scherzando* (mm. 1-4, mm. 5-8).**

Thomas's description of *Scontri* (1960) applies to this short piece: "A great part of its energy comes from its restless and metered rhythmic character. When this is *combined with an unpredictable pace of change in other parameters*, particularly timbre and texture, the music lives on a combination of volatility and apprehension."<sup>131</sup> Volatility does not apply to this *Prelude* but spontaneity or improvisation may: metric changes occur thirteen times in fifty seconds. Furthermore, each voice contains its own articulation - one staccato, another legato - (Fig. 3.14a), slurs do not align (Fig. 3.14b), rhythms are written in two possible realizations (Fig. 3.14c).

<sup>131</sup> Thomas, *Górecki*, 187. My emphasis.

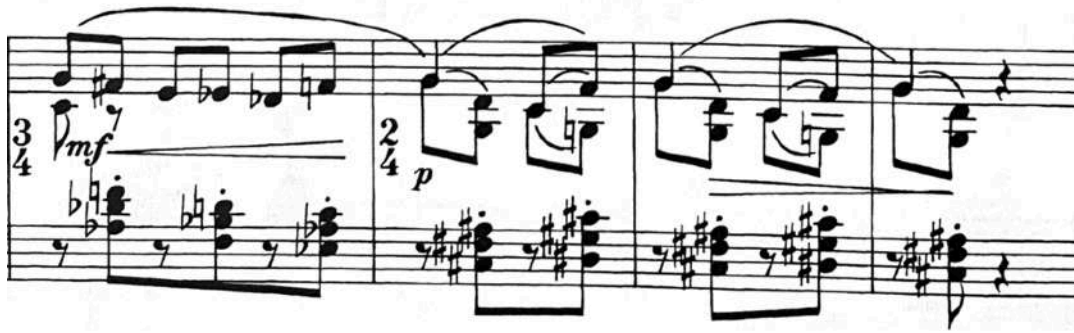


Fig. 3.14a. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, III. Allegro scherzando (mm. 37-38).



Fig. 3.14b. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, III. Allegro scherzando (mm. 17-18).

Prelude 3: m. 9	Prelude 3: m. 13	Prelude 3: m. 22

Fig. 3.14c. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, III. Allegro scherzando (mm. 9, 13, 22).

Górecki's cyclic choices continue in the last phrase, which returns to the opening bitonal harmonies: G major and F-sharp major. After a four-bar phrase in solid chord figurations, the chords spin out into ascending broken chords predicting the figurations of the fourth *Prelude*:

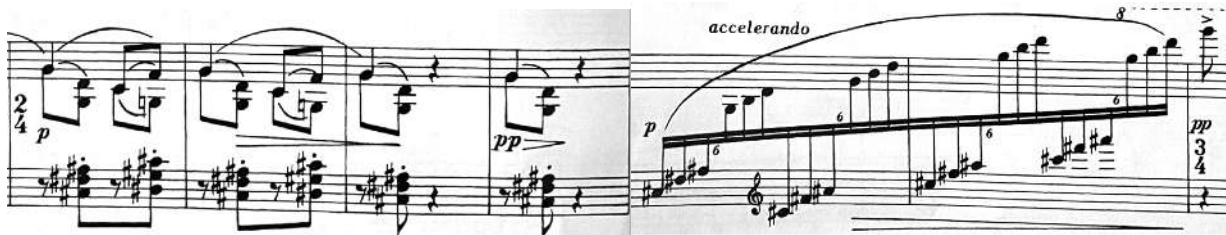


Fig. 15. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, III. *Allegro scherzando* (mm. 38-43). Bitonal G major and F-sharp major, as in mm. 1-2.

Prelude 4: Molto allegro quasi presto sempre legato e marcato

Malecka writes that the fourth movement of Chopin's *Piano Sonata Op. 35* was a model for this fourth *Prelude*, specifically through its stormy character revolving around B-flat (linking both works to the Górecki's first prelude of *Op. 1*, which starts and ends on the same pitch).<sup>132</sup> Górecka confirms Górecki's fascination with Chopin *Op. 35*, evidenced in the youthful set of *10 Preludes, Nr. 7* (unpublished).<sup>133</sup> The initial motif features the same perfect fifth — B-flat-F — as in the first *Prelude*:

Prelude 1: Allegro energico	Prelude 4: Molto allegro quasi presto

Fig. 3.16. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, I. *Allegro energico* (m.1) and IV. *Molto allegro quasi presto* (m.1).

The fourth prelude features wide registral sweeps and extreme virtuosic leaps, which it has in common with the third movement of *Piano Sonata Op. 6*. Phrase endings are

<sup>132</sup> Malecka, *Górecki and the Polish Musical Tradition*, 244-45.

<sup>133</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 34.

marked with specific sound shapes: hairpins indicate the final notes of each figuration end at heightened dynamic levels.



Fig. 3.17a. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, IV. Molto allegro quasi presto* (mm.12-13).

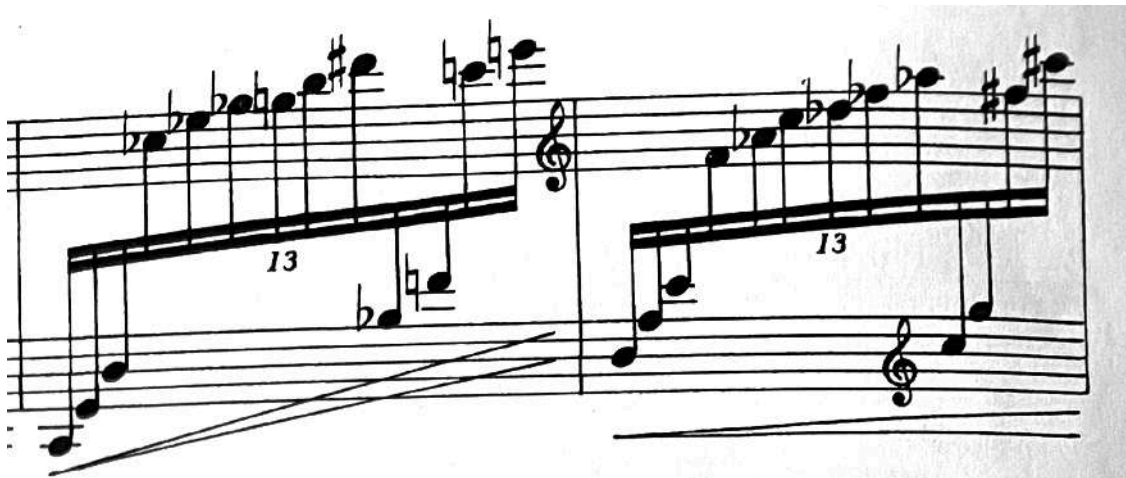


Fig. 3.17b. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, IV. Molto allegro quasi presto* (mm. 16-17)

The running sixteenths in this *Prelude* indicate what Thomas called the *moto perpetuo* style à la Poulenc which Górecki integrated into his early works.<sup>134</sup> Harmonic inventions in this *Prelude* include the use of quartal chords recalling the second *Prelude*, now arpeggiated rather than blocked, cascading up and down the piano in wavelike gestures. These cascades happen twice and cyclically connect to seventh chords used

<sup>134</sup> Thomas, *Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: the First Decade*, 10.

in each of the previous *Preludes*: *Prelude 1* (mm. 90-99), *Prelude 2* (mm. 3-8, mm. 14-23), and *Prelude 3* (mm. 1-2, mm. 4-5, m. 19, mm. 38-39).



Fig. 3.18a. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, IV. *Molti allegro quasi presto* (mm. 28-29).

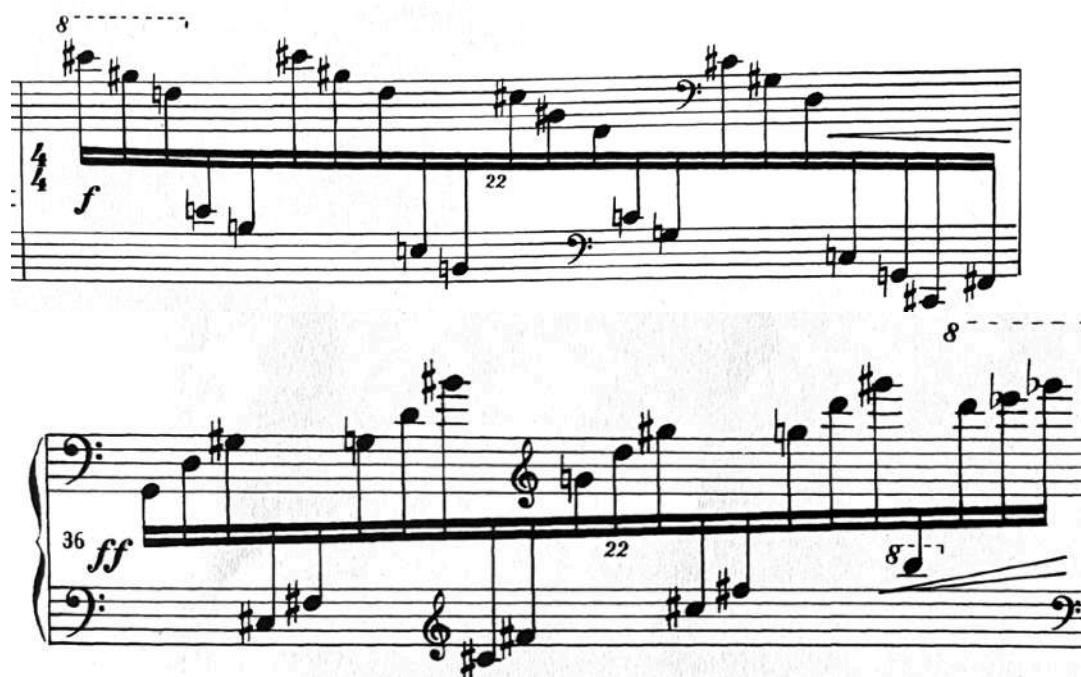
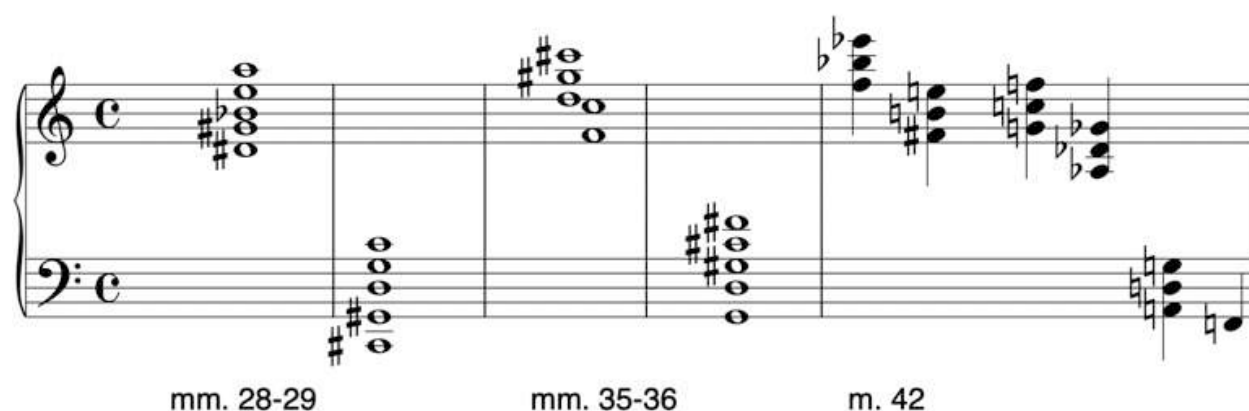


Fig. 3.18b. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, IV. *Molti allegro quasi presto* (mm. 35-36).



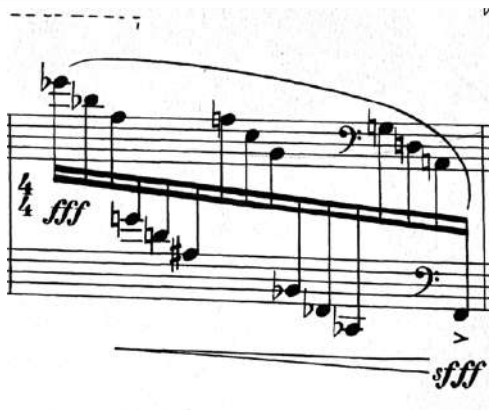

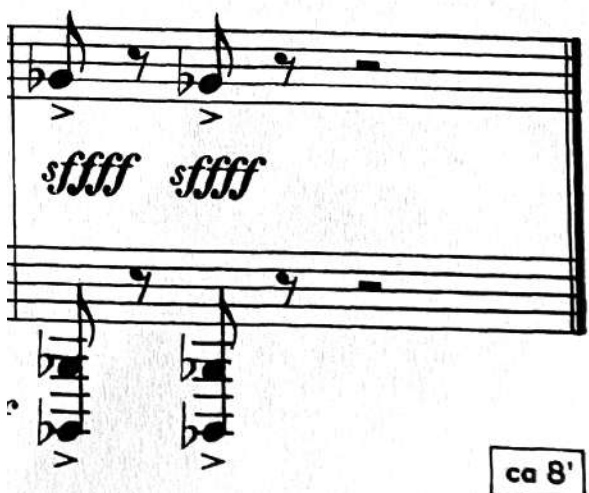
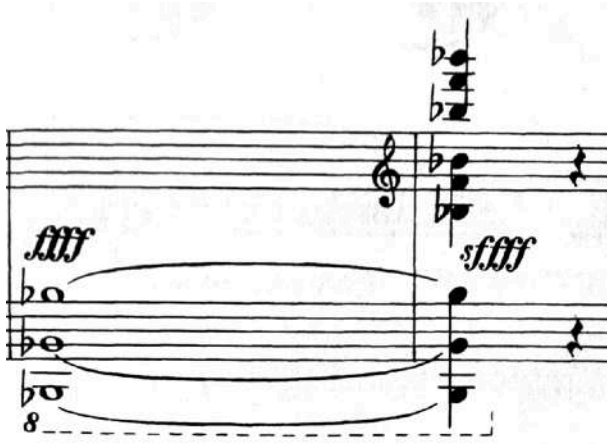
The shape of the arpeggiated chords is strikingly indicative of the Geometric period: each arpeggiated series has a matching pattern of downward broken chords followed by upward broken chords (Fig. 3.18a, 3.18b). The rhythmical groupings of these arpeggiated chords usually follows a 3-note followed by 2-note pattern (Fig. 3.18a, 3.18b). The configuration of these passages is as pianistic (hand-choreography) as it is geometric.

These harmonic cascades are the most dramatic gestures in the fourth prelude (Fig. 3.18a, 3.18b). Harmonies change at the lowest and highest points of each cascade: the impression is that of constantly fluctuating sound. Effectively, broken chords function as sheets of harmony, pointing to the lower and upper limits of the sounds possible on a piano.



**Fig. 3.19. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, IV. Moltī allegro quasi presto*, mm. 28-29, mm. 35-36, m. 42 cascade gestures and chord changes.**

The fourth *Prelude* ends with a downward cascade that combines extreme dynamic registers with articulations: in one measure, a crescendo from *fff* to *sffff*, the final note of the cascade is accented. The defining cyclical moment of the fourth *Prelude* is in its last two bars, where Górecki recalls the final moments of *Prelude 1*. In this phrase, Górecki uses chromatic fourths descending and closes on the same B-flat bass octave (Fig. 3.3 and Fig. 3.5). Curiously, in the first *Preludes*, Górecki writes an 8 indicating the lower octave, but in the fourth *Prelude* he writes ledger lines to indicate the same pitch.

<p><b>Prelude 4, m. 42</b></p> 	<p><b>Prelude 1, mm. 25-27</b></p> 
<p><b>Prelude 4, m. 43</b></p> 	<p><b>Prelude 1, mm. 101-102</b></p> 

**Fig. 3.20. Górecki, *Cztery Preludia Op. 1*, IV. Molto allegro quasi presto closing material, compared to Prelude 1 closing material.**

Górecki's *Four Preludes Op. 1* can be understood cyclically through their common elements. Elements occur independently of one another and in combination. Often, Górecki prefers element combinations. Twelve unifying elements in the *Four Preludes Op. 1* are:

- (1) one theme developed into contrasting themes and groups;
- (2) quartal harmonies beneath simple melodies;
- (3) high dynamic levels, approaching the limits of the piano's capability;



- (4) contrasting articulations and slurring in simultaneous voices;
- (5) sharply contrasting dynamic effects;
- (6) use and re-use of similar intervals to mark sectional closures;
- (7) defined planes of sound and harmony in bitonal passages;
- (8) culminations that interrupt established rhythmic flow;
- (9) vertical harmonic blocks infrequently decorated with moving tones;
- (10) frequent changes of metre;
- (11) texture changes occurring with dynamic changes and registral leaps;
- (12) use of registers to create individual layers of sound;

When playing and hearing the *Preludes Op. 1*, such unifying elements become clearer over the course of the performance. Rather than a group of four separate miniatures, they should be played in their entirety, especially the last two, because of the *attacca* linking them. Elements creating a long-range plan are lost if only selected preludes are performed.

*Four Preludes Op. 1* are Sonoristic, motif-based works. Their prominent features include dramatic dynamics, wide registral deployment, cyclical figures, revolving harmonic waves, irregular metres, and sound as the form-creating agent. The use of the entire keyboard and fullest possible dynamic range in figurations, dynamics, and articulations justify reading this work as sound-mass music.

### III. Piano Sonata Op. 6

Górecki wrote *Piano Sonata Op. 6* over the summer after his first year at the Higher School of Music. Op. 6 is dedicated to “J.R” (Jadwiga Rurańska, Górecki’s then-fiancée). Górecki revised it twice: in 1984 and 1990. Like Op. 1, Górecki’s *Piano Sonata Op. 6* “wears its influences confidently on its sleeve.”<sup>135</sup> The sonata’s textures, dynamics, intervals, and motivic shapes resemble Bartók’s *Piano Sonata Sz. 80*, yet Górecki uses them differently. Examples below show that Górecki achieved his own pianistic style in *Sonata Op. 6*. The sonata’s structure is typical of Classical sonatas but its dynamic range marked a turning point in Górecki’s music: sound structure, volume, and precise sound quality indications continue as hallmarks in his miniatures and large-scale works. Comparisons below show essential musical qualities in Górecki *Sonata Op. 6* and Bartók *Sonata Sz. 80*.

#### I. Górecki *Sonata Op. 6* I: Allegro molto con fuoco. Texture, Melodic Range

The initial sounds summarize the material used throughout the *Sonata*: dense chords and homophonic octaves (or unisons).



Fig. 3.21. Górecki *Piano Sonata, I. Allegro molto, con fuoco*, mm. 1-3.

<sup>135</sup> Thomas, *Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: the First Decade*, 10.

The “prevailing hyperactivity”<sup>136</sup> in the first movement is created by its rhythms and dynamics. The first theme contains eighth-note pulsations beneath melodic pedal-tones broken by syncopations and dotted-rhythm upbeats. The dotted rhythm was likely inspired by Bartók’s use of the same rhythm in the first theme of his *Sonata*, energized by a hairpin and *forte*.



Górecki First Theme (mm.8-9)	Bartók First Theme (mm. 1-2)
	

Fig. 3.22. Comparison: Górecki and Bartók first theme dotted rhythms.

Górecki’s dotted rhythm differs from Bartók’s: Górecki positions this rhythm as an anacrusis to strong downbeats; Bartók’s dotted rhythms are downbeats (Fig. 3.22). Bartók’s dotted rhythms emphasize the middle of the bar (beat 2). Górecki’s downbeat rhythmic emphasis is limited to the beginning of the first phrase. The pedal-point octaves characterizing the main melodic structures are interrupted by syncopated octaves (m. 12, Fig. 3.23).



<sup>136</sup> Thomas, *Górecki*, 5.





**Fig. 3.23.** Górecki *Piano Sonata, I. Allegro molto, con fuoco*, mm. 7-13.

A similar construction is found in the melodic shape of Górecki's first arrival point on a G-sharp, Bartók's on a G-natural. In both sonatas, the first culmination is marked *sforzando* (Górecki uses *sfz*), preceded by the interval of a third (Bartók uses the tones E—F-sharp—G, Górecki uses a minor third, E—G followed by G-sharp, substituting G—G-sharp for the expected F-sharp-G).

Górecki First Theme (mm.8-9)	Bartók First Theme (mm. 13-14)



**Fig. 3.24.** Górecki and Bartók first arrival point.

The bass figuration is punctuated by interval combinations: Górecki uses alternating fourths; Bartók uses thirds, fourths, and fifths. The bass figures are arranged similarly: (1) the interval appears on the first half of the beat, and (2) a single note on the second half of the beat.

Górecki First Theme (mm. 10-11)	Bartók First Theme (mm. 2-3)
	

**Fig. 3.25. Comparison: Górecki and Bartók bass figurations.**

Górecki's and Bartók's first themes are outlined by a third: in Górecki it is the major third; in Bartók, the minor third. Thirds punctuate the culmination of the first motif in both sonatas, but in Górecki thirds are more significant in the global melodic shape. These thirds appear at structurally important places throughout the first movement.

Górecki First Theme (mm.8-9)	Bartók First Theme (mm. 13-14)
	

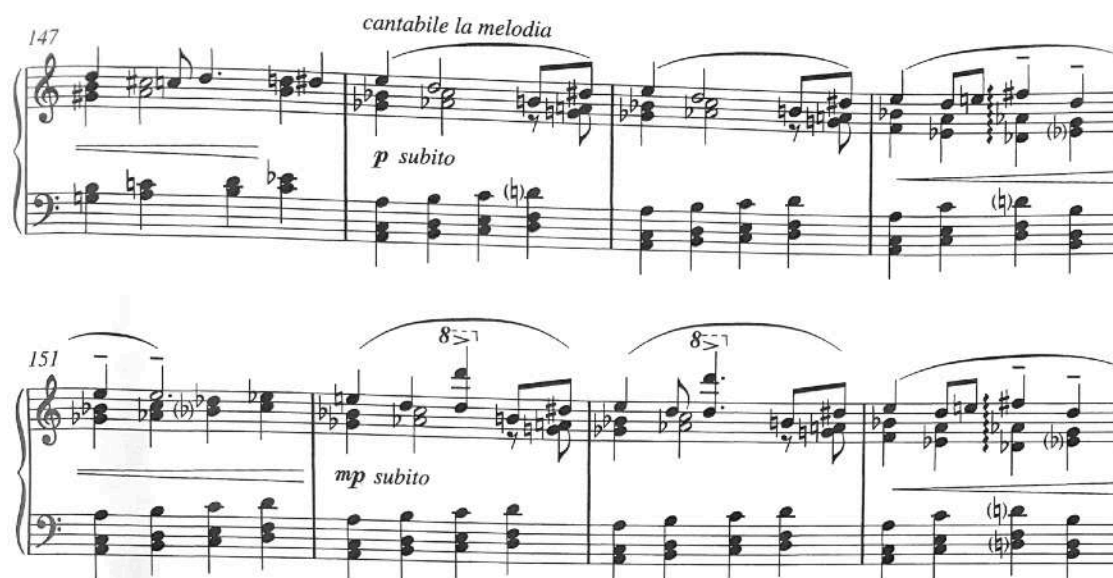
**Fig. 3.26. Comparison: Górecki Op. 6 and Bartók Sz. 80 first theme range (third).**

The development features a slower version of the first theme, again structured by major thirds. The main change of colour is Górecki's transposition of the first theme octaves into unisons, following a rigorous expositional closure. The exposition's vigorous octaves, give way to the development in softer unisons. In the two-bar transition between expositional closure and development, a single E within a long-lasting chord evolves into the development first theme. This technique of chordal resonance evolving into a single note recalls *Prelude 2* (Fig. 3.12) and is vital to *Sonata's* second movement. A three-bar *molto rit.* broadens the space between essential expositional closure and development as the melody changes from one-octave range into four octaves (Fig. 3.27, m. 139).



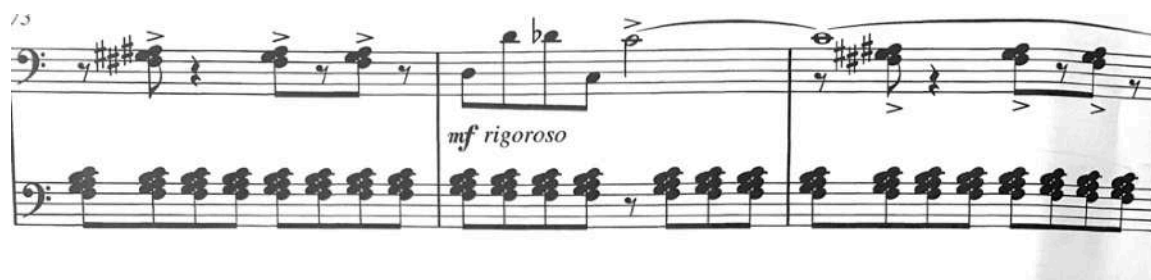
**Fig. 3.27. Sonata Op. 6: End of exposition (mm. 131-138), and Development theme starting at m. 139, an augmentation of the first theme.**

The slow theme (*molto lento*) continues within the range of a third (Fig. 3.27. mm. 140, 142) and develops through unisons into a bitonal theme 1 featuring registral leaps and a bass ostinato in quarter notes.



**Fig. 3.28. Sonata Op. 6: Development of slow theme (mm. 147-162).**

The accompaniment is a rhythmic augmentation of the exposition second theme: an ostinato in groups of four, in A-natural minor and D-natural minor tetrachords (Fig.3.28, bass, mm. 147-48). The development's accompaniment is a rhythmic augmentation and harmonic alteration of the ostinato in the exposition second theme, which features clusters (Fig. 3.29).



**Fig. 3.29. Sonata Op. 6: Second theme ostinato (mm. 73-75).**

Another element connects cyclically with the third movement: the octave interjections at mm. 152, 153, 160, and 161. For the time being, these appear to invoke registral contrasts, but when considered alongside folk elements as in the last movement, they contain another ontological potential of folk singing in exceptionally high registers (Fig. 3.30, Fig. 3.45).



**Fig. 3.30. Sonata Op. 6: Development theme (mm. 152-53, mm. 160-61).**

Górecki uses the elements above in the subsequent movements, including melodic ranges in thirds and fourths, enhanced use of time and space devices, and indicators of folk traditions.

## II. Lento grave e corale: Sonic Space, Instrumental Limits

Descriptions of this movement generally focus on its calmness, a moment's rest between the first and third movements. Sobriquets for the second movement include “a momentary respite”<sup>137</sup> and a “meditation between the aggressive Allegro and the very driven last movement.”<sup>138</sup>

This movement foreshadows Górecki's later style in three ways:

- (1) texture frequently features unisons,
- (2) motifs repeat/revolve around one another,
- (3) harmonies feature minor seconds against background seventh chords.



Fig. 3.31. *Sonata Op. 6*, II. Grave pesante e corale, mm. 1-5

While Bartók's *Sonata Sz. 80* had a powerful impact on Górecki, Op. 6's second movement begins almost emptily, compared to Bartók's.



Fig. 3.32. Bartók *Sonata Sz. 80*, mm. 1-3.

<sup>137</sup> Thomas, *Górecki*, 5.

<sup>138</sup> Kijanowska, *Music of Barbarism*. 56.



Górecki's twenty-four measure second movement renders it less than half the length of Bartók's sixty-two measures. In performance, Górecki's lasts approximately 2.5 minutes, Bartók's five. Both composers use silence to create sonic space between sections and Górecki uses melodic tones that appear in the centre of the chords that accompany them (see Fig. 5.1 for "internals" of the melody). Texturally, this creates a woven soundscape: the melody may appear above, below, or in-between the notes of the harmony.

Górecki, II. Grave pesante e corale (mm. 13-14)	Bartók, II. Sostenuto e pesante (mm. 17-18)

Fig. 3.33a. Comparison: Górecki and Bartók second movements, texture of melody and harmony intersecting in register and range.

Górecki, II. Grave pesante e corale (mm. 16-17)	Bartók, II. Sostenuto e pesante (mm. 19-20)

Fig. 3.33b. Comparison: Górecki and Bartók second movements, texture of melody and harmony intersecting in register and range.

Górecki differs from Bartók in his use of prolonged chords that disintegrate into one chord tone, lengthened by a fermata (Fig. 3.34). This gives an impression of a large sound mass evaporating into a small sound mass.



Fig. 3.34. *Sonata Op. 6, II. Grave pesate e corale*, mm. 11-12.

Bartók's version of this device is a series of rests separating two phrases; this seems to have inspired Górecki's use of long pauses to punctuate sonic space. Górecki's modification of Bartók's rests allows the final sonic traces of a chord tone to deplete into a single voice, which disappears before the next theme appears (Fig. 3.34, compare with Bartók's rests in Fig. 3.35).



Fig. 3.35. Bartók *Sonata*, II. *Sostenuto e pesante*, mm. 6-8 and mm. 17-19.

Górecki uses chords in two ways that create repetitive, revolving effects: (1) literal repetition and (2) alternation (found in *Symphony Op. 36* third movement). In his early style, Górecki used “alternating chords”<sup>139</sup> after establishing harmonic context by repetition of those chords: alternating chords create colour changes between familiar motifs. Thomas finds an ideal example of these in *Trzy pieśni*, No. 1: *Do Matki*.

**Example 4** *Trzy pieśni*, no.1: ‘Do matki’



**Fig.3.36. “Alternating chords” used in ‘Do matki’ as defined by Adrian Thomas.**<sup>140</sup>

As in the first movement, *II: Grave pesante e corale* is organized by an interval that defines its theme. Here, it is the major second, but the use of fourths is seen in the accompaniment. The accompaniment includes repeating quartal harmonies: either melodic fourths or quartal chords in varying pitch classes that colour the melody.

<sup>139</sup> Thomas, *Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: the First Decade*, 11.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

Górecki, II. Grave pesante e corale (m.8)	Górecki, II. Grave pesante e corale (m. 13)

Fig. 3.37. Quartal chord in m. 8 against an A-flat—G-flat melody in lower voice; Perfect Fourth in m. 13 against D-flat—E-flat melody in lower voice.

Górecki's fermatas also create sectional (Fig. 3.38) or movement closure (Fig. 3.39). Instead of including specific rest counts, Górecki writes fermatas over his rests and includes three fermatas at the close of the second movement. The final chord is given a fermata and resonance lines on each note, indicating that the sound depletes entirely before the final rest, with a fermata.

Fig. 3.38. Sonata Op. 6, II. Grave pesante e corale, mm. 16-18.



**Fig. 3.39. Sonata Op. 6, II. Grave pesante e corale, mm. 23-24.**

A fermata over the double-bar line prolongs the silence between the second and third movements. The fermatas indicate a high level of discretion inherent in this text, for Górecki typically “goes beyond marking precise tempo markings to giving the duration for each section or movement of his pieces.”<sup>141</sup> These fermatas indicate that the end of the second movement has a pronounced emptiness.

This structural decision applies Górecki’s is a strong connection between his Early and Crystallization period works: “Górecki appears to be aiming to express a sense of timelessness in keeping with the meditative, prayerful nature of the text...he is also concerned with shaping the architecture of the piece as a whole, generally seeking to achieve the maximum effect from the dramatic contrasts he creates between the work’s different sections.”<sup>142</sup> Górecki’s fermatas enhance of the third movement’s powerful opening: a clangorous stomping- and singing-style outburst after a *pianissimo* chord fading into a prolonged silence.

<sup>141</sup> Harley, *Charting the Extremes*, 3.

<sup>142</sup> Harley, *Charting the Extreme*, 3.

### III. Allegro vivace (ma non troppo): Folk Elements, Dynamic Range

The third movement relies less on Bartókian pianistic and harmonic elements than the previous two movements. Here, Górecki appears to assert Polish folk tradition.

Elements traceable to Podhale (Highlander) song and dance are found in Górecki's use of rhythm, intervallic range, dynamic range, and accompaniment figures. All the more interesting is that Górecki did not mention Polish folk music in his notes about the *Sonata*, nor had he visited Podhale before writing it. Marks of Polish folk tradition in this movement are discussed in more recent research.

The first theme is described by Thomas and Kijanowska as a “stylized mazurka” at its roots and the contrasting Podhalean folk music.<sup>143</sup> But there is a distant possibility of another Polish national dance in this theme: the Polonez (Polonaise).



Fig. 3.40. *Sonata Op. 6*, III. Allegro vivace (ma non troppo), mm. 1-6.

The theme's two sixteenths preceding four eighths (Alto) echo the Polonaise rhythm:



Fig. 3.41. Polonez (Polonaise) standard rhythm. Maja Trochimczyk, “Polonez (Polonaise)” <https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/dances/polonaise/>. Polish Music Center.

<sup>143</sup> Thomas, 5; Kijanowska, 60.

The rhythm of the first theme is that of a standard Polonaise (*Polonez*), but the accompaniment and harmonies are atypical of the Polonaise's noble character. The melodic gestures, registral leaps, and rhythms indicate elements of Podhalean folk dancing and accompaniments played by a small ensemble (*kapela*<sup>144</sup>):

Typical Podhale songs have a two-part structure, with each part made up of a five-measure musical phrase (although quadruple phrase structures are also sometimes present), syncopated rhythms and duple metre...In addition, Podhale dances are well known for their acrobatic elements, including jumps, knee bends, *krzesanie*<sup>145</sup>, jumping over shepherd's axes, and heel tapping.<sup>146</sup>

Górecki's use of high and low registers in the second theme recalls folk bands and dance choreographies "known for their acrobatic elements."<sup>147</sup> The theme captures spontaneous dance movements through sudden metric and registral changes (Fig. 3.42). These changes distinguish between sounds representing 'music played by a *kapela*' and 'dance gestures' accompanying the music. The second theme is organized in two-bar groups: the first bar evokes the *kapela*, the second bar a leaping figure with syncopated quarter notes, evoking a *krzesanie* or *hołubiec*.<sup>148</sup>



**Fig. 3.42. Sonata Op. 6, III. Allegro vivace (ma non troppo), mm. 37-38. Second Theme two-part gesture: first bar *kapela* (folk quartet) and second bar *hołubiec* (heel-clicking).**

<sup>144</sup> Small ensemble: folk quartet with a *basy* (three-stringed violoncello) and three violins.

<sup>145</sup> Striking/hitting.

<sup>146</sup> Kijanowska, *Music of Contrasts and Tradition*, 58.

<sup>147</sup> Kijanowska, *Music of Barbarism*, 58.

<sup>148</sup> Heel-tapping/clicking.

In the development, the third theme contains elements of rhythmic stability that contrast with the second theme. The third theme's rhythm resembles the exposition's first theme (Fig. 3.40), accompanied by ostinato major-second dyads leaping in ninths. The combination of ostinato with accented eighths in the upper-staff tenor voice creates a *ground-bass* effect beneath the Polonaise rhythm.



**Fig. 3.43. Sonata Op. 6, III. Allegro vivace (ma non troppo), mm. 38-44.**

The third theme's rhythmic regularity is challenged by interjections of the second theme. The third theme's character is based on frequent and unpredictable time signature changes accompanied by registral leaps. Here, Górecki pushes timing spontaneity to the limit: in twelve bars (mm. 54-65), metre changes occur eight times, including 5/8, 3/4, 2/8 and 2/4; furthermore, clef changes occur nine times. Vast distances separate the bass and soprano contents, including upward and downward leaps toward and away from the main motif (recalling the *kapela* at m. 55).





**Fig 3.44. Sonata Op. 6, III. Allegro vivace (ma non troppo), mm. 54-67.**

Although readings of folk traditions (including Podhale) are attractive in this movement, readings of this movement as experientially influenced by folk music are not factually supported: Górecki had never been to Podhale by the time he wrote *Sonata Op. 6*.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Górecka, conversation, October 2022.

Thus, it is remarkable that many melodic shapes, harmonies, and registral effects connote folk song and dance as evocatively as they do.

The music of Podhale, the music of the Highlander, is also strikingly different from that of other regions of Poland. The most obvious differences are the duple metre and the characteristic vocal performance style: male voices sing in a loud high-pitched tone, sometimes singing falsetto along with female voices. This distinctive technique...has a harsh, raw timbre, which sometimes makes a strange impression on outsiders who often interpret Highlander singing as shouting.<sup>150</sup>

Górecki incorporates elements that strongly indicate high-pitched singing, particularly in the recapitulation. Here, the usual *F-sharp* tune is sounded one octave higher than the first theme with an *F-sharp 8va* sign every two bars.

Fig. 3.45. *Sonata Op. 6, III. Allegro vivace (ma non troppo)*, mm. 92-97.

<sup>150</sup> Kijanowska, *Embracing Folk Material*, 32.

Górecki's octaves at the outer limits of the texture recalls the first movement (Fig. 3.28). Chords are likewise bitonal as in the first movement. Rhythmic placement of the chords follows suit as well. Górecki's homorhythmic accompaniments align with aspects of the first movement: chords fall on the same emphasized strong or syncopated beats (Figs. 3.25, 3.28, 3.45). Accents enliven these figures with an enthusiasm common to Polish national folk dances.

Kijanowska argues for barbarism in the third movement's conclusion, citing its "extreme dynamics...use of chords and jumps" and "melodic material in the lower register."<sup>151</sup> This reading is plausible, but another one is possible too: singing (or shouting, in Fig. 3.28, 3.45) and stomping (*tupania*) are found at the culmination of the movement. These elements are reinforced by dynamics requiring an incredible force to create the dynamic indication: *ffff* growing into *Sforzatissimo* over a six-beat timespan. In the last bars the same dynamic growth is required in just two beats.



**Fig. 3.46. Sonata Op. 6, III. Allegro vivace (ma non troppo), mm. 168-175.**

<sup>151</sup> Kijanowska, *Music of Music of Contrasts and Tradition*, 62.

A slender, quiet figure between the extreme dynamics of mm. 169-71 and mm. 174-75 has one of two indications in the entire *Sonata* of the character *dolce* (the other is in the second movement, Fig. 3.33a).

123 Tranquillo – dolce  
mp

127  
poco p

132  
(p) allarg. rit. pp (ma sonore)

2/4

Fig. 3.47. *Sonata Op. 6, III. Allegro vivace (ma non troppo)*, mm. 123-136.

Kijanowska defines these phrases as *przyśpiewka* couplets: a folk tune sung at village parties, during ceremonies or festivals, the *przyśpiewka* can be used as a dance accompaniment.<sup>152</sup> This phrase acts as a brief respite between the boisterous recapitulation and coda, recalling the second movement's place between two energetic movements. This phrase offers a space for contemplation through long-lasting chords,

<sup>152</sup> PWN Polish Dictionary: <https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/przyśpiewka.html>. Accessed July 14, 2022.

ending with a fermata (Fig. 3.47). The third movement amalgamates attributes of the first two movements: an integration of Bartók in some respects, but ultimately reaching a uniquely Góreckian style through Polish inspirations, textures, and dynamics.

The *Sonata* concludes cyclically: the last pitch class of the third movement includes the same pitch class found at the end of the first movement: F. The third movement provides greater closure through its use of the entire F-major chord in first inversion.



**Fig. 3.48. *Sonata Op. 6, I. Allegro molto*, mm. 311-314.**



**Fig. 3.49. *Sonata Op. 6, I. Allegro vivace (ma non troppo)*, mm. 172-175.**

These readings of Op. 1 and Op. 6 underscore cyclical elements Górecki's Early piano solo works. The details are meant to show new insights about important structural and performance components of Górecki's piano works (dynamic range, articulation, form, figuration) and provide context for the posthumously-published piano works introduced in Chapter 4. Three of those works were composed during the same period as *Preludes Op. 1* and *Sonata Op. 6*.

Chapter 4 introduces Górecki's posthumously-published piano works for the first time.

## Chapter 4 The 2021 *Górecki Piano Album*: New Discoveries

For more than six decades, the piano works introduced in this chapter were archived in Górecki's Katowice studio. These works were published in the *Górecki Piano Album*, an advancement in 20th and 21st century piano repertoire. Piano works from Górecki's Early and Crystallization periods in the *Album* are discussed in this chapter, including their context, creation process, style traits, and score contents. Piano works in the *Album* from Górecki's Last period are excluded. Primary sources are included (composer drafts and notebook entries) to enhance first contact with this new knowledge.

### I. The Posthumously-Published Piano Works

Study of Górecki's posthumously-published piano works is enhanced by the presence of primary sources, which show how often Górecki revised and recomposed. The piano works of the late 1950s were revised as many as thirty-three years after Górecki's initial drafts of them. Although fewer in number and smaller in size than his chamber music or orchestral works, Górecki valued his early piano solo works, possibly as a time capsule of his initial spark as a composer. Most of the posthumously-published piano works were written during Górecki's composition studies (1955-61), one during his Crystallization period (1980), two in the 1990s, and his final piano work in 2008. Anna Górecka introduces these works in the *Album*:

Most of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki's solo piano pieces date from the second half of the 1950s. It was a happy time for him: his painful childhood was past, his hard work as a primary school teacher was over and no more was the piano a forbidden fruit as in his early years. Having begun his studies with the charismatic Bolesław Szabelski, the world of music was finally open to him. During this time he also met Jadwiga Rurańska, a piano student who, four years later, became his wife.

What did the piano mean to Górecki? I think, 'piano' first and foremost meant his mother, whom he lost on the very day of his second birthday.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Górecka, *Preface*, iv.

Motherhood is a topic in Górecki's music, including *Trzy Pieśni Op. 3 (Three Songs for Voice and Piano, Op. 3)*, *Ad Matrem Op. 29* and *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs Op. 36*.<sup>154</sup> Op. 3 and Op. 29 are dedicated to the memory of Górecki's mother, Otylia. None of the early piano works contain dedications to Otylia Górecka, the topics of motherhood, mothers, or mother-child relationships. These works were motivated by Górecki's joyous early twenties: his long-awaited chance to study music, new career possibilities, and romantic life.

Malecka notes that composers usually write for the instrument that first inspired them: Górecki did precisely that.<sup>155</sup> His posthumously-published piano works were first mentioned by Thomas (1997) in entries marked “unpublished”, “incomplete”, or both.<sup>156</sup> Górecki's posthumously-published piano pieces from the Early period expand the number of musical styles found in this period. These works evidence Górecki's interactions with Dodecaphonic style, miniature forms, pedagogical pieces, folk music, folk dance, cyclical forms, rhythmic devices, humour, phrase-length, texture, and harmonic invention. Specified works introduced in Sections III, IV, V, and VI are in the table below.

Year	Title	Opus
1956	Kołysanka / Lullaby	9
1956	Z ptasiego gniazda: drobne utwory fortepianowe / From a Bird's Nest: Nine short piano pieces	9a
1956-61	Różne utwory / Sundry Pieces	52
1980	Mazurki / Mazurkas	41

**Fig. 4.1. Górecki's posthumous piano works discussed in this chapter.**

<sup>154</sup> Thomas, *Górecki: Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: the First Decade*, 11.

<sup>155</sup> Malecka, *Górecki at the Keyboard*, 262-263.

<sup>156</sup> Thomas, *Górecki*, 150-174.

Górecki's last three solo piano works (*Intermezzo*, *Moment musical*, and *Dla Anny / For Anna*) are excluded because they are from his Last period, which is beyond the scope of this research.

## **II. Profiles and Discussions of the Posthumously-Published Piano Works**

The following introductions to posthumously-published piano works are based on a multi-method approach to understanding them:

- (1) performance training, score reading, consultations with Prof. Anna Górecka,
- (2) prior knowledge of Górecki's piano works published during his lifetime,
- (4) primary source study, translations of primary and secondary sources, and
- (4) mentions of these works when they were still unpublished.<sup>157</sup>

Knowledge of Górecki's posthumously-published piano works brings his repertoire into a state of greater depth and breadth. These works were important in Górecki's path toward substantial compositions. Artistically, they are a mixture of the Polish Tradition to which Górecki was connected through his studies, fascination with Polish folk music, and interest in composers contemporary to him. For each work introduced in this chapter, below are profiles of their creative or circumstantial origins, characteristics, musical elements, and stylistic traits.

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<sup>157</sup> Thomas 1997 and Górecka 2012.



### III. *Kołysanka Op. 9* / Lullaby, Op. 9

**Place and Date on Manuscript:** Rydułtowy, 26 November 1956

**Revision(s):** Katowice 14 June, 1980

Pulse/Tempo	Character	Form	Bars	Górecki's Timing
4/8, <i>Molto lento</i>	<i>cantabile e sostenuto</i>	ABA+Coda	48	4:00'

**Fig. 4.2. Summary of *Kołysanka Op. 9*.**

#### Creative and Circumstantial Origins

Little is known of Górecki's personal thoughts on this piece. It is dedicated to Jadwiga Rurańska and was written in one day. Two characteristics define its Neoclassical style: (1) foursquare phrases with additions demarcating sectional closure, and, (2) irony of its mild title yet dissonant harmonic content. Górecki elongated the B-section on 14 June 1980, having originally written a three-bar instead of four-bar first theme. The revision maintains four-bar phrases, but Górecki added a fifth bar to the last phrase of the B-section (Fig. 4.3, mm. 39, added in empty stave above second system):



**Fig. 4.3. *Kołysanka Op. 9*, manuscript (mm. 27-41). Numbered bars indicate Górecki's added measures above the main text and the resulting changes to measure numbers.**

## Musical Elements

Op. 9's main features are its soft dynamic frame (*mezzo piano*, *piano*, *pianissimo*) and prominent dissonances: minor seconds, major sevenths, and major ninths. The first four-bar phrase is a duet between the Tenor and Bass followed by a four-bar theme:



Fig. 4.4. *Kolysanka Op. 9*, mm. 1-8.

In the second theme, phrase lengths – indicated by slurs – broaden with mathematical precision: four beats (mm. 19-20), five beats (mm. 21-23.5), then six beats (mm. 23.5-26.5). This phrase's broadening structures bring about a contrasting new theme that settles on a rhyming closing turn (E—D—E, Fig. 4.5 mm. 17.5-19) in the first and second phrases:



Fig. 4.5. *Kolysanka Op. 9*, mm. 17.5-18, upper staff.



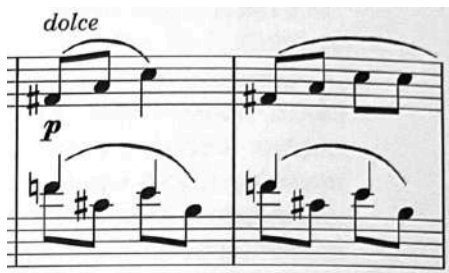
Fig. 4.6. *Kolysanka Op. 9*, mm. 19-26. Rhyming E-D-E figure in mm. 23.5-24 with codetta in mm. 24-26.

The last phrase is highly contrapuntal, with an E-flat bass pedal point (Fig. 4.7, mm. 42.5-45) expanding the first phrase's bass E-flat (Fig. 4.4, m. 4).

Fig. 4.7. *Kolysanka Op. 9*, mm. 37-48.

### Stylistic Content

Górecki remarked that a lullaby style “is the emotional quality that the rhythm and the melody create.”<sup>158</sup> *Lullaby Op. 9* is a case of modern Neoclassicism, a classification enriched by multiple descriptions. Albright describes Neoclassical style as: “rarely easygoing, often tense, the Neoclassicists self-consciously advertise their contemporaneity through slight or gross deviations from the old-fashioned.”<sup>159</sup> Górecka calls Op. 9 a “slow, hypnotic piece.”<sup>160</sup> This may be attributed to the steady and slow ostinato in eighths, or the fact phrases featuring the main theme begin *piano*. Cross-relationships (C-natural and C-sharp) between the bass and soprano add harmonic tension to the atmosphere:



**Fig. 4.8. *Kołysanka Op. 9*, mm. 5-6.**

Melodic shape and dynamics differentiate *Op. 9* from the aggressive works of Górecki's Early period. *Kołysanka's* melodic shape is gentle, *dolce*, and its arrival point is always a lingering tone over the eighth-note accompaniment, which stops only twice, for brief pauses (Fig. 4.6, m. 26; Fig. 4.7, m. 39). Texture, when used at extreme ranges, stays within the realm of articulate softness (*tenute*, never accents; *legato* in all voices). This work has pedal indications from the composer, specifically written for the final phrase, ostensibly due to its wide registral deployment, resulting in long-range resonances and overlapping sounds. Górecki's revision and recomposition in 1980 signals that *Op. 9a* is present in the Early and Crystallization periods.

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<sup>158</sup> Trochimczyk, *Composing is a Terribly Personal Matter*, 61.

<sup>159</sup> Albright, *Modernism and Music*, 276.

<sup>160</sup> Górecka, *Preface*, iv.

#### IV. Z ptasiego gniazda Op. 9a / From a Bird's Nest Op. 9a

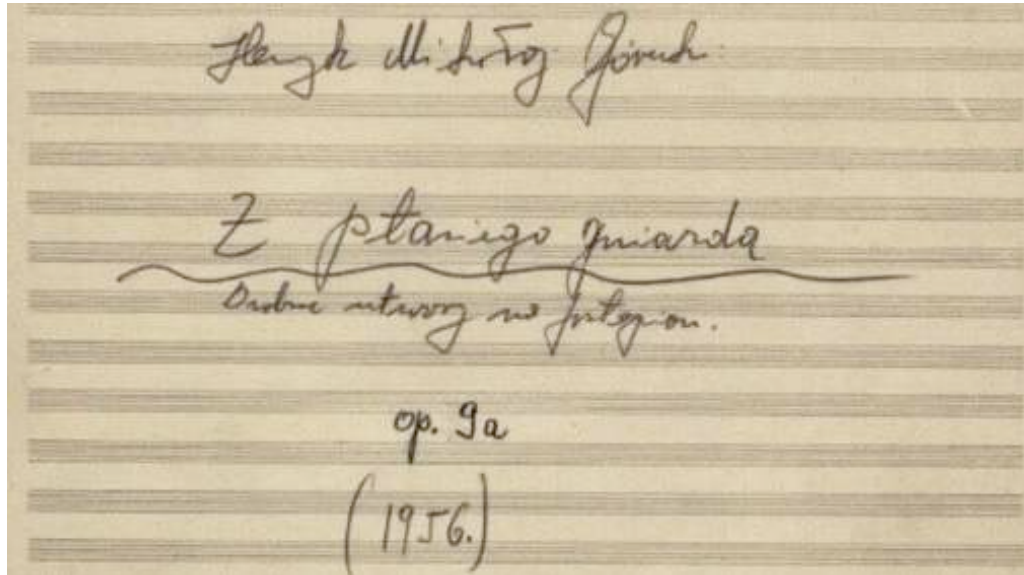


Fig. 4.9. Autograph title page: *Z ptasiego gniazda*.

Place and Date on Manuscript: Rydułtowy, November 1956				
Movement	Pulse/Tempo	Form	Bars	Górecki's Timing
1: Marsz (March)	<i>Allegro non troppo</i>	AB+C	24	8:00' for entire set
2: Piosenka ludowa (Folk Song)	<i>Bardzo wolno—molto adagio</i>	AB	10	
3: Stara melodia (Old Melody)	<i>Andante con molo</i>	AB+C	24	
4: Scherzo	<i>Allegro energico</i>	ABA	20	
5: Druga piosenka ludowa (Second Folk Song)	<i>Andante molto</i>	ABA	26	
6: Interludium	<i>Lento pesante</i>	AB+C	15	
7: Bagatela (Bagatelle)	<i>Vivo</i>	ABA	37	
8: Drugi marsz (Second March)	<i>Lento funebre</i>	AB+C	15	
9: Finale à la danse	<i>Presto</i>	ABA	45	

Fig. 4.10. Summary of *Z ptasiego gniazda*, Op. 9a.

### Creative and Circumstantial Origins

*From a Bird's Nest Op. 9a* is a set of miniatures Górecki completed in 1956, but wrote over the two years prior. This set has the character of children's works, rather different from Górecki's *Preludes Op. 1*, *Toccata Op. 2*, and *Sonata Op. 6*.<sup>161</sup> Górecki did not write specified comments for Op. 9a: its exact origins or inspirations are unknown. He wrote it during his engagement to Jadwiga Rurańska, who made her career as a piano teacher primarily of children.

Some works in Op. 9a last less than thirty seconds. Each piece in the cycle has didactic elements, a distinct character, and relationship to the cycle. In Chapter 2, Op. 9a was compared to Bartók works for children of similar size and character (Fig. 2.3). The similarities between individual works of Op. 9a are described below. Górecki reported no revisions to Op. 9a: it was published based on the autograph manuscript.

### Musical Elements and Stylistic Contents

Op. 9a as a cycle can be divided in three short groups based on tempo relationships<sup>162</sup> between individual works:

- (1) Group 1: Nr. 1 Fast, Nr. 2 and 3 Slower
- (2) Group 2: Nr. 4 Fast, Nr. 5 and 6 Slower
- (3) Group 3: Nr. 7 Fast, Nr. 8 Slow, Nr. 9 Fast

The third group is an exception to the tempo pattern established by the first two groups (*Fast—Slow—Slow*). Op. 9a is a natural consequence of Górecki's fascination with Bartók's cycles for children. In Op. 9a, each piece is a *précis* of pianistic skill and style traits found in the intermediate and advanced piano literature, such as:

- (1) Quick rhythms in fast tempi,
- (2) Slow, legato lines of singing quality (especially folk melodies),
- (3) Contrasting articulations in both hands,

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<sup>161</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 49.

<sup>162</sup> *Attacca* connections between certain movements reinforce its cyclical nature.

- (4) Dynamic ranges *subito* and long *crescendi* or *diminuendi*,
- (5) Quick changes of metre, articulation, and hand configurations,
- (6) Modal, chromatic, clusters, tertian, and quintal harmonies,
- (7) Contrasting textures between the melody and accompaniment,
- (8) Range of articulations: staccato, legato, tenuto, accent, resonance effects, *sf*, *sfz*, *marcato*, and these in combination with slurs.
- (9) Varied phrase lengths and expressive terms according to the character of each piece, especially *dolce* and *cantabile* for slow, folk melodies;
- (10) Question of pedal use in works without pedal markings yet character and tempo indicate pedal is used.

Nr. 1: *Marsz* (March) in 4/4 opens with broad dynamic range and rhythm that, when performed in tempo, resembles a rhythmically augmented Polonaise (mm. 1-2). Phrases are structured in two-bar groups: the first two bars are a question (bar 2 lands on the supertonic), the second two bars an answer (bar 4 lands on the tonic):



Fig. 4.11a. *Marsz*, mm. 1-4.

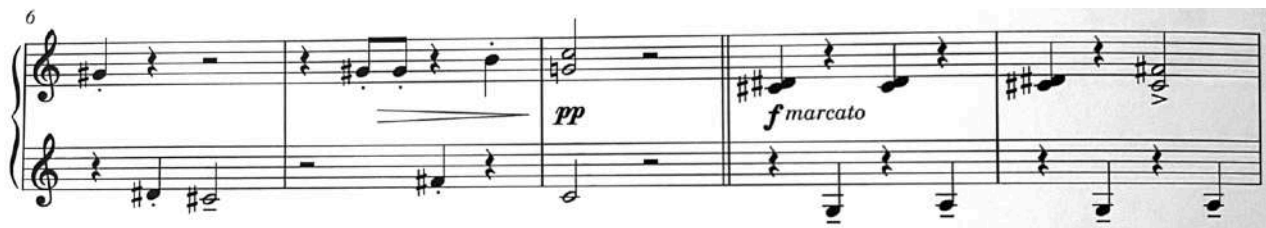


Fig. 4.11b. *Marsz*, mm. 6-10.

The fifth bar shifts unexpectedly to B major for another two-bar question. The B major shift is answered even more unexpectedly by a soft leading tone resolution to C major (m. 8). Here, rhythms in eighth and quarter notes are of a twofold nature: (1) they reinforce music theory and rhythmic training, (2) they contribute to the march's character.

To create a climax, the rhythmic energy intensifies in a written-out *accelerando* (Fig. 4.12, mm. 19) on the same bitonal chord (fourths in C-sharp and thirds in G major) followed by two accented *sfz* chords. The codetta is a four-bar diminution of the opening: the first two bars are followed by the seventh and eighth, this time in *forte* with a crescendo to *sfz*.



Fig. 4.12. *Marsz*, mm. 16-24.

Górecki placed a movement of simplistic technical demands at the opening of the cycle. The main technical skill is alternation between right and left hands (mm. 1-19). Though *Marsz* has the opposite character to the next piece, *Piosenka ludowa*, they have the same metre, allowing the performer to feel four-quarter pulses between the end of *Marsz* and beginning of *Piosenka ludowa*.

Nr. 2: *Piosenka ludowa* (Folk Song) in 4/4 is written in slow-moving quarters in a legato line. The English translation of the tempo *Bardzo wolno* is "Very slow" and may be read



as an instruction to count this music in quarters. Górecki uses the second and third bars to explore sound colour in harmonic changes distant from the tonic: by bar 4, Górecki modulates to F-sharp minor and marks hairpins during the modulatory third bar.



Fig. 4.13. *Piosenka ludowa*.

Górecki adds a pair of *przyśpiewki* couplets (mm. 7-8, mm. 9-10) which dovetail the preceding six-bar structure (4+2 bars). The form is AB+C: A-section is a four-bar phrase, B-section is a two-bar phrase, and C-section is a four-bar *coda*. Each phrase starts softly (*piano*), swells mildly, and returns to the initial dynamic. The dynamic range is limited to *p*—*pp*. One marking connects to later Górecki works: *pp* followed by diminuendo (mm. 9-10): this phrase begins very softly (*pianissimo*) and softens as the tempo slows.

Górecki uses a similar accompaniment to *Marsz* for the last four measures of *Piosenka ludowa*: alternating hands with the bass falling on syncopated beats. The pianistic-musical skill highlighted here is varying degrees of soft sound. Górecki writes both tenuto signs and the term “ten” (m. 9), almost certainly a didactic choice. The *rit.* (m. 10) is valuable for young pianists learning to connect two pitches by (1) listening to

decaying sound, (2) using the pedal subtly, and (3) re-striking the repeated pitch accordingly.

Nr. 3: *Stara melodia* (Old Melody) in 2/4 is also a study in soft playing, concerning the *sempre piano e staccato* ostinato of the lower voice accompanying a *cantabile* theme. Musically this has much in common with *Piosenka ludowa*: minimal dynamic range (*pp* – *p* – *mp*), with small inflections shown by hairpins. Contrasting articulations in each part show the nuances in each sound layer.

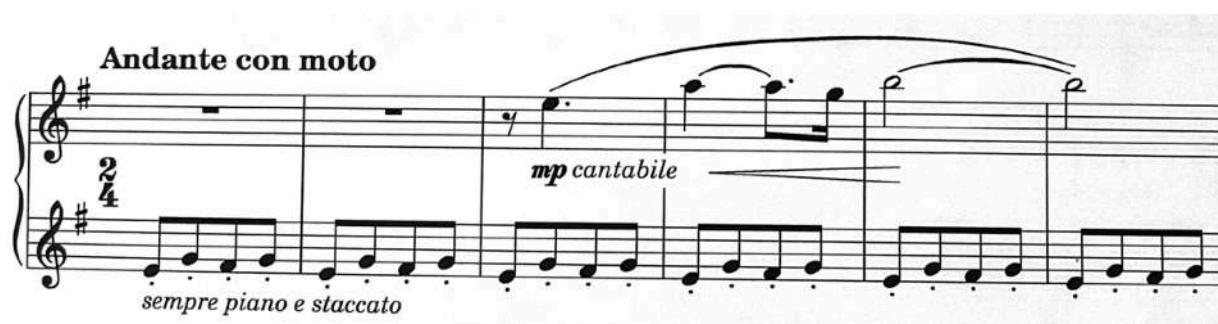


Fig. 4.14a. *Stara melodia*, mm. 1-6.

The lower voice requires clear articulation and deft pedal use (if pedal is used at all). An extended period of similar notes indicates that intentional accentuation of certain notes (eg. E–F-sharp) or clever use dynamic shape are necessary to ensure the accompaniment does not deaden the pulse or burden the texture. As in *Piosenka ludowa*, the last phrase makes a *diminuendo* from an already soft dynamic (*p*) as the pace gradually slows (here, *poco rit*).



Fig. 4.14b. *Stara melodia*, mm. 19-23.

Dynamic control is crucial to performing this piece because of the prominent long-lasting melodic tones (Fig. 4.14a/b). These melodies require the accompaniment to decrease in volume so the melody tone remains audible (perhaps a reason for the four-bar *diminuendo* mm. 20-23). The nostalgic character of *Stara melodia* is joined *attacca* with the next work, *Scherzo*, an enthusiastic interjection into a sullen atmosphere created by two previous works which end resignedly.

Nr. 4: Scherzo in 4/4 and 3/4 is the shortest work of the set. Its character is derived from the tempo *Allegro energico* and slowness of the preceding two works. *Scherzo* features rapid changes of meter and articulation, from accented dyads to short units of slurred, unison groups of syncopations (Fig. 4.15, mm. 1-2). The dynamics are *forte* and *fortissimo*, with hairpins for the shortest motifs (mm. 11-13).

Some passages divide materials between the hands: right hand playing only on black keys, left hand on white keys, with close proximity requiring hand-over-hand technical choreography. This piece resembles an étude in two basic ways: (1) its texture rapidly alternates between intervals and single notes, and (2) accents appear most notes and intervals. Essentially, the pianist's technique must remain active throughout. Similar works to *Scherzo* are *Nr. 7 Bagatela* and *Nr. 9 Finale à la danse*.



**Fig. 4.15. Scherzo, mm. 1-10.**

Nr. 5: *Druga piosenka ludowa* (Second Folk Song) in 2/4 begins by re-using the interval on which *Scherzo* finishes: a perfect fifth.



**Fig. 4.16a.** Perfect fifths in *Nr. 4 Scherzo* (m. 20) and *Nr. 5 Druga piosenka ludowa* (m. 1).

This simple, elegant melody is marked *dolce e cantabile*, with slurs of varying length. The main theme's harmonies alternate between A minor and D Major.



**Fig. 4.16b.** *Druga piosenka ludowa* main theme, mm. 1-6.

The second theme features two Baroque elements: counterpoint and ornamentation. In bar 9, a bass line enters in parallel tenths with the soprano; in bar 12 contrary motion appears between soprano and bass. Mordents are found in the soprano (mm. 11 and 13) and a short *triller* realized in sixteenths at bar 15.

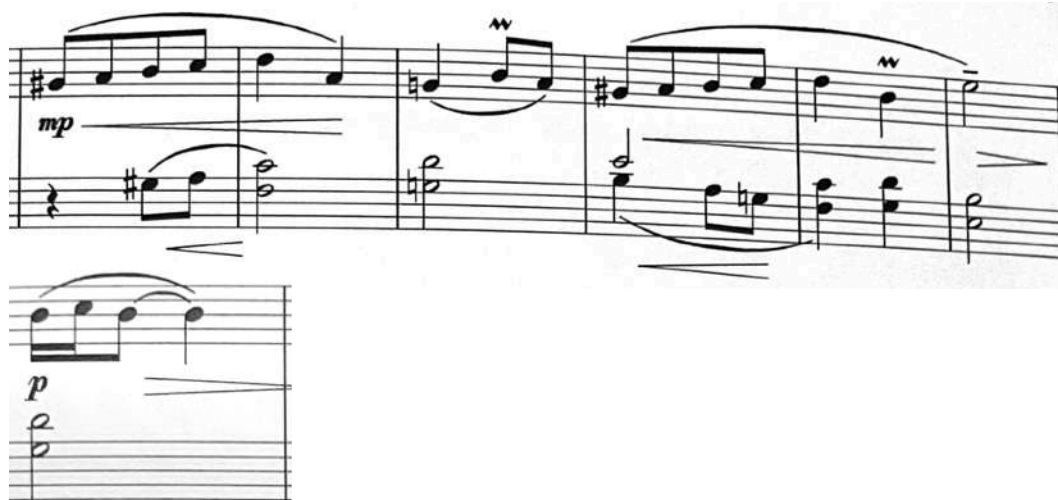


Fig. 4.16c. *Druga piosenka ludowa*, mm. 9-15.

The *rit.* at the end of *Druga piosenka ludowa* confirms Górecki's preference for slow pieces with slower endings. Another indication of cyclical intention is found in the *attacca* at the end of this piece, creating a connected *ritardando* between the previous piece, present piece, and next piece. The three pieces form a sub-unit of the cycle: Nr. 4 "Allegro energico", Nr. 5 "Andante molto", Nr. 6 "Lento pesante."

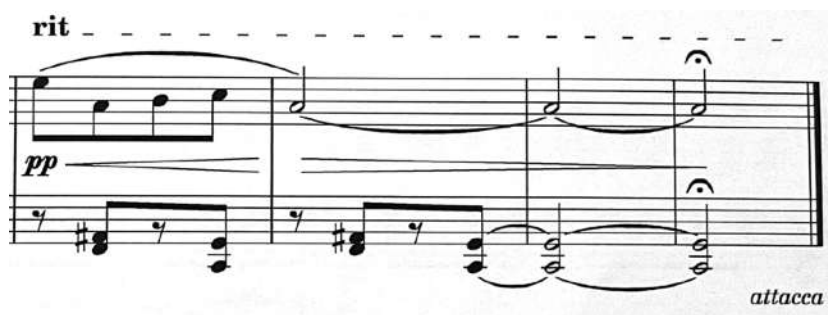


Fig. 4.17. *Druga piosenka ludowa*, mm. 23-26.

Nr. 6: Interludium in 4/4 is the slowest of the middle sub-group, its character continues in the vein of the previous piece and its first interval shares a common *E* with the end of *Druga piosenka ludowa*. The cycle is continued through forceful interruption of the

previous mood: although the tempo is slower and more contemplative, *Interludium* begins with *forte* accented intervals and tertian chords.



Fig. 4.18. *Interludium*, mm. 1-5.

*Interludium*'s main musical element is one harmonic sound mass fading into another. This resembles future Górecki works which use harmonic blocks of sound with resonance lines (m. 3). This piece recalls *Marsz* in its wide dynamic range: *forte* and *piano*, but in a vastly different character. *Interludium*'s dynamic changes are rather blocks of sound than gradual changes to different dynamic levels. Another Górecki hallmark used here is heavy, accented articulations in a thick texture, contrasted by disappearing tones into near-silences (Fig. 4.19). The final sounds connect *attacca* to the the next piece, *Batagela*, an energetic follow-up.



Fig. 4.19. *Interludium*, mm. 12-15.

Nr. 7: Bagatela (Bagatelle) in 2/4 has the greatest challenge of the set, found in Górecki's other piano works: rapidly-repeating chords in one voice while a single melody follows with sharply contrasted articulation (Fig.3.29). Górecki marks tempo *Vivo*, the articulation of the four-note clusters *leggiero*. The left hand has the melody, marked *marcato*. Górecki's themes with accents tend to be marked *marcato*, and he usually reinforces accents with *sforzando* (Fig. 4.21).



Fig. 4.20. *Bagatela*, mm. 1-10.

The four-bar B theme is a vivacious series of minor sevenths alternating between once and twice per measure (Fig. 4.21). Here, Górecki uses contrasting articulations and harmonies compared to the first theme, which was *poco marcato* in diatonic E-flat major. The A theme reappears bluntly at bar 24 (Fig. 4.21).

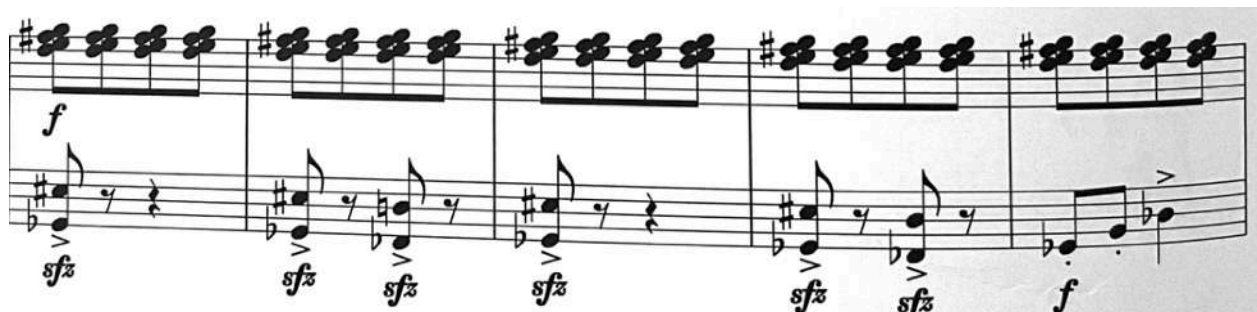


Fig. 4.21. *Bagatela*, mm. 20-24.

The third element commonly-found in Górecki's larger and later works is the use of *subito* dynamics even if figurations or textures remain the same. Although preceded by a brief pause, the *piano subito* at bar 15 is a drastic contrast that requires a quick-working technical and musical ability to execute without slowing the tempo (Fig. 4.22).

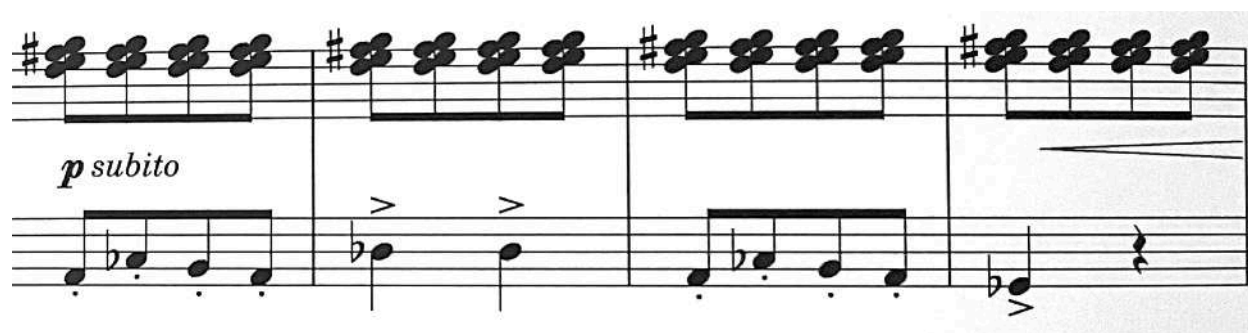


Fig. 4.22. *Bagatela*, mm. 15-18.

The absence of *ritardandi* in the last three bars, which have the most changes in the shortest time, indicates an insistence on strict tempo and pulsation. Here, however, there are specific gradations of dynamic change, as in *Interludium*. The pauses in the soprano at bar 36 help to facilitate a quieter finish, if the octave in bar 37 is played as quickly and *piano* as the score indicates (Fig. 4.23). For the first time in the cycle, each ending rest has its fermata, signalling a longer expanse between this work and the next. This is the second place in the cycle where Górecki finishes one thought and articulates its finality (the first being the tempo change between *Nr. 1 Marsz* and beginning of *Nr. 2 Piosenka ludowa*).



Fig. 4.23. *Bagatela*, mm. 34-37.

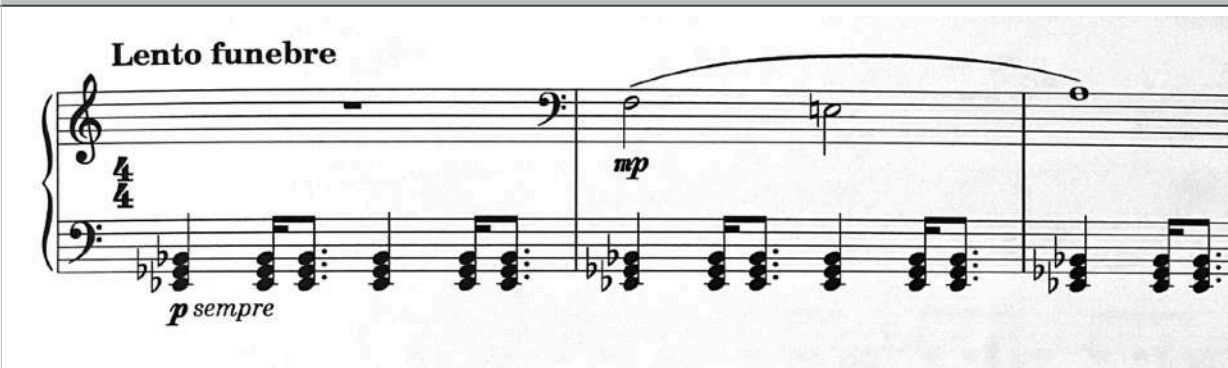


Nr. 8: *Drugi marsz* (Second March) in 4/4 resembles Bartók's *Bagatelle Op. 6 Nr. 13*: "*Elle est morte*" ("She is dead"). Górecki's *Lento funebre* tempo is a nod to Bartók, comparing each piece reveals similarities in rhythm, bass tonality, and harsh dissonances between melody and accompaniment.

**Bartók: Op. 6 Nr. 13, mm 1-3**



**Górecki: Op. 9a Nr. 8, mm. 1-3**



**Fig. 4.24. Górecki *Drugi marsz* and Bartók *Elle est morte*.**

Bartók's rhythm reverses the expected dotted-eighth followed by sixteenth pattern; Górecki maintains the expected pattern. Another difference between Bartók and Górecki in these works is their use of accents: Bartók notates that sixteenths in every group are to be accented, Górecki's accompaniment has no accents.

In this piece, dynamic and textural control are the core pianistic challenges. The melody is written in single notes accompanied by low-register triads (the piano's bass register threatens to be louder than the higher melodic single notes). The melody is in *mezzo piano* and the accompaniment *piano sempre*.

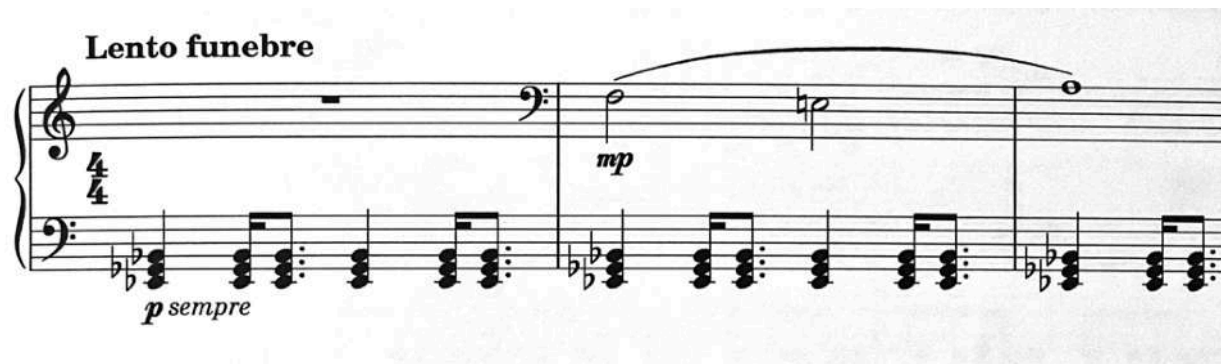


Fig. 4.25. *Drugi marsz*, mm. 1-3.

The only measure with a fully chordal texture is bar 11, which has two strict planes of bitonal harmony: melody in D minor, accompaniment in D-flat minor (Fig. 4.26).

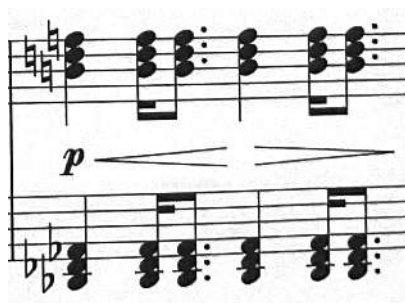


Fig. 4.26. *Drugi marsz*, mm. 1-3.

Controlling repeating chords without overpowering the melody is essential to good piano playing: this skill was likely on Górecki's mind as he wrote this. The use of repeating chords asks for a developed sensitivity to the rebound action between key strokes. In terms of piano playing, this work shares more in common with *Piosenka ludowa*, *Stara melodia*, and *Druga piosenka ludowa* than it does with its counterpart, *Marsz*. The character of *Drugi marsz* is darker and more pessimistic than *Marsz*.

Górecki finishes this piece in two distinct dynamics: accompaniment *pianissimo* and melody *piano*, with a *rit.* over the last bar, fermata over the last rest, and *attacca* connection after the long silence that articulates the transition into the ninth piece.



Fig. 4.27. *Drugi marsz*, mm. 13-15.

As with the transitions between *Nr. 3* and *Nr. 4*, and *Nr. 6* and *Nr. 7*, this *attacca* connection results in surprise and vigour. The final piece in is characterized by vivacious joy and naiveté.

*Nr. 9: Finale à la danse* in 3/8 acts as a quasi-encore in *moto perpetuo*. The rapid opening accompaniment gives the impression of four-bar groups, but is joined by a soprano melody in five-bar structures. The melody has an improvisatory character, perhaps invoking a spontaneous choreography. The theme is repeated in a sharp harmonic contrast: its second appearance is in C, the accompaniment changes to a C-sharp—D-sharp dyad.

Fig. 4.28. *Finale à la danse*, mm. 1-16.

One of Górecki's expressive combinations throughout Op. 9a is that of sudden change from one theme to another with instant dynamic and articulation contrasts. In *Finale* this trait is an expressive springboard: without a moment between them, Górecki introduces new thematic material, dynamic, and accents on every melody note (Fig. 4.29, mm. 24-25):



Fig. 4.29. *Finale à la danse*, mm. 20-29.

The second theme's dynamic finish is a device that became a definitive Górecki style trait in future works (Fig. 4.30): dynamics that begin *forte* will culminate in combined articulations and more intensified signs.



Fig. 4.30. *Finale à la danse*, mm. 35-38.

The last gesture of *Finale* is cleverly devised from the standpoint of full-circle cyclical form. In *Marsz*, the final phrase is an abbreviation of the elements taken from the first eight-bar structure (Fig. 4.12). *Finale*'s last six bars are identical to the material heard in its first three, repeated down the octave as an extension of the first theme. Górecki extends the last phrase and finishes with a sudden *sfz* chord. Repeating the initial material in the same dynamic-articulation choice advances on the ending of the first piece: *Marsz* ends *sfz*, *Finale* ends *sfz*. It was typical of Górecki's works in this period to combine dynamic signs with articulation signs.



**Fig. 4.31. *Finale à la danse*, mm. 31-45.**

Op. 9a shows that Górecki approached writing smaller-scale piano works as seriously as he did larger works. He appears to have woven these works through contrast and similarity, creating cyclical designs he used in other Early piano works. A progressive set of pieces such as Op. 9a may be used to prepare young pianists for the basic sound devices Górecki used in his other Sonorist compositions (*Preludes Op. 1*, *Sonata Op. 6*), his experimentations with phrase length, and cyclical designs.

## V. Różne Utwory, Op. 52 / Sundry Pieces Op. 52

Pierwotnie opusem 52 oznaczałem  
chorał w Formie kanonu na kwartet  
smyczkowy napisany w Katowicach w sobotę  
21. 1. 1961 r. i trochę przekomponowany -  
wzburzony w Ochodzie 12. 5. 1961 r.  
Jednak w 1988 r. (październik -  
listopad) z utworem tego powrotu  
I kwartet smyczkowy "już się zmieniło"  
jako op. 62 i utwór "Chorał w Formie  
kanonu przestał w ogóle istnieć  
a opusem 52 oznaczałem utwory  
fortepianowe dawniej napisane,  
które połączyłem w jeden zbiór  
pt. "Różne utwory na fortepian".

Fig. 4.32. Górecki's notebook entry regarding Op. 52 in *Spis moich utworów* (List of my Works).

Op. 52  
RÓŻNE UTWORY  
na fortepian

- I Recitativo i Mazurek  
Bydgoszcz, sierpień 1956.  
Zadanie Rumaniskiej polonizacji
- II Dwa utwory  
Katowice, marzec 1957.
- III Trzy utwory dodekafoniczne  
Katowice, październik - listopad 1957.
- IV Quasi Valse  
Katowice, wtorek 27. 6. 1961.  
Pon. Profesor Władysławie Markiewicz

Fig. 4.33. Górecki's entry regarding future contents of Op. 52 in *Spis moich utworów* (List of my Works).

### Creative and Circumstantial Origins

Op. 52 has an interesting story, the moral of which is that opus numbers do not always represent the works they initially contained. Górecki devised this set after re-assigning his original Op. 52 to another work.

Op. 52's evolution is translated below, from Górecki's notebook *Spis moich utworów* (*List of My Works*). He originally wrote a movement of *String Quartet Nr. 1, Op. 62* as Op. 52, but that movement was later published as *Op. 62*. Górecki noticed a gap between two published works: *Idzie chmura, pada deszcz Op. 51* and *Lerchenmusik Op. 53*: an empty Op. 52. Górecki reviewed his Early piano solo works and combined into a set (Fig. 4.34).

Polish	English
Pierwotnie opusem 52 oznaczyłem Chorał w Formie Kanonu na kwartet smyczkowy napisany w Katowicach w sobotę 21.1.1961r. i trochę przekomponowany-rozbudowany w Chchołowie sobota 12.5.1984r Jednak w 1988r (październik - listopad) z utworu tego powstał Kwartet Smyczkowy "Już się zmierzcha" jako op. 62 i utwór „Chorał w Formie Kanonu” przestał w ogóle istnieć w opusem 52 oznaczyłem utwory fortepianowe dawniej napisane, które połączyłem w jeden zbiór pt. "Różneutwory na fortepian."	Originally I marked as opus 52 Chorale in the Form of Canon for string quartet in Katowice on Saturday 21 January 1961 and slightly recomposed and developed in Chorzów on Saturday 12 May 1984. However, in October/November 1988 the 1st String Quartet "Already it is Dusk" was based on this piece as op. 62, and Chorale in the Form of Canon ceased to exist. I gave the opus number 52 to piano pieces previously written much earlier, which I gathered into one collection and named it <i>Sundry pieces for piano</i> .

**Fig. 4.34. Transcription of Górecki's notebook entry regarding Op. 52. Translation of Anna Górecka, *Górecki Piano Album* (Preface, v), 2019.**

This is Górecki's longest set of miniatures, comparable in length to *Piano Sonata Op. 6*. Written mostly in Katowice, the Op. 52 individual sets are entirely disconnected from one another; they do not form a cycle as does Op. 9a. The variety of sources for these works is so broad (folk music, Sonorism, dodecaphonic music, musical humour) that Górecka introduces them as follows:

Polish	English
Na opus 52 składają się miniatury nie związane ze sobą ani językiem kompozytorskim, ani jakąś pozamuzyczną czy formalną ideą.	Op 52 consists of miniatures that are not related to each other either by the compositional language, or by any extra-musical or formal idea.

**Fig. 4.35. Górecki's introduction to Op. 52. Translation of Anna Górecka, *Rola fortepianu* (2012), 50.**

Op. 52 is therefore stylistically in two periods: Early works considered from the Crystallization period. Górecki's inclusion of *Trzy utwory dodekafoniczne* is important: this is the sole example among Górecki's piano works of his response to 12-tone serialism. Having been selected from among his earlier works, this set indicates that Górecki considered them an important part of his early period.

Movement	Pulse/Tempo	Bars	Górecki Time
1: Recitativo i Mazurek	<i>Nr. 1. Recitativo: Comodo e rubato</i> <i>Nr. 2. Mazurek: Andante e molto cantabile</i>	24 50	12:00' for entire set
<b>Place and Date:</b> Rydułtowy, August 1956			
2: Dwa utwory	<i>Nr. 1. Lento assai — recitativo; Vivo</i> <i>Nr. 2. Molto andante</i>	75 39	
<b>Place and Date:</b> Katowice, March 1957			
3. <i>Trzy utwory dodekafoniczne</i>	<i>Nr. 1. No tempo</i> <i>Nr. 2. No tempo</i> <i>Nr. 3. No Tempo</i>	29 11 27	
<b>Place and Date:</b> Nr. 1, Katowice, 29 October 1957; Nr. 2, 12 November 1957; Nr. 3, 26 November 1957 <b>Revisions:</b> 28 January - 4 February 1990			
4. Quasi valse	<i>Eighth = 132</i>	41	
<b>Date:</b> 27 June 1961			

**Fig. 4.36. Short Profile of *Różne utwory Op. 52*.**



## Musical and Stylistic Elements

### Set 1: *Recitativo and Mazurek*

This pair are both in ABA form, the *Recitativo* functioning as a prelude to the *Mazurek*, containing the more developed and complex material. *Recitativo*'s changing tempi and angular rhythms contrast within themselves, and are an even greater contrast to the rhythmic regularity of *Mazurek* (*Recitativo* Fig. 4.37; *Mazurek* Fig. 4.38)).

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of Set 1, *Recitativo and Mazurek*. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system, starting at measure 13, is marked **Meno mosso** and **p**. It features a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes and a treble line with a triplet of eighth notes. The second system, starting at measure 19, is marked **Tempo I** and **ff**. It includes a treble line with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes. The score concludes with the marking **Adagio, rit molto** and **pp**, followed by the word **attacca**.

Fig. 4.37. *Recitativo and Mazurek, I. Recitativo*, mm. 13-24.

Górecki includes bass fifths in *Recitativo*, a folk-inspired connection to *Mazurka* (mazurkas ubiquitously employ fifths indicating the *dudy*, a Polish bagpipe). Another link between *Recitativo* and *Mazurka* is their initial narrow ranges that broaden into larger, open spaces through low and high registers:

The image displays a musical score for the second movement, *Comodo e rubato*. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system, starting at measure 1, is marked **Comodo e rubato** and **ff**. It features a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes and a treble line with a triplet of eighth notes. The second system, starting at measure 5, is marked **f** and **sfz**. It includes a treble line with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes.



Fig. 4.38. *Recitativo and Mazurek, I. Recitativo*, mm. 1-4 and *II. Mazurek*, mm. 1-6.

*Mazurek* has two themes: (1) a slender turning theme, and (2) a broad multi-register theme. Harmony is crucial in both themes: mazurkas tend toward the Lydian scale (sharpened fourth), but Górecki uses the sharpened sixth (G-sharp, in what is ostensibly B minor).



Fig. 4.39. *Recitativo and Mazurek, II. Mazurek*, mm. 5-6.

Still, the Lydian fourth is not far away. In the second theme (m. 21), the E-sharp plays a more significant role on the second beat of the bar: a standard accented pulse in mazurka playing. The second theme develops into broader registers than the first theme, including clef changes, dynamic intensification, leaps from low to high registers with hand-over-hand choreography, and polyrhythmic passages developing over short periods. Indications of Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* as Górecki's reference point are justifiable, since Górecki played from Chopin's *Mazurkas* almost daily whenever he was at home (and often Szymanowski's).<sup>163</sup>

<sup>163</sup> Górecka, *Preface*, iv.



**Fig. 4.40. *Recitativo and Mazurek, II. Mazurek*, mm. 19-27.**

### Set 2: Dwa utwory / Two Works

These are recomposed harmonic assignments from Górecki's study years, which Górecki refined with Prof. Szabelski. While the original exercises themselves are not published, Górecka reports their origins and contents as comparable to the published *Dwa utwory*.<sup>164</sup> The prototype of this piece includes a sketch with these elements: (1) whole-tone scales, (2) bitonality, (3) parallel fifths, and (4) major and minor seconds.

Set 3: *Trzy utwory dodekafoniczny* / *Three dodecaphonic pieces* represents a period that Górecki wished to annul. Górecka's introduction to this work detail a conversation with Górecki about 12-tone Serialism (Fig. 4.41).

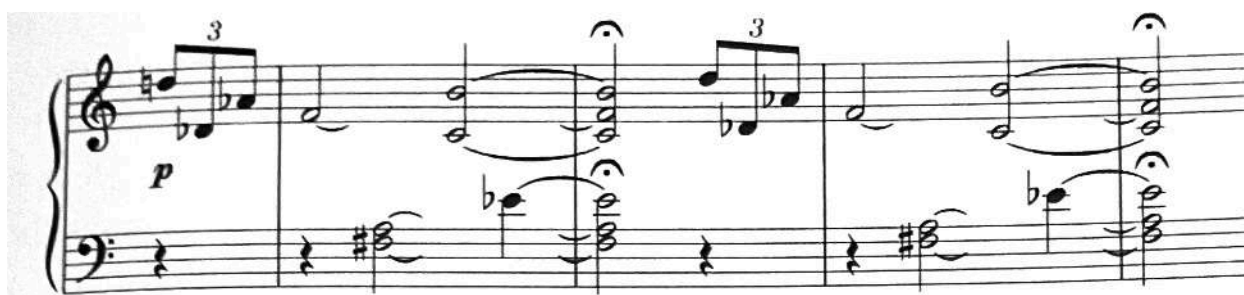
<sup>164</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 51.

Original	English
Jego stosunek do dodekafonii i serializmu uległ z czasem radykalnej zmianie, jednak jako kompozytor awangardowy w przełomowym okresie lat pięćdziesiątych i sześćdziesiątych na tej właśnie technice oparł swoją ówczesną twórczość. Po latach natomiast powiedział: “Gdybym mógł cofnąć czas, to bym tego nie tykał.”	His attitude towards dodecaphony and serialism changed radically over time, but as an avant-garde composer in the breakthrough period of the 1950s and 1960s, it was this technique that he based his work on. Years later, however, he said, “If I could turn back time, I wouldn't touch it.”

**Fig. 4.41. Translation of Górecka's entry on *Trzy utwory dodekafoniczny*, in *Rola fortepianu* (2012), 51-52.**

None of the three pieces have a tempo or metre indication: this is rare in Górecki's music. The set is formed similarly to *Piano Sonata Op.6*: one short movement in between two longer movements. There are dynamic indications throughout, the range is between *piano* and *forte*. This is also rare in Górecki's Early piano music, which usually features extreme dynamic changes and ranges (*ppp*, *fff*, *ffff*), or sudden changes from one extreme to another.

Although Górecki turned away from 12-tone serialism, Schoenberg's *Three Pieces Op. 11, Nr. 1 Mäßige [quarters]* (1909) is a reference point given the intervals Górecki uses: in the accompaniments, major and minor sevenths. Górecki's motivic intervals resemble Schoenberg's in the third dodecaphonic piece (mm. 1-2, Fig. 4.43).



**Fig. 4.42. *Trzy utwory dodekafoniczny*, I: mm.1-4.**



Fig. 4.43. *Trzy utwory dodekafoniczny, II: mm.1-5.*



Fig. 4.44. *Trzy utwory dodekafoniczny, III: mm.1-5.*



Fig. 4.45. Schoenberg, *Drei klavierstücke Op. 11, Nr. 1* (mm. 1-10).

Set 3: *Quasi valse* was a name-day gift to Polish piano professor Władysława Markiewiczówna, a lifelong friend of the Górecki family. It is a musical joke of domestic origin: Prof. Markiewiczówna and the Górecki family were neighbours in the same apartment building on Broniewskiego Street in Katowice. Prof. Markiewiczówna's neighbours complained that her practicing was noisy and disruptive, so Górecki wrote *Quasi valse* for her and wrote beneath its dedication to Prof. Markiewiczówna an endearing quip: "to finish off the neighbours."<sup>165</sup> Aspects of *Quasi valse* take a sarcastic tone considering its wry but friendly intent.

The opening's low-register single notes sound dynamically unpredictable with a combination of *piano* and *fortissimo* without fluctuations in between. The downbeat C's are enhanced by dissonant C-sharp graces (Fig. 4.46, mm. 3-4 and m. 6) evolving into diminished octaves (m. 7). Sevenths are the eventual framing interval of the theme (G—F):

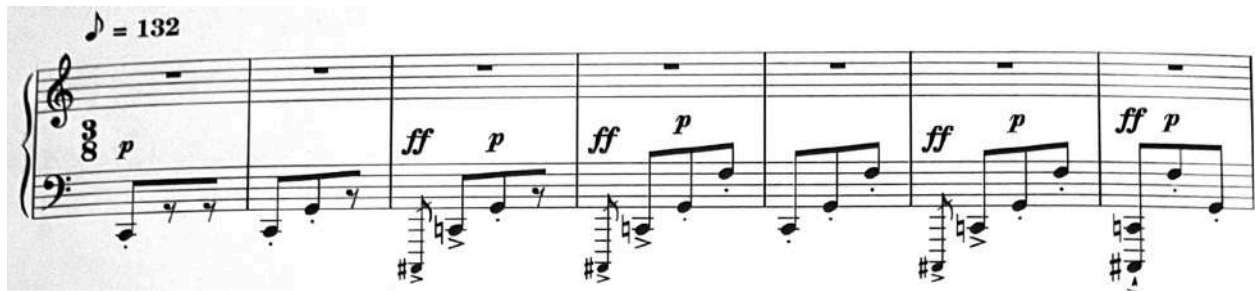
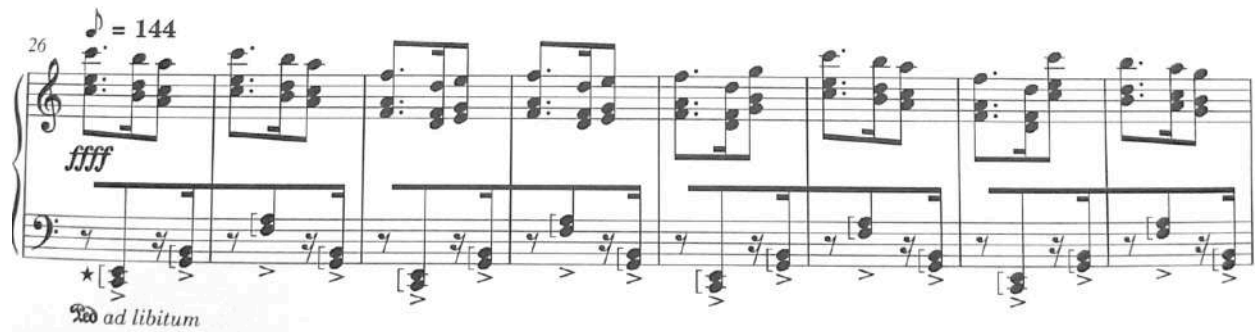


Fig. 4.46. *Quasi valse* (mm. 1-6), dynamic extremes *p* and *ff*.

After the extreme dynamics *ff* and *p* are exhausted, an eerie seventeen-bar phrase begins in softer dynamic levels (*pianissimo*, *pianississimo*, *piano*). This phrase is a delicately-appointed irony: its final measure with fermata at the double bar line precedes an outburst of *ffff* in an "untamed, brutal character,"<sup>166</sup> faster tempo, with a bass part written to be played in chromatically filled-in thirds.

<sup>165</sup> Górecka, *Preface*, v.

<sup>166</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 52. Original: "Walc ma tu nieposkromiony, brutalny charakter."



**Fig. 4.47. *Quasi valse* (26-33).**

This *fff* fragment registers as deliberate palm- or fist-pounding the bass keys in an effort to frustrate nearby listeners. The melodic dotted rhythms are disturbed by the placement of clusters in the bass (a brace indicates striking all notes between the notated thirds): the combination sounds aggressive even without knowing the work's sarcastic underpinning. The title *Quasi valse* is also a twist: waltzes generally connote refinement and elegance.

## VI. Mazurki Op. 41 / Mazurkas Op. 41

Place and Date on Manuscript: Chochłów, 28-31 May 1980			
Pulse/Tempo	Character	Bars	Górecki's Timing
<i>None given</i>	<i>Not given</i>	166	9:00'

Fig. 4.48. Short Profile of *Mazurki Op. 41*.

### Creative and Circumstantial Origins, Musical and Stylistic Elements

This score is curiously empty compared to other Górecki piano works. Górecki never revised it; he planned it as the first in a series of movements titled *Mazurki*; the longer cycle did not come to fruition. The work confirms Górecki's connection to the Polish piano tradition: his "utter fascination with Chopin...since early youth,"<sup>167</sup> continued into his maturity. This work is rooted in Górecki's love of mazurkas.

Pociej's remarks about Górecki's place among 20th-century Polish composers are relevant here: "Among the outstanding Polish composers of the twentieth century, acting after Szymanowski, Gorecki in his music seems to be most strongly marked by the Polish idiom, the hallmark of the Polish style."<sup>168</sup> Górecki's *Mazurki* has four themes, each emphasizing the second beat of the bar.



Fig. 4.49a. *Mazurki Op. 41*, mm. 1-5: Theme A.

<sup>167</sup> Malecka, *Górecki and the Polish Musical Tradition*, 244.

<sup>168</sup> Pociej, *Bycia w muzyce*, 32. Original: "Wśród wybitnych polskich kompozytorów XX wieku po Szymanowskim działających, Gorecki w swojej muzyce najsilniej zdaje się znaczonej polskim idiomem, znamiem polskiego stylu."





Fig. 4.49b. *Mazurki Op. 41*, mm. 5-8: Theme B.



Fig. 4.49c. *Mazurki Op. 41*, mm. 25-28: Theme C.



Fig. 4.49d. *Mazurki Op. 41*, mm. 43-46: Theme D.

Except the first theme, each theme has a four-bar structure. Their rhythms are found in the Chopin *Mazurkas* Górecki frequently played, which Górecka recalls were Górecki's favourites because he would play them on family vacations: "to this day, many of them [Mazurkas] in my memory mingle with the smells and views of summer in the village of

Podhale (for example, Op. 56 nr. 1 in B, C major Op. 24, E-flat minor, Op. 6).<sup>169</sup> In each of these, Chopin used the mazurka rhythm in a traditional sense: accentuating the second or third beat of the bar, with the standard pattern of two eighths followed by a quarter or triplet eighths:



Fig. 4.50a. Chopin *Mazurkas Op. 56, I*: mm. 1-6.



Fig. 4.50b. Chopin *Mazurkas Op. 24, II*: mm. 1-10.

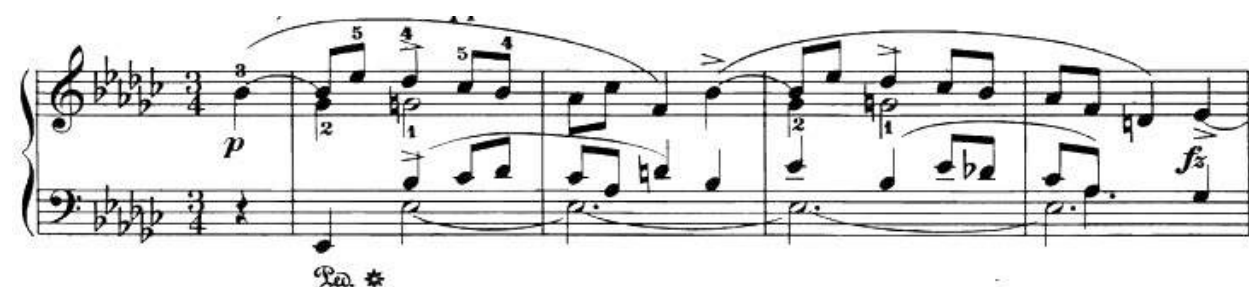


Fig. 4.50c. Chopin *Mazurkas Op. 6, V*: mm. 1-4.

<sup>169</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 53. Original: “do dziś wiele z nich w mojej pamięci kojarzy się z zapachami i widokami lata na podhalańskiej wsi (Op. 56 H dur, C-dur op 24, es-moll Op. 6).”

One invention Górecki contributed in his *Mazurki* is unprecedented: insertion of measures in duple metre, a change to the fundamental tenet of mazurka playing and dancing: triple meter. In no *Mazurkas* by Szymanowski or Chopin does duple meter appear. Górecki places this invention in the fourth theme (Fig. 4.51).



Fig. 4.51. Górecki *Mazurki Op. 41*, mm. 50-53.

This creation occurs in the central portion of *Mazurki*. That the fourth theme is the most expansive and contains experimental metrical units was deliberate: the form of this work is symmetrical, ABCDCBA,<sup>170</sup> and the central section — Section D — is the longest, lasting fifty-one measures (mm. 43-94). Before transitioning to the second Theme in Section C, Górecki continues varying time signatures that seem to wander away from the mazurka tradition (Fig. 4.52).



Fig. 4.52. Górecki *Mazurki Op. 41*, mm. 60-65.

<sup>170</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 55.

The sense of symmetry is found in the metrical unit of 2 beat-measures in six-bar units that Górecki uses to maintain contact with triple metre. This interpretation uses hypermeter to locate units of three (Fig. 4.53).



**Fig. 4.53.** Górecki *Mazurki Op. 41*, mm. 66-77.

The right-hand harmonic ninths added to the melody invokes the Podhale singing style discussed in Chapter 2 (Fig. 2.45) and Chapter 3 (Fig. 3.30, Fig. 3.45), often interpreted as screaming by those unfamiliar with it. Heard in hypermeter, these syncopations enliven the rhythms and reinforce the prevailing triple meter, even though individual bars are written in atypical duple meter. Górecki's textural effects emphasize higher sound registers, contrasting Theme B in its first and second sections, in which a dyad C-sharp—D-sharp resonates in the lowest range of the keyboard against the D minor melody (Fig. 4.54).



Fig. 4.54. Górecki *Mazurki Op. 41*, mm. 12-15: emphasis of low bass in m. 15.

Fig. 4.55. Górecki *Mazurki Op. 41*, mm. 138-147.

The absence of dynamics in this score indicates that Górecki never revised it. Górecka cites a sketch for *Mazurki II*, Górecki's unfinished second work in this set: this sketch is not developed enough to allow it to be constructed into a full-fledged work.<sup>171</sup>

To summarize the form and conception of *Mazurki Op. 41*, its symmetrical or mirrored form is found in the following chart.

<sup>171</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 56.

Theme	Measure Numbers	Total Length
<b>A</b>	1-5	5 measures
<b>B</b>	6-24	19 measures
<b>C</b>	25-42	18 measures
<b>D</b>	43-94	54 measures
<b>C</b>	95-128	34 measures
<b>B</b>	129-151	22 measures
<b>A</b>	152-166	14 measures

**Fig. 4.56. Form and section breakdown by themes of *Mazurki Op. 41*.**

Górecki's *Mazurki Op. 41* lasts almost the same length as an entire opus of Chopin *Mazurkas*. Its formal symmetry creates a distant, nostalgic impression as the final measures of the work alter from melodic octaves into static tones, concluding with the B theme's bass dyad (C-sharp—D-sharp). This dreamlike ending is a Górecki signature: sounds between long pauses drifting toward complete silence.



**Fig. 4.57. *Mazurki Op. 41*, mm. 154-166.**

The next chapter explains practice, performance, and primary sources of Górecki's piano music.

## Chapter 5 Practicing and Performing Górecki's Piano Music

What approaches are advisable when working with Górecki's music? This chapter offers approaches to practicing, teaching, and performing Górecki's solo piano music. All advice is taken from two sources: (1) research on Górecki's musical style or performance issues, and (2) studies with Prof. Anna Górecka. Primary sources (Górecki's autographs, comments on his music, pages of *Spis moich utworów*) are included at the end of this chapter.

### I. Górecki's Style: Basic Elements

Discovering new musical works and researching their primary sources poses special challenges. Data can be gleaned from many sources. In Górecki's case, those sources are in different languages and are based on various types of contact with the composer, his music, or both. Górecki's career connected with many musicians who had long professional careers or are active professionals today. These include Górecki's wife Jadwiga Górecka (née Rurańska) and their children, Anna Górecka and Mikołaj Górecki; soloists Elżbieta Chojnacka, Eugeniusz Knapik, and Dawn Upshaw; composers Andrzej Krzanowski, Rafał Augustyn; musicologists Teresa Malecka, Bohdan Pociąg, Adrian Thomas, and Mieczysław Tomaszewski; ensembles such as the National Polish Radio Symphony in Katowice (NOSPR), London Sinfonia, and Kronos Quartet: the list is long. Musicians whose views on Górecki's music are influenced by direct contact with him can therefore be of importance to studying it, but the depth of their contact must be examined before drawing any conclusions from their views.

Researching and practicing Górecki's piano works includes a combination of studying scores/manuscripts, print sources, and consulting musicians who had contact with Górecki. Manuscripts and other primary sources are available online at *Polona* (this search engine exists in English, but sources are in Polish).<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Accessed July 2022. [www.polona.pl](http://www.polona.pl).



Anna Górecka's book, *Rola fortepianu w życiu i twórczości Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego* (*The Role of the Piano in the Life and Works of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki*) is to date the most comprehensive overview of Górecki's piano music. Górecka includes data from her conversations with Górecki about his works (Fig. 4.41). This information underlines the value of personal-professional connection with a composer as an influential factor in practicing their repertoire. Górecka includes Górecki's remarks on essential components of his music, translated into English in Sections Ia, Ib, and Ic below. These elements are melody, harmony, and form.

#### Ia. Melody

Lyrical melodies are a special category in Górecki's early works because the majority of his early melodies are classified as brutalist or sonoristic. Górecka finds a lyrical portion of *Sonata Op. 6* comparable to Górecki's orchestral works in lyric melodies and their structuring as "internal" melodies ensconced in harmony.

Original Polish (Górecka, 35)	English Translation (Górecka, 46)
<p>"Linie melodyczne o lirycznym charakterze prowadzone są albo ponad szeroką warstwą akordów (część pierwsza - przetworzenie) albo dzieją się, 'wewnątrz' harmonii. (Opracowując korektę jednego z utworów orkiestrowych Górecki pisał 'wewnętrznych' melodii: "Koniecznie trzeba wpisać <i>en dehors</i> w miejscach, gdzie melodia jest w środku harmonii — &lt;pod spodem&gt;. Dyrygentom do głowy nie przychodzi, żeby te wszystkie <u>melodie-tematy</u> wyraźnie pokazać &lt;na wierzchu&gt;."</p>	<p>"Lyrical melodic lines either run over a wide layer of chords (first movement - development section) or happen 'inside' the harmony. (When preparing a correction of one of the orchestral pieces, Górecki wrote "internal" melodies: It is necessary to enter <i>en dehors</i> in places where the melody is in the middle of harmony - &lt;underneath&gt;. Conductors do not think to show all these melody-themes clearly &lt;on top&gt;."</p>

**Fig. 5.1. Lyrical melodies as marked by Górecki in an unidentified orchestral work; comparable to *Sonata Op. 6* development theme.<sup>173</sup>**

Górecki's interest in Polish folk music influenced his melodies. Although Bartók's piano

<sup>173</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 46.



works, textures, and forms were important to Górecki, another aspects of Bartók's music inspired Górecki to study his native roots: folk music research.

Original Polish (Górecka, 47)	English Translation (Górecka, 47)
Bartók, wzór i punkt odniesienia młodego Góreckiego, podpowiedział mu właściwy sposób realizacji nowych, suwerennych zamierzeń za pomocą języka w pełni nowoczesnego, osadzonego jednak w ludowej tradycji. Pomimo zasadniczych zmian, jakie z latami zachodziły w sposobie muzycznego wypowiedzania się kompozytora, czynnikiem niezmiennym była wierność tej właśnie tradycji: "Polska muzyka ludowa była i jest moja wielka pasja, była i jest moja wielka miłość. Jest to najlepsza dla mnie pożywka muzyczna, jest i zarazem niezawodnym lekarstwem i odtrutką na wszelkiego rodzaju schorzenia i zatrucia muzyczne."	Bartók, the model and reference point of the young Górecki, suggested to him the right way to implement new, sovereign intentions by means of a modern Polish language, however rooted in folk tradition. Despite the fundamental changes that have taken place over the years in the composer's musical expression, the constant factor was faithfulness to this tradition: "Polish folk music was and is my great passion, has been and is my great love. It is the best source of music for me, it is also a reliable medicine and an antidote to all kinds of diseases and musical poisoning."

**Fig. 5.2. Polish Folk music as specified by Górecki.**<sup>174</sup>

Kostka's *National Elements in the Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki* shows his use of folk texts and their effect on vertical and horizontal musical structures. Kostka emphasizes that Górecki's creativity draws on national elements, except in experiments with sound (*sonorystka*) and form.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>174</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 47.

<sup>175</sup> Kostka, *National Elements*, 267.

## Ib. Harmony

Górecki commented on the nature of harmony in his earliest piano works. His comments are decisive: harmony was the core of Górecki's earliest approach to composition. The liberation of harmony and associations between keys from the tonal system of major-minor modes (and perhaps the tonic-dominant relationship) was crucial in Górecki's Early piano works (Fig. 5.3).

Original Polish (Górecka, 35)	English Translation (Górecka, 35)
"Opus 1 zakorzeniony w tonalności przemawia jednak do słuchacza w sposób bezkompromisowy. Akord, skala, tonacja to zaledwie narzędzia służące treści, nośniki emocji i baza precyzyjnej formy. Według słów kompozytora harmonia jest niezwykle ważnym elementem, od niej zależy bowiem charakter utworu."	"Opus 1 rooted in tonality, however, speaks to the listener in an uncompromising manner. The chord, scale, and key are merely tools for the content, the carriers of emotions and the basis of a precise form. <i>According to the composer, harmony is an extremely important element, because it determines the character of the work.</i> "

**Fig. 5.3. Górecki's conviction that harmony determines the character of a musical work.<sup>176</sup>**

Górecki's concept for the content of an individual sound and its relationship to another sound is unencumbered by notions of dissonance or consonance (Fig. 5.4).

Original Polish (Górecka, 35)	English Translation (Górecka, 35)
System dur-moll nie determinuje już stosunków pomiędzy poszczególnymi strukturami, ważny jest 'stosunek dźwięku do dźwięku', nie ma już konsonansów i dysonansów, w tworzeniu klimatu i atmosfery bierze udział każdy dźwięk. Jak twierdzi kompozytor: "Każda wysokość - poszczególne dźwięki mają swoją TREŚĆ."	The major-minor system no longer determines the relations between individual structures, the 'sound-to-sound ratio' is important, there are no consonances and dissonances any more, every sound takes part in creating the climate and atmosphere. As the composer claims: "Every pitch - individual sounds have their CONTENT."

**Fig. 5.4. Górecki's basic harmonic relationships: sound-to-sound ratio/content.<sup>177</sup>**

<sup>176</sup> Górecka, *Rola fortepianu*, 35.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 35.

### lc. Form

To Górecki, the form of a composition was as important to plan and refine on the score as it was to convey convey in the performance. Form, in other words, is as performable as harmony or melody. Górecki's comments on musical form emphasizes his value of organic forms, his study of forms used by other composers, and forms in his own works.

Original Polish (Górecka, 55)	English Translation (Górecka, 55)
od najmniejszej struktury wymagam naturalnego toku. Tak jest i w tym utworze [Mazurki Op. 41].	I require a natural course from the smallest structure. This is also the case in this piece [Mazurkas Op. 41].

**Fig. 5.5. Górecki's interest in form.**<sup>178</sup>

Górecki's melodic and harmonic developments sprang from his engagement with *Sonorystyka* and his conviction that form is foundational to successful musical works.

Original Polish (Górecka, 41)	English Translation (Górecka, 41)
"Kompozytor przez wiele lat w rozmowach o wywiadach wracał do problemu przetworzenia i analizował sposób jego przeprowadzaniu u innych twórców. Zauważał, że dla Brahmsa, Dvoraka i Mahlera przetworzenie było kulminacyjnym momentem pracy z tematami ekspozycji, natomiast np. dla Czajkowskiego stanowiło pretekst do wprowadzania nowych tematów.	"For many years the composer returned to the problem of developments [sonata form structure] in conversations and interviews, and analyzed the way it [form] was carried out by other artists. He noticed that for Brahms, Dvorak and Mahler, the processing was the culmination of working with the subjects of the exhibition, while for Tchaikovsky it was a primer to introduce new themes.
Środkowe ogniwo pierwszej części <i>Sonaty Op. 6</i> jest przykładem zastosowania przemyślanych technik kompozytorskich po pierwsze do uzyskania spektakularnej przemiany opracowywanego tematu (co jest zasada konstrukcyjna przetworzenia), po drugie do stworzenia silnego wrażenia wejścia w część środkową schematu ABA."	The middle link of the first movement of the <i>Sonata Op. 6</i> is an example of the use of sophisticated compositional techniques, firstly to obtain a spectacular transformation of the subject under study (which is the constructional principle of processing), and secondly to create a strong impression of entering the middle part of the ABA scheme."

**Fig. 5.6. Górecka's description of Górecki's study of form and his inventions in *Op. 6*.**

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 55.

## **II. Elements in Playing Górecki's Piano Works**

Practicing Górecki's works offers pianists the opportunity to consult a living expert — Anna Górecka — on Górecki's life, musical style, and performance practice. Studying Górecki's piano works with Prof. Górecka is a special artistic experience. Her relationship to Górecki and her concert career give Prof. Górecka's observations an unusual level of authority. Her approach to this repertoire is effective in preparation and in concert. That advice will be discussed in Section IIc.

The first priority is to establish a relationship between the score, instrument, and pianist. Viewing the score's contents as Górecki's precise instructions is crucial. Górecki's works are specific, particularly concerning rhythm, timing, and tempo. One of the commonest challenge for performers is that

The music of Górecki, while often based on materials of the utmost simplicity, poses certain problems to the performer...these arise from the extremes to which the materials are subjected: tempo, dynamics, and phrasing. The intensity of expression, so characteristic of his music, relies upon an informed and committed adherence to the music as it is written.<sup>179</sup>

Pianistic challenges in Górecki's music are easily described but exist in an uncompromising frame of repeating figures, rapidly-changing elements, and strict tempi. Often, repeating figurations are organized in thick chords with heavy articulations, shifting registers with extreme dynamic changes, sudden metric changes with new material, exact replications of phrases, and phrases copied from previous material but slightly altered or elongated toward the end. Dynamics tend to approach the piano's sound limits at the loudest and softest possible levels when textures or registers change.

These challenges would be easily surmountable if not for one of Górecki's hallmarks: "Górecki goes beyond marking precise tempo markings to giving the duration for each section or movement of his pieces."<sup>180</sup> Therefore, in situations when the performer sees

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<sup>179</sup> Harley, *Charting the Extremes*, 2.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

a phrase that appears playable only if the tempo is momentarily slower, that phrase is governed by the timed duration of the entire work. Thus, certain components in Górecki's music have local and global effect on performance.

Górecka notes that when teaching Górecki's piano works, "Technical issues are a common difficulty: maintaining high dynamics, equalization of sound, articulation effectiveness, but the most important turn out to be expressive issues: building and maintaining tension, contrasts, etc."<sup>181</sup> Górecki's piano works follow their own internal laws and structures. Anna Chęćka describes this in *Metaphysical Hearing* as follows:

The composer or performer *becomes obedient* to the inner laws of the musical material. In practice, s/he is absorbed by the process of *thinking in terms of musical structures*, very often identified with duration beyond words, with temporal and spatial relations, with emotional tension and with abstract notions. In the process of practising a work...the performer acquires certain automatic motor behaviors, and they become vitally disputed by conceptual thinking about them ('I'll miss the key, I'll go wrong in a second')...The tip wise music teachers give in such situations can be reduced to the simple advice: 'Listen, follow the music.'<sup>182</sup>

Thinking "in terms of musical structures" and abiding by the principle "follow the music" in Górecki can be challenging because his works concentrate on metric pulse through repetitions with sudden drastic contrasts, usually without tempo fluctuation. The score's appearance is also a factor: many passages appear simply playable, but their simplicity is deceptive. Górecki's repeated structures demand excellent memorization and technical facility. An experiential understanding of Sonorism in Górecki's music is needed: knowing about Sonorism is not enough. The interpreter must attend to timbre, dynamic change, and texture to produce the sound masses in the score.

Two examples of Górecki pushing the limits of what a performer is physically capable

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<sup>181</sup> Lech, Filip. *Anna Górecka: Ojciec bardzo dużo słuchał (Wywiad)*, 2020. Accessed June 2022. <https://culture.pl/pl/artykul/anna-gorecka-ojciec-bardzo-duzo-sluchal-wywiad>.

<sup>182</sup> Chęćka, *Metaphysical Hearing*, 107. My emphasis.

of doing are found in *Prelude Op. 1 Nr. 4* and *Sonata Op. 6, III: Allegro vivace*. In the *Prelude*, a leap of seven octaves is accompanied by a *mp subito* dynamic change from *sff* (Fig. 5.7).



**Fig. 5.7. *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, IV. Molto allegro quasi presto*, m. 30.**

In *Sonata Op. 6*, leaps in both hands of more than two octaves are accompanied by time signature changes and contrasting textures (Fig. 5.8).



**Fig. 5.8. *Sonata Op. 6, III. Allegro vivace*, m. 58-59.**

These examples demonstrate the uncompromising frames common in Górecki's piano works. Some indications in the piano works are flexible based on the concert hall in which performance takes place or the instrument used in the performance, but the pianistic-artistic capacity of the performer must allow timings, speeds, dynamic levels,

and articulations of the work to be executed according to the score. Górecki's piano works are more concrete than elastic.

## Ila. Dynamics

Understanding sound structures and dynamics in Górecki's piano music is enhanced by listening to and reading his orchestral, choral, and chamber music. Comparing solo piano works to ensemble works enhances performer understanding of Górecki's dynamics. Harley finds a helpful illustration in *Lerchenmusik Op. 53*, for clarinet, cello, and piano:

As in many of his other pieces, this score is filled with detailed indications of expression and dynamics...a progression toward increasing intensity...the dynamic level jumps from *piano* to *fortissimo*, and thereafter keeps rising, finally reaching a marking of *sfffff*. The central question for the performers is, obviously, how does one make a distinction between *ff*...and *sfffff*? Further, how does one create the sensation of a crescendo from *sfff* to *sfffff*?<sup>183</sup>

Extreme dynamics - such as "crescendo from *sfff* to *sfffff*" are found at the end of the first and third movements of the *Sonata Op. 6* (Fig. 5.9a).



**Fig. 5.9a. Sonata Op. 6, I. Allegro energico, mm. 305-314.**

<sup>183</sup> Harley, *Charting the Extremes*, 5.

The excerpt begins *fortissimo* (Fig. 5.8. begins mid-passage, *ff* marking unseen), with a hairpin (mm. 306—308) culminating *fff*. The remaining measures are a *poco a poco* *crescendo* to *ffff* in the final two bars have still *ffff* with another hairpin to *ffffz* (pulse intensifies here also: four beats per bar condenses into two beats). Similarly, in the third movement of *Sonata Op. 6*, Górecki calls for a consistently high level of volume with hairpins indicating that volume intensifies even more, while the space between dynamic marks is shortened (Fig. 5.9b).



Fig. 5.9b. *Sonata Op. 6*, III. *Allegro vivace (ma non troppo)* m. 30.

Górecki instructs performers to scale their dynamic range not according to traditional conditions such as their technical capacity, the concert hall, or the piano's qualities, but "according to the markings in the score...the maximum controllable level must be reserved for the climax, and the musician should work to develop the gradations in between, from *ff* to *più ff* to *fff* and so on...the level chosen for the first *fortissimo* must allow for intensification."<sup>184</sup>

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 6-7.



A “highly disciplined musicianship” is required to execute the “traditional-looking notes on the page,”<sup>185</sup> due to sudden dynamic markings calling for multiple musical elements to be executed instantly. To “scale” the dynamics in performance requires strong mental concentration and physical coordination. Górecki’s lengthy passages of repeating figurations should not create physical tension or over-exertion in the performer, yet the dynamics must be respected. Górecki’s piano music commonly contains *fortissimo* or even *fff* which may be followed by a crescendo: the difference between *very strong* to *strongest possible* sound must be distinguishable to listeners. For articulations *plus* dynamics, the pianist must judge the attack of a dynamic to ensure its associated “*sforzando*” has slightly more sound.



**Fig. 5.10. *Różne utwory Op. 51: Dwa Utwory, Nr. 1: mm. 74-75.***

## IIb. Timing, Texture, Tension

Górecki’s scores specify musical time (tempo, pulse, meter) and real time (minutes, seconds): both types of time are equally important. Listeners may quickly understand the music’s tempo, pulse, and character, but the effect of real-time duration on sound content is less accessible without a score to read. Still, it is crucial for performers of Górecki’s music to understand musical and real time dimensions. Górecki’s calculated durations add an element of tension into the performance: repeated materials in the music drive and press against the formal frame.

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 6.

Occasionally, technical movements in Górecki's music appear impossible to execute in the given tempo according to their arrangement. This is thorny in the faster works and gives rise to virtuoso effects. Furthermore, a sense of timelessness and room for contemplation is important in many Górecki slower works. Harley points out that,

The performer, when faced with what appears to be an unreasonable marking in his score, needs to try to determine the expressive and musical intent, and then do everything possible to achieve that aim. Not all music is 'user-friendly', but that does not make it unplayable. This is not a composer to sit at a desk and dream up abstract compositional schemes. He 'hears' the music, he 'feels' it... Górecki has a special gift for conceiving musical architectures of cathedral, even cosmic, proportions. This is perhaps the element of his music most difficult for performers to grasp.<sup>186</sup>

Górecki's textures, timbres, and forms indicate that precise timing, counting, and rhythm are essential elements in performing his music. Timing between phrases, use of silence, metric changes: these factors are all influenced by harmonic development and accompanied by textural changes. Thicker portions of Górecki's textures tend toward repetitions and harmonic sound masses that typical of his orchestral works.<sup>187</sup>

In *Piano Sonata Op. 6*, this is seen in the exposition's second theme, including a cluster accompaniment (played with knuckles rather than fingertips) with the melody sometimes cast as a sustained tone on one of the pitches of the cluster itself. This is further complicated by the positioning of the rhythmically syncopated third voice (a triad of F-sharp—G-sharp—A-sharp) interjecting beneath the sustained notes. The two layers of sound beneath the melody (clusters and triads) are carefully layered: their articulations must be handled so as to ensure a two-tiered accompaniment emerges from the texture (Fig. 5.11).

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>187</sup> Dickinson, *Modern Poles*, 289



Fig. 5.11. *Sonata Op. 6, I: I. Allegro molto, con fuoco, second theme, mm. 73-77.*



Fig. 5.12. *Mazurki Op. 41, mm. 61-64.*

Górecki's transitions between phrases or sections are either strictly measured or variable. To indicate strictly measured transitions, Górecki's favoured device is a change of time signature with precise rest or note values, as in the thematic transitions of *Mazurki* (Fig. 5.12) and the expositional closure of *Sonata Op. 6* (Fig. 5.13).



Fig. 5.13. *Sonata Op. 6, I: Allegro energico*, mm. 134-142.

The rest values can also include fermatas, but special note should be taken of changed time signatures, as in the exposition closure of *Prelude Nr. 1 Op. 1* (Fig. 5.14).

Fig. 5.14. *Cztery Preludia Op. 1, Nr. 1*: mm. 28-29.

Górecki occasionally wrote material exceeding the piano's resonance capabilities. In *Dwa Utwory Op. 52*, the first section's closing phrase is accompanied by an eight-bar drone: in its *Lento assai* tempo and *mezzo piano* dynamic, it is entirely possible for the sound to disappear before the notation indicates.

The musical score is for 'Dwa Utwory, Nr. 1' by Henryk Górecki, measures 1-19. It is written for piano in 2/4 time. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-5) is marked 'Lento assai - recitativo' and 'p'. The second system (measures 6-11) is marked 'mf' and features a drone in the right hand. The third system (measures 12-19) is marked 'mp cantabile' and features a drone in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as trills, triplets, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 5.15. *Różne utwory Op. 51: Dwa Utwory, Nr. 1: mm. 1-19.*

### IIc. Preparatory Repertoire, Technical-Artistic Competencies

How can piano teachers provide a foundation for study and performance of Górecki's piano music? The suggestions below are drawn from studies with Prof. Anna Górecka and concert/recording preparation of Górecki's piano works. This section addresses piano teachers and students wishing to learn and perform Górecki's piano music.

It is advantageous to practice and listen to piano works which the young Górecki studied and admired during his education. Górecki references specific works in interviews, including:

- (1) Chopin: *Mazurkas* and *Impromptus*<sup>188</sup>
- (2) Szymanowski: *Mazurkas* Op. 20 and Op. 62,<sup>189</sup> *Piano Sonata* Op. 36<sup>190</sup>
- (3) Bartók: *Suite for Piano* Op. 14, *Allegro Barbaro*, *Sonata for Piano* Sz. 80, *Bagatelles* Op. 14, *Ten Pieces* Sz. 39<sup>191</sup>
- (4) Beethoven: *Piano Sonatas*, especially Op. 27<sup>192</sup>
- (5) JS Bach: *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, especially *Prelude in E-Flat minor* (Book 1)<sup>193</sup>
- (6) Ives, Schubert, Messiaen: unspecified works<sup>194</sup>

With regard to entry 6, Górecki's slow piano works lend themselves to comparisons with Schubert's *Piano Sonata in B-Flat Major* D. 960, especially its first and second movements featuring repeat expansive, meditative motifs; the third and fourth

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<sup>188</sup> See "Composing is a Terribly Personal Matter" in *Górecki in Context: Essays on Music*, ed. Maja Trochymczyk, (2012), 46.

<sup>189</sup> Malecka, "Górecki and the Keyboard," 262

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 262.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid, "There is More to Life than the Arranging of Sounds," 72.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, "Composing is a Terribly Personal Matter," 63 and "There is More to Life than the Arranging of Sounds," 72.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 72.

movements of Ives's *Sonata nr. 2 "Concord, Mass."*; and general topics of Catholic devotion in Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus*.

It is also advisable to be familiar with orchestral, chamber, and choral works Górecki referenced, including works of Mozart, Schubert, Monteverdi, Ives, Beethoven, and Szymanowski.<sup>195</sup> These add background to Górecki's interest in and indebtedness to Polish history and folklore. Górecki discussed specifically his study of these works:

- (1) Beethoven: *Ninth Symphony Op. 125*,<sup>196</sup> *String Quartets Op. 18*<sup>197</sup>
- (2) Szymanowski: *Stabat Mater, Op. 53*<sup>198</sup> and *String Quartet Op. 56*<sup>199</sup>
- (3) Mozart: orchestral works<sup>200</sup>
- (4) Skierkowski: *The Kurpie Forest in Song (vols. 1 and 2)*<sup>201</sup>

Next is the matter of pianistic facility, which determines the acoustic results the pianist can achieve. Certain movement habits and physical coordinations are necessary to produce sounds appropriate to Górecki's musical style. The following skills are essential to playing Górecki's piano music:

- (1) Playing dense textures in loud dynamics for sustained periods.
- (2) Sustaining long phrases with constant harmonic and melodic tension.
- (3) Sustaining a fast or very slow tempo for such phrases as points 1 and 2.
- (4) *Subito* dynamic changes during drastic textural and registral changes.
- (5) Playing for sustained periods in *piano* without lowering into *pianissimo*.
- (6) Distinguishing non-legato articulations clearly (esp. staccato, tenuto, accent).
- (7) Hands and arms moving rapidly between extreme registers of the keyboard.

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid, "*I am always Myself*" (*Zawsze jestem sobą*, 1993), 15.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, "*Composing is a Terribly Personal Matter*", 46-60.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, *Górecki and the Keyboard*, 262.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, "*Music is a Conversation*", 95.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, "*Music? A Visitor from Another World*", 82.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, "*Composing is a Terribly Personal Matter*", 46.

- (8) Creating noticeable dynamic changes between similar levels of loudness (ie. *fff* and *sfff* increasing to *ffff* and *sffff*).
- (9) Using sustain pedal to allow quiet notes to repeat, striking repeating notes without audible breaks between those notes.
- (10) Overriding a general performance tendency to create dynamic changes for repeating figures: repeating chord textures are often intentional and require no dynamic shading.
- (11) Playing solo melodic lines accompanied by or surrounded by chords of much thicker textures.
- (12) Tempo consistency where rhythms quicken or are more demanding.



### **III. Primary Sources: Górecki's Autographs**

The publication of *Górecki Piano Album* was preceded by the release of his manuscripts into the National Polish Library Archive. Primary sources reveal fascinating new data.<sup>202</sup> Górecki's autographs are useful to performers and teachers because they provide insight into his creative process and relationship to his predecessors. In this section, I discuss Górecki's manuscripts as they relate to study, practice, and performance.

Górecki's manuscripts show various stages in his creative process. Górecki's global recognition grew significantly in the late 1980s and early 1990s, such that he had limited time for composing new piano works or revising earlier ones. It is therefore unsurprising that his manuscripts of this period show different levels of completion: some works remained as sketches (*Mazurki*, *Op. 41*), some were in the revision process (*Op. 52 Dwa utwory*), some were revised considerably (*Op. 52 Trzy utwory dodekafoniczne*), others were augmented (*Kołysanka Op. 9*) and others already publication-ready (*Z ptasiego gniazda Op. 9a*).

#### **IIIa. Composition Process**

Unlike composers who notated technical aspects of their piano works, Górecki's manuscripts contain no fingerings, physical choreographies for complex figurations, or similar instructions to the pianist. Górecki's manuscripts document his instructions for phrasing, sound quality, articulation, timing, and structural form (repetitions, section breaks).

When drafting a work, Górecki wrote notes first, followed by dynamic indications, articulations, and phrase markings (slurs). Sometimes he wrote small amounts of complete material (notes, dynamics, articulations), other times in long stretches of notes or harmonic ideas before marking dynamics, articulations, or other expressive details. This is evidenced by deletions in *Dwa utwory*, *Op. 52*: notation beneath the

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<sup>202</sup> Górecki's manuscripts are housed in the National Library Archives (*Biblioteka Narodowa*) and found online at [www.polona.pl](http://www.polona.pl).

deletion lines is visible enough to detect the basic continuation of chords, but no dynamics or articulations as are found in other measures with the same contents.

Górecki considered tempo from a new work's inception but finalized it when the musical character or style of the entire piece was concretized (march, mazurka, folk song, etc.). His specified duration in minutes and seconds helped him adduce an appropriate tempo. Timing markings were written next: fermatas and phrase divisions using rests with fermatas between phrases or sections (in some works Górecki added or subtracted bars). Górecki also found new opportunities for augmenting, diminishing, or repeating specific motifs or phrases (*Kołysanka Op. 9*).

Considerations of pianistic expression evolved as Górecki wrote and revised. He composed at the piano, considering performance and acoustic traits as he hammered out the sound and resonance structures of a work. Thus, pedal markings are found both in completely-prepared works (Op. 9a) and works that are less complete (Op. 41), but only three works contain pedal indications from Górecki (of the seventeen posthumously-published works). Górecki's pedal markings appear in these situations:

- (1) bass tones sustained beneath changing harmonies or melodies;
- (2) lower voices split into two registers exceeding an octave;
- (3) atmospheric or ambient bitonal passages;
- (4) accumulating pitches form a large, sustained resonating texture;
- (5) rests or beats with vertical arrows pointing to pedal releases (Fig. 5.22).

### IIIb. Autograph Manuscript Contents

The following elements are found in Górecki's autograph manuscripts:

**i. Title Pages:** Each work has a title page (in Op. 52, each group of works has a separate title page). In *Spis moich utworów (List of my Works)* each opus is given its own page.

**ii. Timing:** a work's duration in minutes and seconds is found beneath or beside its last measure. Exceptionally, the timing of *Mazurki Op. 41* is entered in *Spis moich utworów*.

**iii. Place and Date of Completion:** Górecki marked the city and date he completed a draft or revision of a work (month, day, year or range of days, months, years). Dating indicates that Górecki deemed a composition worthy of publication or further revision and publication. Górecki wrote dates and places of revisions beneath initial completion dates and places. In multi-movement works conceived over a single period, place and date of completion are written at the end of the last movement (single movements are not dated or placed). Individual works in cycles contain place and date if written in multiple locations (Op. 9a, Op. 52).

**iv. Measure numbers:** Górecki numbered measures at the end of each system. Measure numbers are found in manuscripts ready for publication.

**v. Chopinisms:** Górecki's admiration of Chopin is subtly indicated by four tendencies he and Chopin had in common:

- (1) Handwritten extension of the staff if a phrase appears more continuous without a system break, or a small amount of material may be appended to the end of the system (Fig. 5.19).
- (2) Heavy criss-cross lines concealing rejected fragments or versions of a passage. In some cases, deletion lines do not cover the entire version of the passage but indicate Górecki wanted it to be deleted (Fig. 5.20).
- (3) Empty staff between staves for revisions/additions to the main text (Fig. 5.18)
- (4) Pedal signs in Chopin style (early 19th century), in similar font (Fig. 5.19)

### IIlc. Filiation, Editor Credentials

The *Górecki Piano Album* is a collection of works stemming from a single source: the autographs. Autographs are mostly from Górecki's Early period, but he revised them later: some works were closer than others to publication-ready. *Mazurki Op. 41* was only drafted, with no dynamics, articulations, or other expressive markings (timing fluctuations, tempo or character terms in Italian or Polish). Other works were reviewed to define the basic musical text and structure (*Trzy utwory dodekafoniczne* in Op. 52), but contain few or no dynamics, articulations, or other expressive markings.

The sources being at her disposal in Górecki's Katowice home studio, Anna Górecka chose works for the *Górecki Piano Album*, redacted as necessary, and added basic tempo markings or timing indications to works whose autographs do not have those markings. Górecka's markings are printed in square brackets in the *Album*. Górecki's children – Anna and Mikołaj – have contributed significantly to their father's posthumous or incomplete compositions seeing publication and performance. Alongside their professional careers, both Górecki children are music professors: their credibility is based on their training and careers combined with specialized knowledge of Górecki's thought processes and the “encoding” of his musical values they each report from childhood.<sup>203</sup> That “encoding” factored into the editing process of the posthumously-published piano works.

Anna Górecka's redaction of works in the *Album* includes markings that evince Górecki's tendencies in handling sound and tempo, aspects encoded in her approach to Górecki's music through professional experience with him (listening to music together, attending concerts, his remarks about her performances or those of other artists, musical discussions, rehearsals, etc). Górecka's performance experience in this repertoire is vast, including performances and recordings of Górecki's entire repertoire that includes piano (solo piano, chamber music, concerto, orchestral). A similar example is found in the larger, unfinished posthumous *Fourth Symphony: Tansman*

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<sup>203</sup> Górecka's description in Rotter-Kozera, *Górecki: Please Find* (2012).

*Episodes, Op. 85.*<sup>204</sup> A composer by profession (and former Górecki student), Mikołaj Górecki completed Op. 85 using three sources: (1) his knowledge of Górecki's evolution, (2) the short piano score Górecki sketched, and (3) Górecki's comments about that score when playing the piano version for Mikołaj in 2006.<sup>205</sup> Having worked alongside Górecki professionally for decades, Górecki's children are experts on the histories of this music, score filiation, and performance.

### IIId. Sources: Autograph Materials, *Spis moich utworów*

Below are Górecki autograph manuscripts (primary sources) for his piano works. These were deposited into the Biblioteka Narodowa in Warsaw (National Library) over the period this thesis was written (2020-22), their primary location until then was the Górecki family home in Katowice.

The inclusions below are title pages of works, autograph manuscripts, and entries in Górecki's notebook *Spis moich utworów* (*List of my Works*). These entries are included because they show Górecki's durations, place/date of completion of a work, place/date of revisions, and demonstrate the Chopin connections noted above. To further demonstrate that connection, two Chopin facsimiles are included which show strong resemblance to Górecki's writing.

Special contents from *Spis moich utworów* are not in the Górecki archive at the National Library but were provided for the purpose of this research.<sup>206</sup> Entries in *Spis moich utworów* include works published during Górecki's lifetime and works published posthumously.

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<sup>204</sup> Commissioned by London Philharmonic Orchestra, Southbank Centre, Adam Mickiewicz and Polish Cultural institutes in London.

<sup>205</sup> Thomas, *Symphony No. 4* in "Górecki: A Nonesuch Retrospective," 2016.

<sup>206</sup> Thanks to Anna Górecka, Co-Supervisor, for providing these important documents.

J.R.

Henryk Mikołaj Górecki

I Sonata

na fortepian

op. 6

1956

Planke dlihoty Jomah

Z planigo gniarda  
Ordre ntervoj no Jotg on.

op. 9a

(1956.)



Fig. 5.16. *Sonata Op. 6* title page.

Fig. 5.17. *Z ptasiego gniazda Op. 9a* title page.

Fig. 5.18. *Kolsanka Op. 9* last page. Timing of four minutes noted after the double bar line. Rydułtowy, 26 November 1956 noted as first place and date of completion; revisions noted below as having been completed at Katowice, 14 June, 1980.

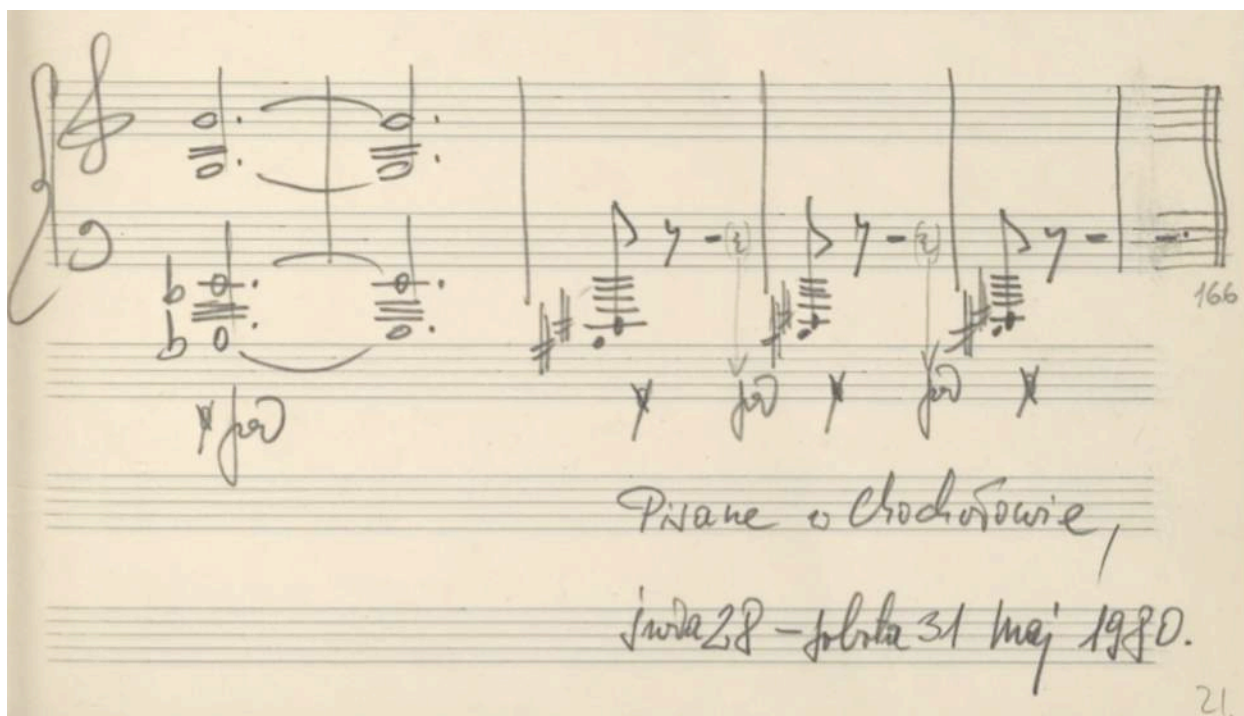


Fig. 5.19. *Mazurki Op. 41* last page. Chochółów, Wed. 28 - Sat. 31 Maj 1980 noted as place



and date of completion. Chopinism I: handwritten continuation of system. Chopinism IV: pedal signs in symbols Chopin used.

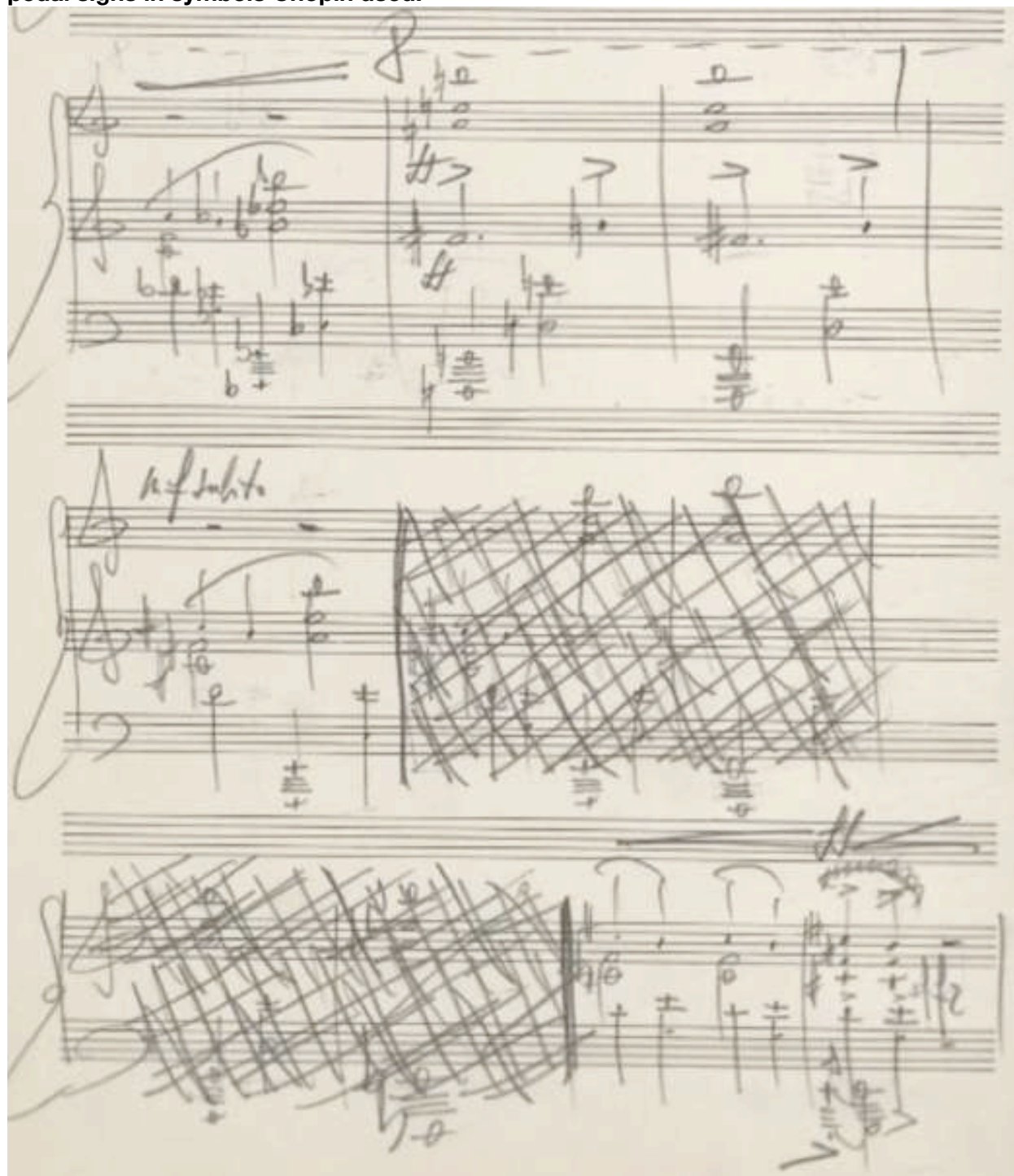


Fig. 5.20. *Dwa utwory Op. 52*. Chopinism II: heavy criss-cross deletion lines.

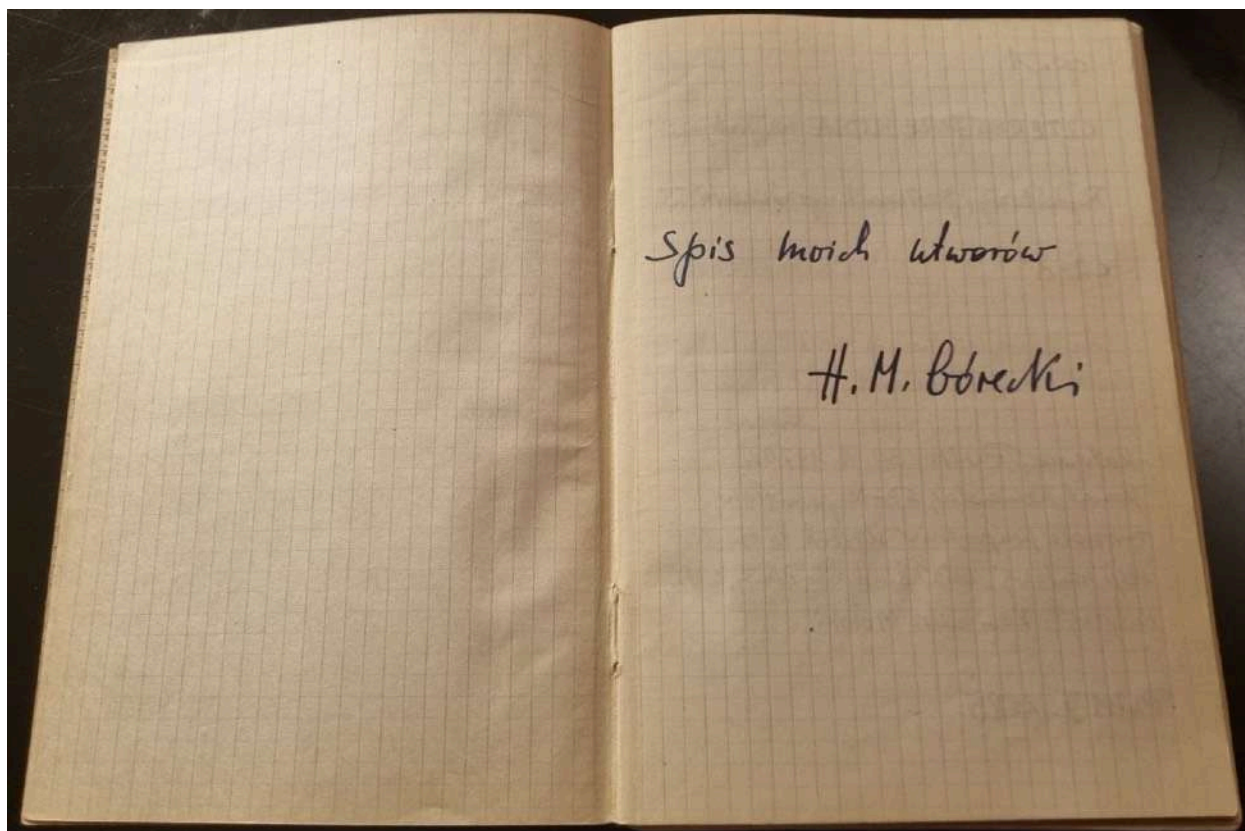


Fig. 5.21. Title page *Spis moich utworów* (*List of my Works*). Górecki archive, Katowice.



op. 1

CZTERY PRELUDIA na fortepian

Rydułtowy, październik - grudzień 1955r.

DURATA: ca 8'

Katowice, PWSM <sup>(piątek)</sup> 30. 1. 1970r.  
Koncert kameralny SPAM poświęcony  
twórczości kompozytorów śląskich w czasie  
sesji naukowej „Okład Śląska do Polskiej Kultury  
Muzycznej”. Kazimierz Moroki.

PWM I 1985.

Fig. 5.22. Four Preludes, Op. 1 entry in List of my Works. Górecki archive, Katowice.

op. 6

# I SONATA na fortepian

Rydułtowy, sierpień 1956r.

Chodzież, maj (środa 2.5.) 1984.  
piątek 11.5.

Katowice, listopad (sobota 27.10)  
(piątek 23.11) 1990.

(Zadwórze) Ruralskiej

Lerchenborg, sobota 28.7. 1984. Festiwal  
w Lerchenborgu, Engelhard Knapiak cz. I

Helsinki, niedziela 17.3. 1991. Helsinki  
Biennale, Paul Crossley coś się.

Recitativo i Mazurek

na fortepian

Rydułtowy, sierpień 1956.

Zadwórze Ruralskiej pośmiesznie

Fig. 5.23. Piano Sonata Op. 6 entry in List of my Works. Górecki archive, Katowice.



op. 41  
MAZURKI  
na fortepian

Pisałem w Chodźowie Środa 28.5.80.  
sobota 31.5.80.

DURATA: ca 9'

Fig. 5.24. Mazurki Op. 41 entry in *List of my Works*. Górecki archive, Katowice.

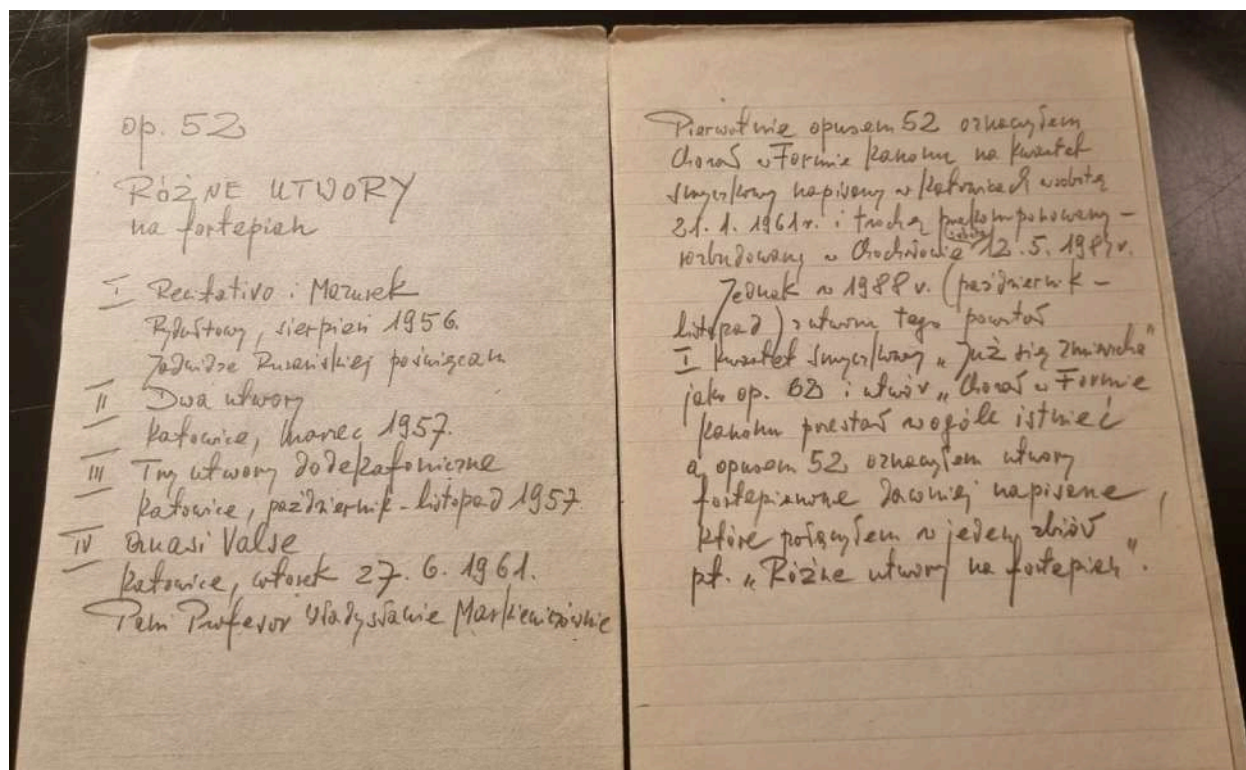


Fig. 5.25. *Różne Utwory na fortepiano* Op. 52 entry in *List of my Works*. Górecki archive, Katowice. On the left-hand page, list of the works contained in this opus. On the right-hand page, an explanation of the opus contents. Shown in Chapter 4, Fig. 4.32 and Fig. 4.33.



Op. 52

## RÓŻNE UTWORY na fortepian

### I Recitativo i Mazurek

Rydułtowy, sierpień 1956.

Jedynże Rumaniskiej postawca

### II Dwa utwory

Katowice, marzec 1957.

### III Trzy utwory dodekafoniczne

Katowice, październik - listopad 1957.

### IV Quasi Valse

Katowice, wtorek 27. 6. 1961.

Pełn Profesor Władysław Markiewicz

Fig. 5.26. *Różne Utwory na fortepiano Op. 52* entry in *List of my Works*. Left-hand page. Shown in Chapter 4, Fig. 4.32.

Pierwotnie opusem 52 oznaczam  
 Choraś w Formie kanonu na kwartet  
 smyczkowy napisany w Katowicach w sobotę  
 21. 1. 1961 r. i trochę później <sup>przełożony</sup> <sup>substa</sup> <sup>przełożony</sup> <sup>przełożony</sup> -  
 wybudowany w Chodźowie 12. 5. 1988 r.  
 Jednak w 1988 r. (październik -  
 listopad) utworu tego powstał  
 I kwartet smyczkowy "Już się zmieniło"  
 jako op. 68 i utwór "Choraś w Formie"  
 kanonu przestał w ogóle istnieć  
 a opusem 52 oznaczam utwór  
 fortepianowy dawniej napisane  
 które połączyłem w jeden zbiór  
 pt. "Różne utwory na fortepian".

Fig. 5.27. *Różne Utwory na fortepiano* Op. 52 entry in *List of my Works*. Right-hand page.  
 Left-hand page. Shown in Chapter 4, Fig. 4.33.



op. 9

KOŁYSANKA  
na fortepian

Rydułtowy, 26. listopad 1956.

Poprawiona:

Katowice, sobota 14. 6. 1980.

DURATA: ca 4'

Jeździe Rurańskiej

Baranów Sandomierski, piątek 8.9.1978.

III spotkanie Muzyczne, Halina Kochan.

Fig. 5.28. *Kołysanka* Op. 9 entry in *List of my Works*.

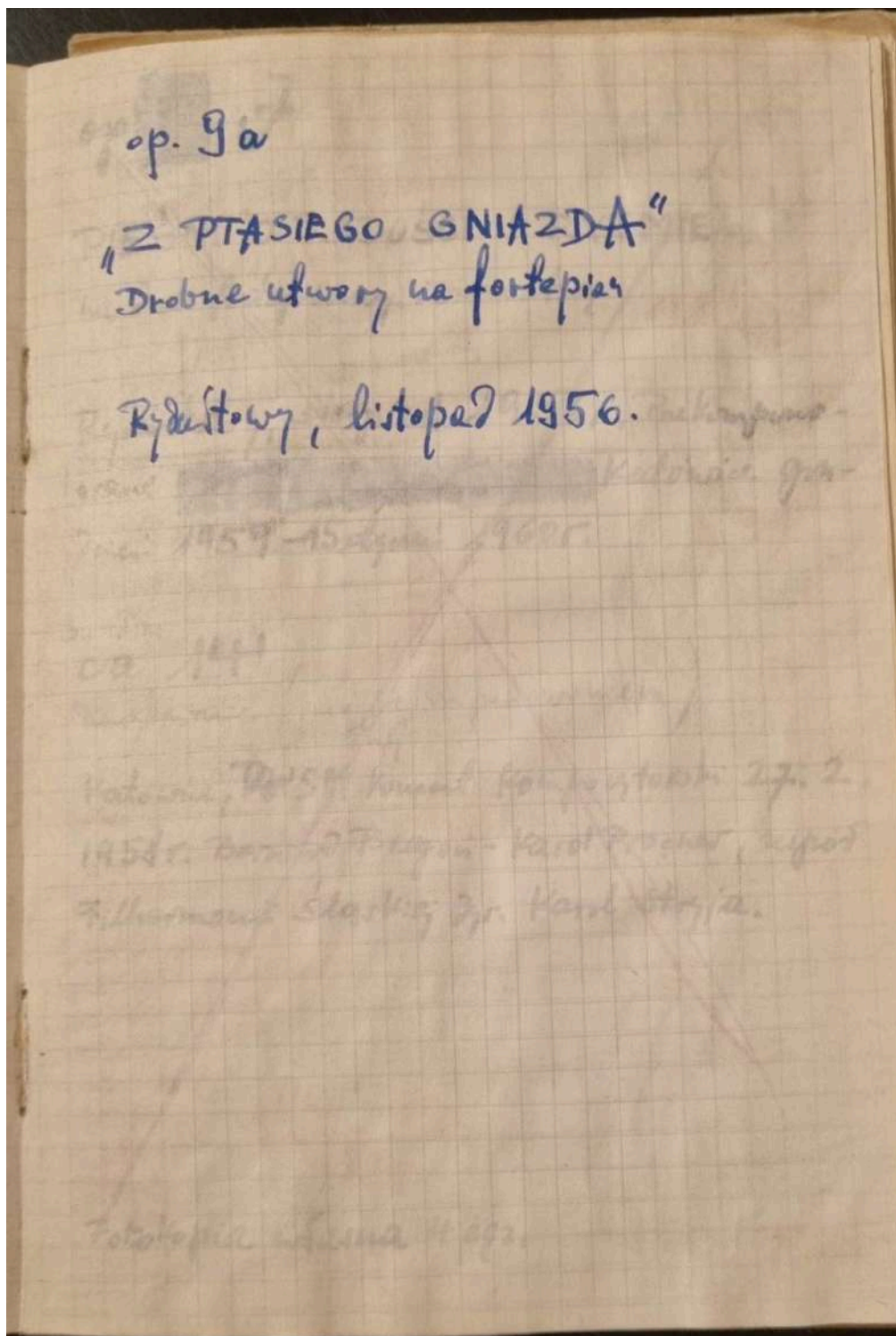
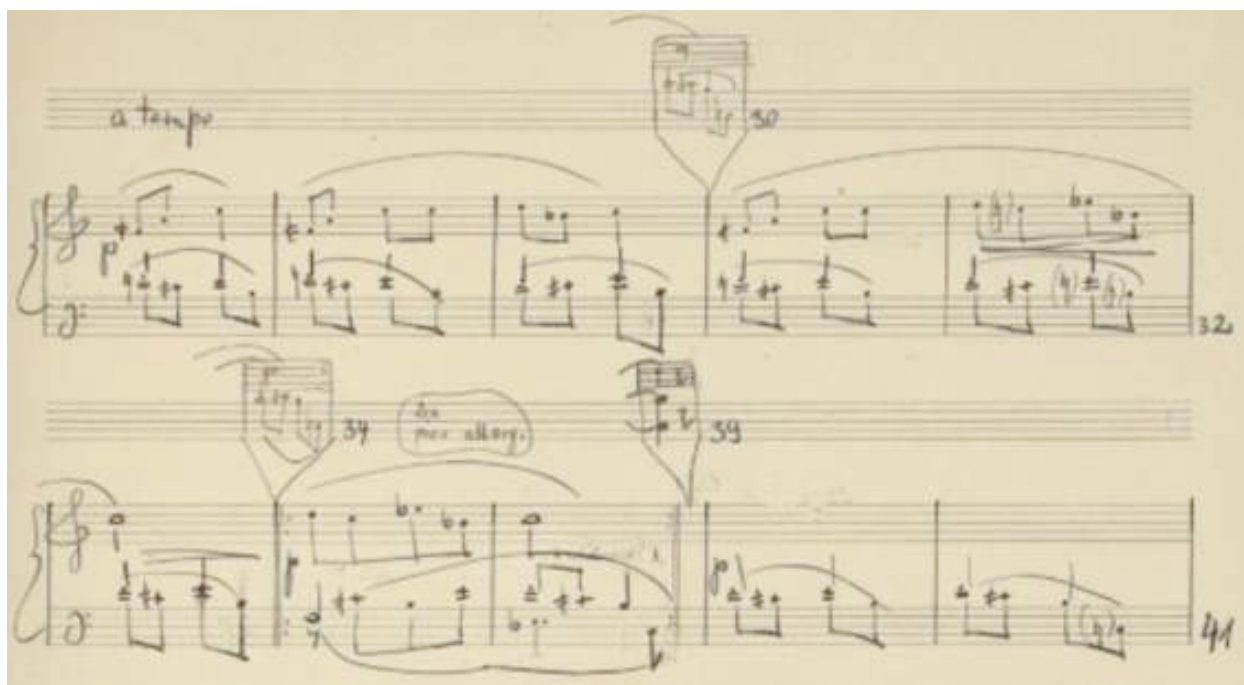
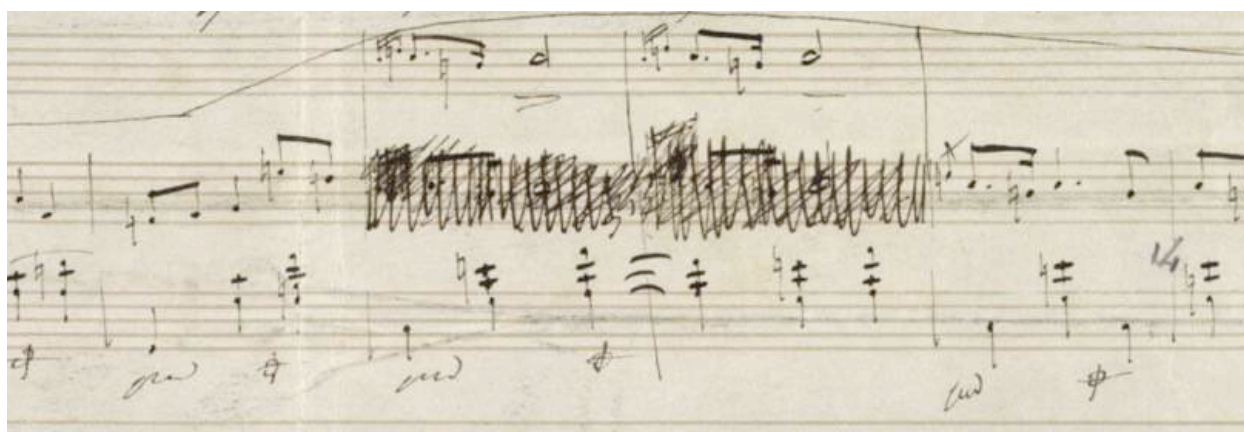


Fig. 5.29. Z ptasiego gniazda Op. 9a entry in *List of my Works*.



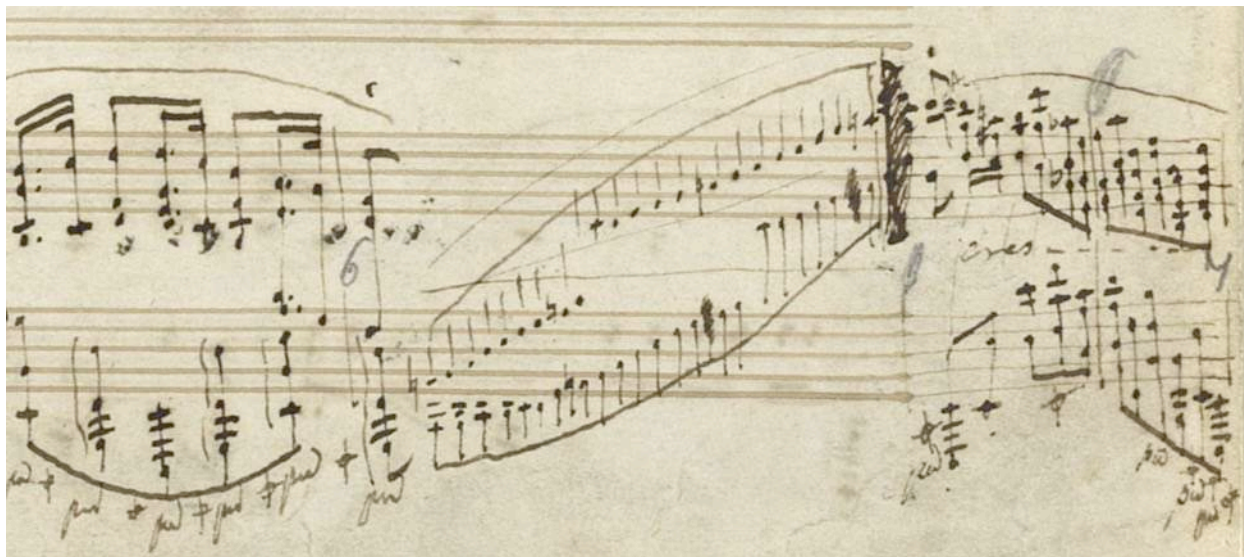
**Fig. 5.30. Autograph: *Kolysanka*, Op. 9. Chopinism III: one empty system between staves for revisions/additions to the main text. Shown in Chapter 4, Fig. 4.3.**

Examples below show Górecki's and Chopin's common habits, in *Mazurkas Op. 50 Nr. 2* (1841-42) and *Polonaise Op. 53* (1842). Fig. 5.29 shows Chopin's heavy deletion lines, empty system for revisions or additions to the main text. Fig. 5.30 shows a handwritten extension of the system, allowing the last bar of a phrase to appear on the same page as the rest of that phrase. Both figures show Chopin's pedal signs/font.



**Fig. 5.31. Chopin *Mazurki Op. 50 nr. 2*: heavy criss-cross deletion lines, empty system with revised main text, pedal font.**





**Fig. 5.32. Chopin *Polonaise Op. 53*: extension of staff to include last bar of phrase.**

By connecting Górecki through his manuscripts to Chopin, a new link is found in the Polish tradition of piano music. Not only related by an interest in Polish folk music, connections between Chopin's and Górecki's manuscripts extend to their handwriting. Studying Górecki's autograph manuscripts gives new knowledge of the texts, the composer's processes in preparing them for publication, and evolution of his works. In Górecki's case, even works not polished for publication have a remarkable coherence and completion of basic musical ideas, even if they are in an undefined artistic state (*Mazurki Op. 41* and *Trzy utwory dodekafoniczny Op. 52*).



## **Conclusion: Research Findings**

The purpose of this research was to address Górecki's solo piano repertoire in its updated state, introduce Górecki's posthumously-published solo piano works through primary sources, provide English translations of Polish secondary sources, and inform musicians of the advisable teaching and playing approaches to this music. The research findings are listed below, organized into categories of knowledge.

### **a. Górecki General Knowledge**

- (1) Górecki's posthumously-published piano works mark an advancement in knowledge of his contribution to piano literature.
- (2) Górecki was inspired by certain composers (Bartók, Chopin, Szymanowski, Ives), yet maintained a personalized approach to form, time, harmony, and piano playing.
- (3) Górecki's posthumously-published piano works give a fuller picture of his Early and Crystallization periods. Compositions from these periods display his fascination with the piano and its expressive potential.
- (4) Górecki refined and grouped Early solo piano works during his Crystallization period, evidence that he saw them as publication-worthy.
- (5) Former designations of Górecki's style periods and works should be updated to include the relationship of posthumously-published piano works and their style traits to Górecki's style in general.
- (6) Górecki has been known primarily for his symphonies, quartets, and large ensemble works. However, the piano was a constant presence in his creative life, connecting him to his Polish origins and musical roots.
- (7) Some of the posthumously-published piano works challenge currently-accepted periodization of Górecki's music.

## b. Górecki Periodization/Historical Context

- (8) Most of Górecki's posthumously-published works have a double presence in his Early period (when most were written) and Crystallization period (when he edited/recomposed them): they are a vital time capsule reflecting his long-range creative development.
- (9) Górecki's posthumously-published solo piano works justify a new periodization in his music. The new periodization should account for the solo piano works from his Early period that came to realization in his Crystallization period (Op. 9, Op. 9a, Op. 52) and works written solely in the Crystallization period or later.
- (10) I propose this new period be termed Górecki's "Reflective Evolution", a period indicating his development as piano composer from 1956-1990. This period is also justified by Górecki's revisions to *Piano Sonata Op. 6* in 1984 and 1990, his most substantial solo piano work.

## c. Górecki Primary Sources

- (11) Górecki's autograph manuscripts evidence a connection to Polish musical traditions as far back as Fryderyk Chopin.
- (12) Górecki's autographs significantly impact musical and historical understanding of his creative process.
- (13) Primary sources verify Górecki's observations and views of his own music and the music of other composers.
- (14) Primary sources indicate that Górecki was deliberate in assigning opus numbers to his compositions and grouping multiple compositions into single opuses.

(15) Primary sources confirm that Górecki calculated real-time durations for several of his posthumously-published piano works. Pulse, time, duration, metronomic values, and rhythm are vital to his music.

#### d. Górecki Secondary Sources, Translations

(16) Polish secondary sources provide an in-depth, local view of Górecki, his works, their origins, his comments about his music and the music of other composers.

(17) Future projects translating Polish sources into English would be valuable to Górecki research.

(18) Translations of Polish sources verify that it is partially accurate that Górecki's main inspiration was his connection to Poland, Polish history or folk traditions. Górecki drew on other elements in his piano works: dodecaphonic music, pedagogical works, serialism, irony/humour, as shown by his posthumously-published works.

#### e. Significance of Górecki's Posthumously-Published Piano Works

(19) The posthumously-published piano works reveal new historical connections, musical styles, and artistic ideas in Górecki's music.

(20) *Mazurki Op. 41* demonstrates Górecki's inheritance of and connection to the Polish Piano Tradition (Chopin—Szymanowski—Górecki).

(21) *Z ptasiego gniazda Op. 9a* evidences Górecki was a didactically-aware piano composer who was fascinated by Bartók's piano works for children. This work has strong cyclical qualities. The work also connects Górecki to the Polish Piano Tradition through its pedagogical qualities, since didactic works were written by the major Polish piano composers (Szymanowska, Chopin, Szymanowski, Bacewicz).



(22) *Różne utwory Op. 52* contains the sole example in Górecki's piano repertoire of 12-tone serialism/dodecaphonic music. This cycle demonstrates Górecki's specificity in cataloguing works into opuses.

(23) *Kołysanka Op. 9* could be an example of Górecki's Neoclassicism, sharing much in common with *Op. 1* and *Op. 6* (structure, form, phrasing). It has a comparable melody to the second *Prelude Op. 1*.

#### f. Performing and Teaching Górecki's Piano Works

(24) Performance training and research are valuable to learning Górecki's piano repertoire. Experts such as Anna Górecka positively impact the level of expertise performers can attain when practicing and playing this repertoire.

(25) Pedagogical consultation with Anna Górecka resulted in learning relevant skills for practicing, score reading, and listening. That knowledge enhances the teacher's level of expertise when teaching this music.

(26) Performance training with Anna Górecka led to enhancement in understanding of three domains: Górecki's musical style, specified Górecki piano works, and best practices for performing these works.



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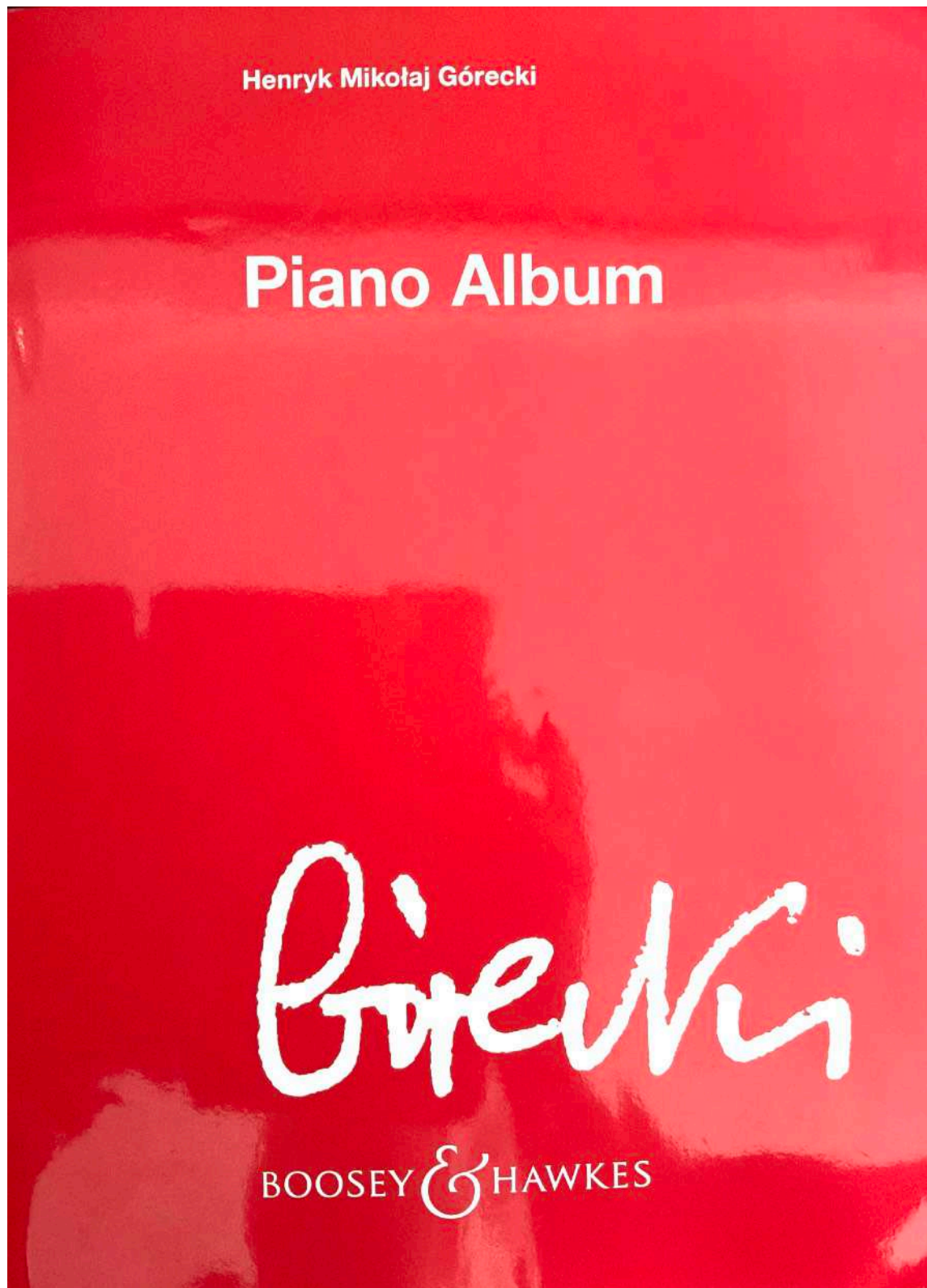
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Appendix A: Górecki Piano Album: Cover



## Appendix B: Górecki Piano Album: Table of Contents

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The publishers are grateful to Dr Ruth D Williams and Dr Stephen C Gieser for granting access to the manuscript of *Moment musical*.

## Appendix C: Search Terms

1. Górecki, Henryk Mikołaj
2. Polish piano composers
3. Polish piano tradition
4. Silesian music
5. Polish folk music
6. Górecki style and interpretation
7. Górecki symphonies
8. Postwar Poland
9. The Thaw
10. Communism in the arts
11. Polish Communism
12. Górecki periods
13. Music in Poland
14. Polish folk music
15. Polish sacred music
16. Polish secular music
17. Polish symphonies
18. Polish Nationalism
19. Polish Catholicism
20. Górecką, Jadwiga (née Rurańska)
21. Górecka, Anna
22. Górecki, Mikołaj
23. Kilar, Wojciech
24. Penderecki, Krzysztof
25. Chojnacka, Elżbieta
26. Bacewicz, Grażyna
27. Szymanowski, Karol
28. Bartók, Béla
29. Ives, Charles
30. Classical music in Poland
31. 20th-century music analysis
32. *Sonorystyka* and sonorism
33. Górecki Posthumously-published works
34. Scholarship on Górecki piano music/works
35. Analysis of Górecki piano works
36. Analysis of Górecki chamber music
37. Performance of Górecki's music
38. Górecki Piano Album
39. Górecki i jego utwory
40. Górecki i jego osobowość
41. Górecki i jego styl muzyczny
42. Górecki i jego krytyka wykonań jego utworów
43. Górecki i jego uczniowie
44. Górecki i Akademia Muzyczna w Katowicach

45. Górecki i Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie
46. *Symfonia pieśni żałosnych op. 36*
47. *Scontri* Góreckiego
48. Warszawa Jesień
49. Kameralistyki i Górecki
50. Bolesławska-Lewandowska, Beata
51. Mirka, Danuta
52. Tomaszewski, Mieczysław
53. Górecki i Chopin
54. Szymanowski i Górecki
55. Harmonika Góreckiego
56. Melodyki Góreckiego
57. Kontekst i okoliczności utworów Góreckiego
58. Forma w muzyce Góreckiego
59. Rola fortepianu w muzyce Góreckiego
60. Górecki i XX wiek
61. Kompozytorzy z Katowic
62. Kompozytorzy z Polski
63. Polska i Górecki
64. Górecki i Akademia Muzyczna
65. Estetyka muzyki Góreckiego
66. Historia muzyki Góreckiego
67. PZPR i Górecki
68. PRL i Górecki
69. PRL i muzyka
70. Katolicyzm i Górecki
71. Wiara i muzyka polska
72. Górecki i muzyka
73. Górecki i rodzina
74. Historia Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego
75. Utworów Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego
76. Analiza porównawcza utworów Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego
77. Wykonania polskiej muzyki ludowej
78. Wykonania symfonii polskich
79. Polskie analizy utworów Góreckiego
80. Matka Bolesna i muzyka polska

**Appendix D: Permission and Licensing from Boosey and Hawkes regarding reprinted excerpts from *Górecki Piano Album*.**



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McGill University

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To: Jarred Dunn <dunnjarred@gmail.com>

Tue, Sep 20, 2022 at 9:18 AM

Dzień dobry,

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pozdrawiam,

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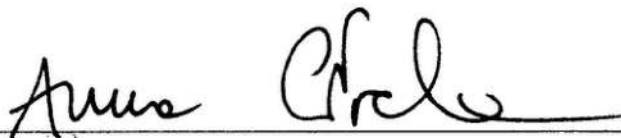
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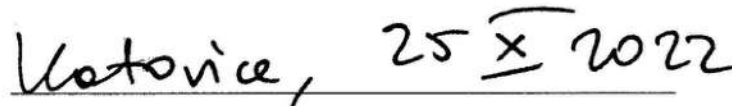
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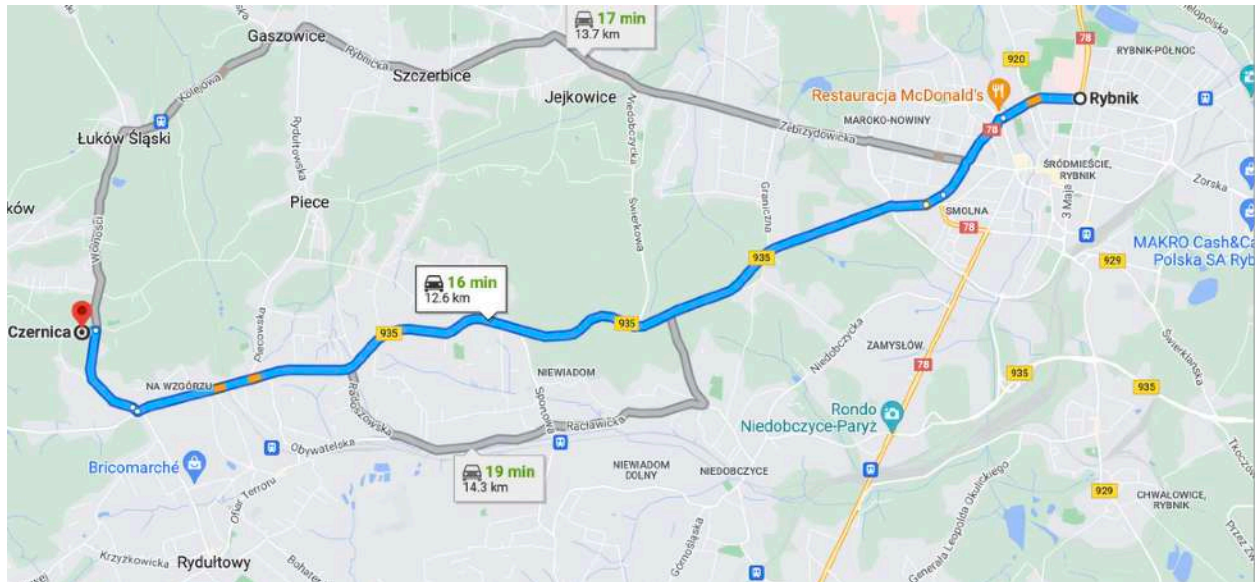
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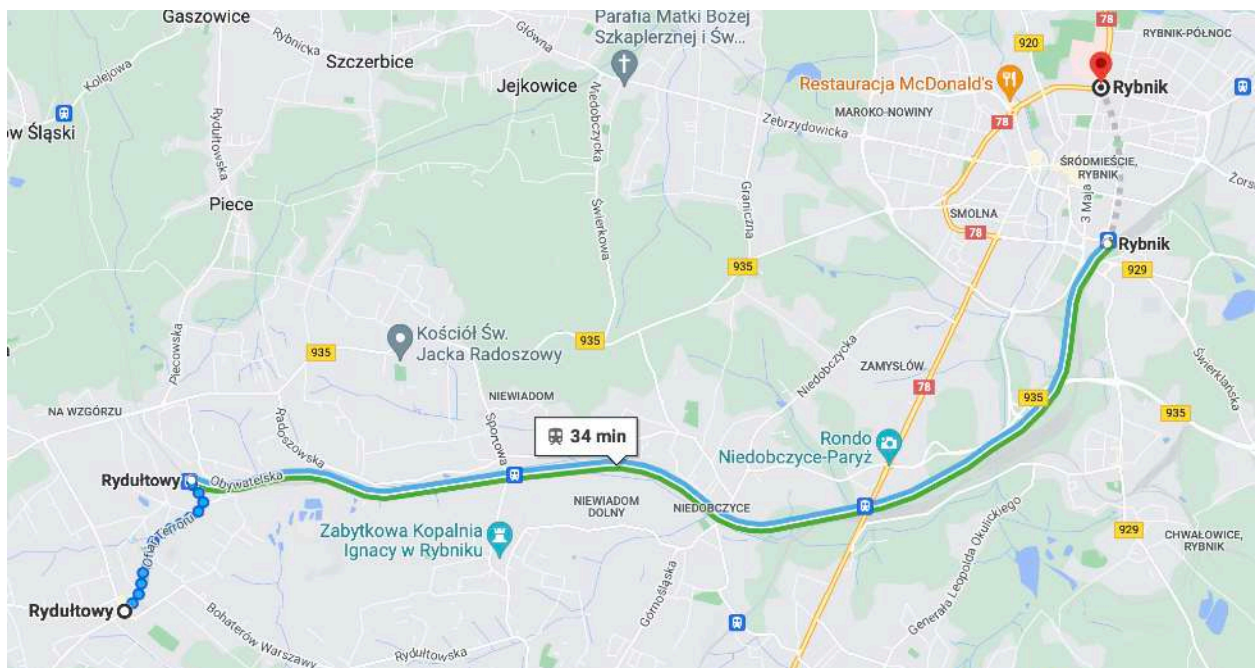
  
Anna Górecka

  
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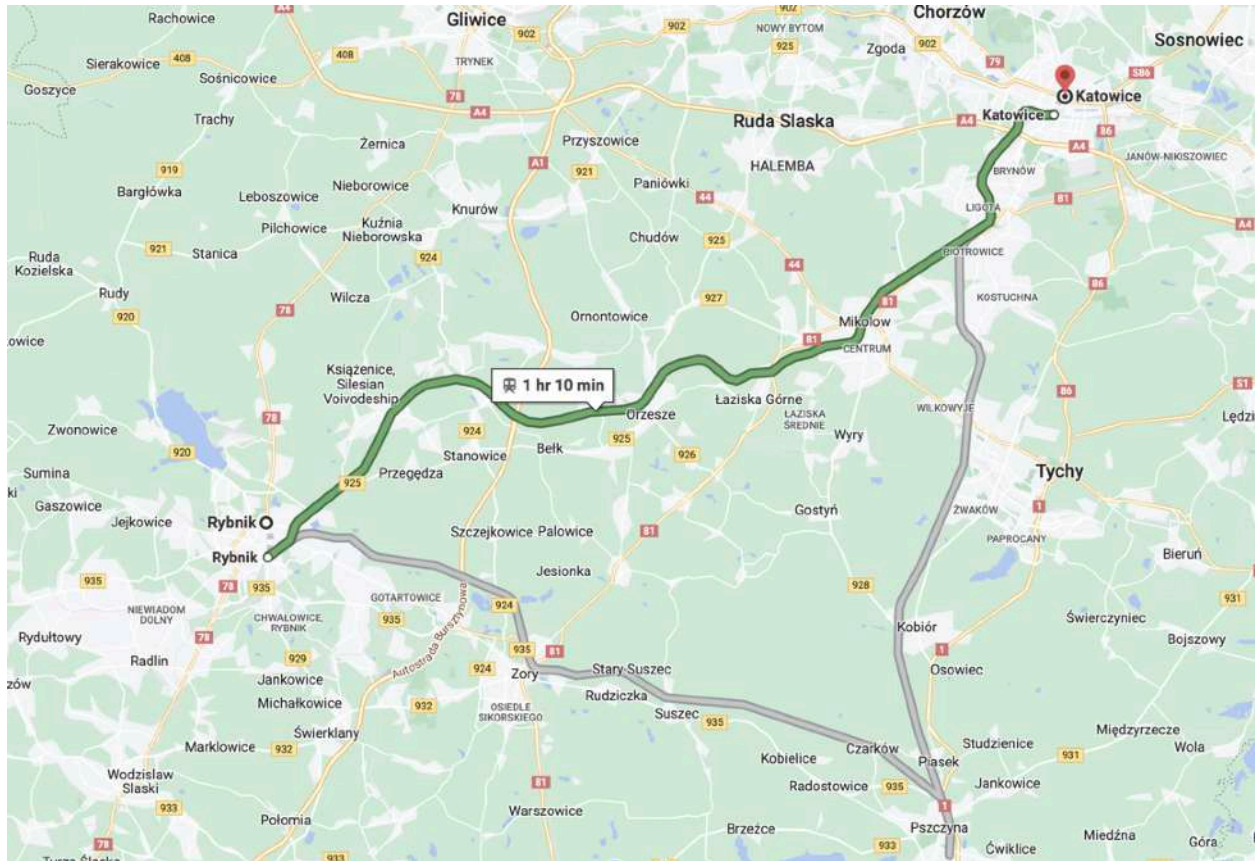
**Appendix H: Route from Czernica to Rybnik (as of 2022). Górecki was born in Czernica and grew up in Rydułtowy.**



**Appendix I: Route from Rydułtowy to Rybnik (as of 2022). Górecki was born in Czernica and grew up in Rydułtowy.**

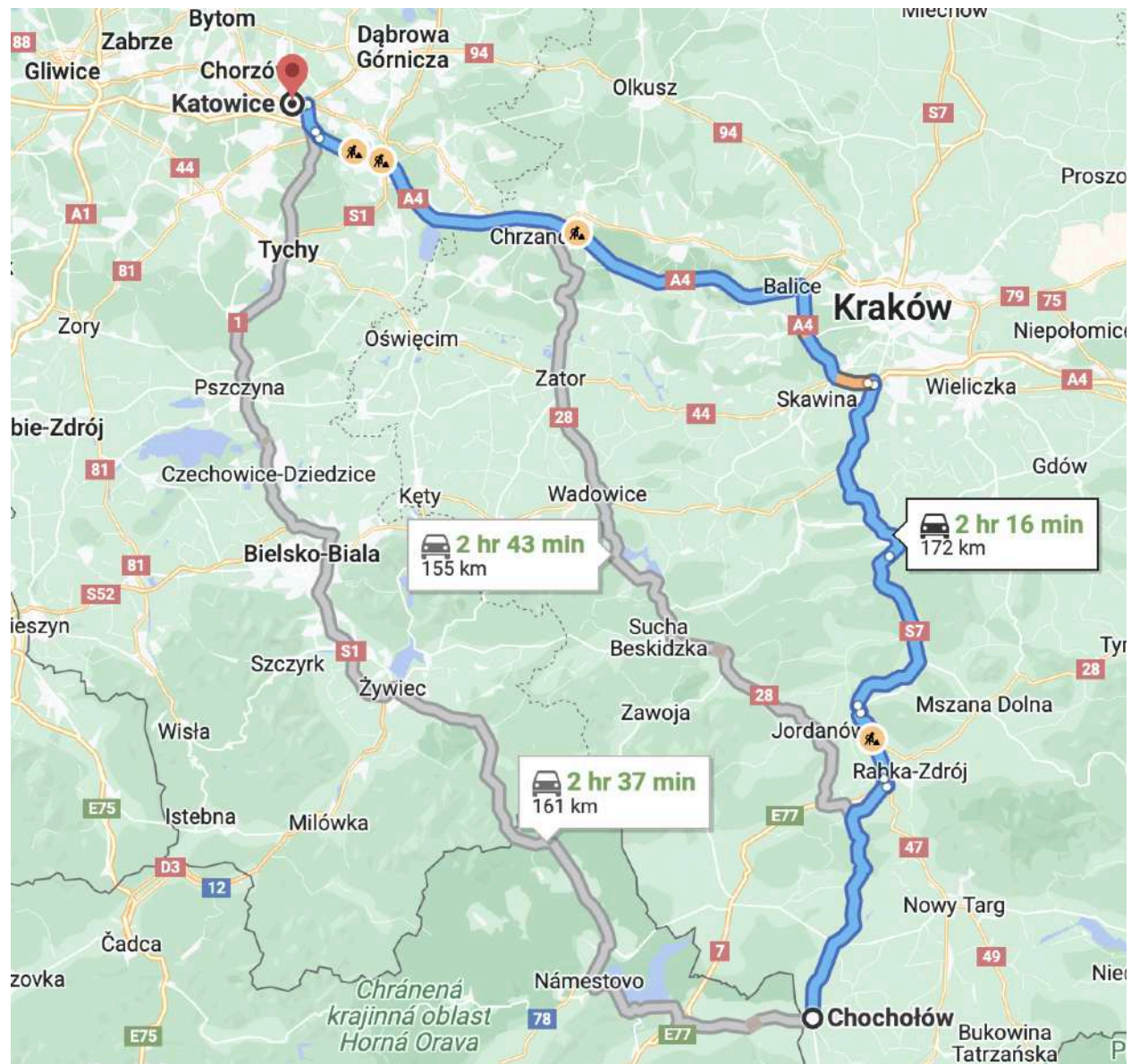


**Appendix J: Route from Rybnik to Katowice (as of 2022). Rybnik was the location of Górecki's first music school training, in 1955 he began to study formally in Katowice at the Higher School of Music.**





**Appendix K: Map of route from Katowice to Podhale (Chochół). He spent many summer months in Chochół, where he edited *Sonata Op. 6*.**



**Appendix L: Route from Katowice to Ząb (as of 2022), where Górecki bought a home and worked for about 15 years. Ząb is in Podhale (Małopolskie) near Zakopane. Górecki's childhood locations (Rybnik and Rydułtowy) are seen on the leftmost side of the map.**

