

*“It is my world,  
to which you  
are invited...”*

*Composers’ self-  
reflection in the*

*programme books of the Warsaw  
Autumn (1999–2016)*

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## ABSTRACT

Although we usually treat writing and speaking about music as a secondary activity in relation to creation and performance, discourse about the latest compositional output is now gaining considerable independence. The need for creative artists to work together with institutions and with a whole network of mediators means that in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, verbal discourse has played even a key role, and the search for a nuanced and original language that might attract potential listeners to new repertoire is proving a serious challenge.

For contemporary music, festivals remain the most important – and at times almost the only – forum enabling works to exist in the social awareness. Hence an important area in which discourse linked to contemporary music is shaped consists of festival books and composers' comments on their works. The latter help composers to forge their own image, at the same time helping or hindering the creation of an additional plane of understanding with potential listeners.

This text represents an attempt to distinguish the main thematic areas to appear in composers' self-reflection on the pages of the programme books of the "Warsaw Autumn" International Festival of Contemporary Music from 1999 to 2016, when Tadeusz Wielecki was appointed director of the festival. We will find here remarks on inspiration, creative process and musical language, as well as technology, nature and modes of listening. Notions taken from physics, chemistry and biology also frequently enter descriptions of music, and art becomes a sort of commentary to modern science. Finally, a separate strand consists of notes in which composers not so much shed light on the techniques they use or build contexts for their works, but rather seek to create plays on words as an alternative to musical compositions.

From a broader perspective, analysis of composers' comments may help us to answer the question as to how such comments shape the plane of communication with potential listeners, what they tell us about discourse on the subject of new music, and the extent to which they expand the categories of its interpretation.

**Keywords:** Warsaw Autumn, composers' self-reflection, programme notes, contemporary music, festivals

## 1. THE WARSAW AUTUMN OF TADEUSZ WIELECKI

Tadeusz Wielecki's appointment as director of the Warsaw Autumn, in 1999, brought the implementation of some crucial changes, initiated by the previous director, Krzysztof Knittel (1995–1998), and at the same time a symbolic entry into the twenty-first century.<sup>1</sup> More works from the very latest output entered the repertoire,

including first performances. The festival programme was enhanced with multimedia and theatrical work. Finally, the concert space itself was expanded to encompass not just concert halls and studios, but also art galleries, post-industrial interiors and large sports halls. A new young audience began attending Warsaw Autumn events. "Over the last ten years, the festival has enjoyed bumper attendances, which are attributable not to any pandering to the public with 'more accessible' programmes – on the contrary, young listeners appreciate in particular music that is progressive and thoroughly 'modern', which is a sign of the times",<sup>2</sup> noted Andrzej Chłopecki in 2011. A permanent feature since the 54<sup>th</sup> edition of the festival has been the Little Warsaw Autumn, created with the youngest audiences in mind. Contemporary music, and the festival with it, has also acquired a group of committed young music critics, publishing texts in the periodical *Glissando*, on websites and in blogs.

Włodzimierz Kotoński points out that although Wielecki continued to work together with the Repertoire Committee, it was his vision for the festival that proved decisive.<sup>3</sup> Wielecki himself describes his work in creative terms: "composing a programme and selecting compositions is a work similar to that of a musical composer: there is a preliminary plan of sounds, timbres and rhythms. But in order to hear the truth, one also needs to open to the unknown and follow one's intuition."<sup>4</sup>

Wielecki led the Warsaw Autumn for almost two decades, which represented a cohesive and significant period in the festival's history, featuring the rise of new musical trends, new media and new technologies. As Wielecki emphasised in an interview for *Glissando*: "The festival is at present the only place where one can, with 'impunity', present the latest trends and works, including experimental works in which not everything is determined, although they open up some vistas for the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. D. Szwarcman, (2007). *Czas Warszawskich Jesieni. O muzyce polskiej lat 1945-2007*. Warsaw: Stentor, p. 96. For Szwarcman, the festival's history provided a pretext for sketching the history of Polish music over successive post-war decades. Such an approach confirms the leading position of the Warsaw Autumn in Polish musical life.

<sup>2</sup> A. Chłopecki, (2011). *Muzyka współczesna*. In: A. Chłopecki, J. Grotkowska (eds.), *Raport o stanie muzyki polskiej*. Warsaw: Instytut Muzyki i Tańca / Institute of Music and Dance, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> M. Gąsiorowska, (2010). *Rozmowy z Włodzimierzem Kotońskim*. Warsaw: Warszawska Jesień, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> T. Wielecki, (2011). [foreword]. In: W. Bońkowski, E. Radziwon-Stefaniuk, A. Suprynowicz, E. Szczepańska-Lange (eds.), 54. "Warsaw Autumn". *International Festival of Contemporary Music*. Warsaw: Warsaw Autumn, [henceforth WA 2011], p. 12. Quotations from the (English-language versions of) Warsaw Autumn programme books have been presented here as they appear in the original Festival publications, with all the idiosyncrasies of language.

future."<sup>5</sup> In his foreword to the programme of the 56th edition of the festival, however, Wielecki writes that the Warsaw Autumn is a "festival with a memory".<sup>6</sup> Tangible evidence of that memory is provided by the catalogues of composers, works and performers to have appeared in previous editions that are included in successive programme books. Thus is created a festival archive, augmented year on year. And it is that archive and the canon of twentieth-century "classics" that is built upon it which constitute a proper context for the newest works to come into being. "This relationship of the rich and greatly varied 'new music' (that we are coming to recognize) to works that already have a place in our cultural awareness and are well established in culture could be compared to a journey into the unknown – explains Wielecki – We undertake the journey in order to discover new lands, but also to rediscover again, looking back from afar, the place from which we departed – our place."<sup>7</sup> So despite the distinct thematic strands featured in successive editions, the Warsaw Autumn has retained the hallmarks of a survey festival on an international scale, and "the memory of value"<sup>8</sup> has determined the presentation of recognised works from the recent past, including works by Polish composers who took their first artistic steps at this very festival years before.

Through all these years, the Warsaw Autumn has remained a festival rooted in the history of the avant-garde and linked primarily to the tradition of "composed music".<sup>9</sup> That has distinguished it both from festivals of

improvised music, such as "Musica Genera", and also from more commercially-orientated festivals presenting "established" twentieth-century classics or currents from the intersection of popular and serious music, such as "Sacrum Profanum".

In 2016, when Tadeusz Wielecki bade farewell to the Warsaw Autumn, the term "TW Generation" was even coined. Krzysztof Stefański blogged the following about Wielecki's departure: "In his speech, he mentioned that successive editions of the festival were like 'the rings of a tree', and he ended by reciting a children's poem. It was neat, with no superfluous pathos."<sup>10</sup>

## 2. DISCOURSE ON CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AND ITS INFLUENCE

For contemporary music, festivals remain the most important – and at times the only – forum enabling works to exist in the social awareness. The increasing diversification and specialisation of festivals, as well as the common celebration of musical events, determine their strength and appeal. On the other hand, factors such as social isolation, an uncertain financial situation and a lack of permanent institutional support can weaken the position of contemporary output.<sup>11</sup> Diagnosing the situation of the newest music in Poland, Wielecki declares: "We are still in a state of fighting: for audiences, for tastes, for interest among the media, bureaucrats and politicians – otherwise, we will become marginalised, and that would mean the marginalisation of a whole area of reality."<sup>12</sup> Taking full advantage of the possibilities offered by a festival also entails additional challenges, since people's contact with art is determined not only by individuals and institutions, but also by words, images, technology and perception.<sup>13</sup> As Wielecki notes: "Notions and words

5 M. Mendyk, J. Topolski, (2006). Wywiad z Tadeuszem Wieleckim. *Glissando* No 8, p. 121.

6 T. Wielecki, (2013). The new in context. In: B. Bolesławska-Lewandowska, W. Bońkowski, E. Radziwon-Stefaniuk, A. Suprynowicz (eds.), 56. "Warsaw Autumn". *International Festival of Contemporary Music*. Warsaw: Warsaw Autumn, [henceforth WA 2013], p. 7.

7 Ibid. The texts of Tadeusz Wielecki (both in the forewords to programme books and in smaller festival brochures written with youngsters in mind) constitute a phenomenon which certainly merits separate discussion. Wielecki's language is characterised by considerable inventiveness, strong use of metaphor, abstract plays on words, stylisation (often of a lofty and biblical character), and also a dynamism resulting from numerous exclamations and rhetorical questions.

8 "I view Warsaw Autumn as a vehicle on which we carry the memory of value in subsequent epochs." See T. Wielecki, (2007). [foreword]. In: E. Radziwon-Stefaniuk, A. Suprynowicz, E. Szczepańska-Lange (eds.), 50th "Warsaw Autumn". *International Festival of Contemporary Music*. Warsaw: Warsaw Autumn, [henceforth WA 2007], p. 11.

9 See A. S. Dębowska, (2013). Jesień przeżywa swą wiosnę. *Warszawska Jesień, Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21.09.2013.

[http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,14642288,Jesien\\_przezywa\\_swoja\\_wiosne\\_\\_Warszawska\\_Jesien.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,14642288,Jesien_przezywa_swoja_wiosne__Warszawska_Jesien.html)

10 See <http://nibytygodnik.pl/2016/09/25/dziennik-wj-cz-5/>

11 Monika Żyła writes more on this phenomenon in her article: Festiwale muzyki współczesnej – instrukcja obsługi [Festivals of contemporary music: An instruction manual], *Glissando*, 2016, No. 28, pp. 89–93. She took as a case study the MaerzMusik in Berlin.

12 M. Mendyk, J. Topolski, (2006). *Op. cit.*, p. 121.

13 Art sociologists call this phenomenon cultural agency. As Nathalie Heinrich stresses, the notion of agency is being gradually replaced by such terms as "distribution" and "institutions", and "mediation can even contribute to a creative process, when individuals authorising and 'accrediting' a work (those producing exhibitions, publications and commentaries)

change. And that all translates into the programme, concept, setting and promotion of concerts, into *what* is presented and *how*.<sup>14</sup>

Ian Pace, a British pianist specialising in contemporary music, who is also an active journalist and musicologist, argues that although we usually treat writing about music as a secondary activity in relation to creation and performance, discourse about music, understood as (written and spoken) utterances and the views they articulate,<sup>15</sup> has gained considerable independence. The essential cooperation pursued by creative artists with institutions and with a whole network of mediators, such as cultural animators, publishers, record labels, critics and musicologists, means that in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, verbal discourse has played even a key role. Its huge causative power is manifest particularly in relation to living composers. "Whether such things are explicit or implicit [...], the discourse and the value judgements contained within in essence determine who and what is to be commissioned, which works are to be performed, who is to perform them and so on".<sup>16</sup>

Although music by nature is resistant to linguistic reduction, the more assimilated, "reified" conventions and expressive categories we have at our disposal,<sup>17</sup> the easier it is for us to say something about a specific work. The difficulties pertaining to "nominalising" have already been discussed from the perspective of hermeneutics by Carl Dahlhaus, who understands that process as finding subjects in sentences that tell of a subjectless piece of music. That led to the reshaping, or *Überformung*, to which musical perception succumbs in the process

of linguistic interpretation.<sup>18</sup> In Pace's opinion, the language of criticism and promotion nowadays often have recourse to the language of marketing, aspiring to "maximum immediacy and comprehensibility", with "minimal ambiguity".<sup>19</sup> That favours the use of conventional, worn linguistic phrases.<sup>20</sup>

Contemporary music presents particular difficulties, since we are often lacking ready-made nouns and expressive categories to describe it. Consequently, its evaluation is also fraught with danger, and works heard for the first time may arouse varied reactions and opinions. Referring to British realia, Pace emphasises that the category of modernism is often regarded as oversimplified and unfashionable, and that in music criticism it is accompanied by tendentiousness and a paucity of terms.<sup>21</sup> Thus the search for a new, nuanced and creative language that will warm potential listeners to this current remains a real challenge. In concluding his text, the author stresses "the necessity of developing, expanding and refining discourses which allow for forms of cultural valorization that are based upon coherent and defensible alternatives to those of exchange value."<sup>22</sup> Although Pace's argumentation is linked strictly to British musical culture and the market there, his closing appeal applies equally to Poland and other European countries as well.

### 3. PROGRAMME NOTES

One important area in which discourse linked to contemporary music is shaped consists of festival books and composers' notes on their works. In the case of first

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constitute an integral part of the artistic milieu, turning art into a game played between artists, mediators and receivers." See N. Heinich, (2010). *Socjologia sztuki*, A. Karpowicz (transl.). Warsaw: Oficyna Naukowa, p. 93. Fr. orig. (2001). *La sociologie de l'art*. Paris: Editions La Découverte.

14 M. Mendyk, J. Topolski, (2006). *Op. cit.*, p. 121.

15 "Due to certain reservations to do with extreme relativist tendencies, over-emphasis on hegemonic ideologies, and a general lack of self-reflexivity, I have not engaged with [...] text of Foucault in his chapter" explains Pace. However, his text largely concerns market mechanisms, the work of institutions and also the situation of music criticism, which brings his exposition close to the ideas of Michel Foucault. See I. Pace, (2009). Verbal Discourse as Aesthetic Arbitrator in Contemporary Music. In: Björn Heile (ed.), *The Modernist Legacy: Essays on New Music*. Farnham: Ashgate, p. 81.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 84.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

18 See C. Dahlhaus, (1973). Das „Verstehen“ von Musik und die Sprache der musikalischen Analyse. In: Peter Faltin, Hans-Peter Reinecke (Eds.), *Aufsätze zur semiotischen Theorie, Ästhetik und Soziologie der musikalischen Rezeption*. Köln: Volk, p. 43. Polish translation: C. Dahlhaus, (1988). „Rozumienie“ muzyki i język analizy muzycznej. In: Idem, *Idea muzyki absolutnej i inne studia*, A. Buchner (transl.). Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, p. 277.

19 I. Pace, (2009). *Op. cit.*, p. 88

20 In Polish musical letters, this phenomenon was aptly stigmatised, with a hefty dose of irony, by Andrzej Chłopecki, who invoked a "phraseological vade-mecum of effective music criticism", consisting of a number of general terms such as "honing technique" and "intense expression". See A. Chłopecki, (2016). *Zabobony gasnącego stulecia. Kontynuacje*. Warszawa-Kraków: Fundacja Polskiej Rady Muzycznej, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, pp. 70-71.

21 I. Pace, (2009). *Op. cit.*, p. 91-92.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 99.

performances, we encounter a characteristic situation in which the text remains for the listener or the critic one of the few sources of knowledge about a new work. So it may serve – as indeed it often does – as a clue to the language and terms in which one can speak about that output. Gordon Downie argues that programme notes can also be suffused with marketing-speak, and he treats the composer-receiver relationship in terms of a seller and a client. In practice, as Downie sees it, a relationship of trust is built up precisely through the skilful construction of programme notes:<sup>23</sup> "Composers can [...] build such relationships by employing classes of clichégenic or stereotypical terms and expressions to form the lexical nexus and discursive focus of so-called *programme notes*, those texts that function to further determine and constrain that network of signifiers that manage the impressions given to the composers' customers."<sup>24</sup> One may polemicise, of course, about the extent to which a market-orientated research perspective narrows down the entire issue, but there is no doubt that texts help a composer to forge his own image, at the same time helping or hindering the creation of an additional plane of understanding with a potential "customer".

There follows an attempt to distinguish the main thematic areas to appear in composers' self-reflection on the pages of Warsaw Autumn programme books from the years 1999–2016, with those areas profiled in brief and illustrated with selected examples. First, it should be stressed that the material used will be highly diverse. The notes vary in length and weight: from laconic factographic commentary, through ampler texts that are nonetheless clearly dictated by circumstances, to individualised, eloquent mini-treatises containing reflections of a personal and aesthetic nature. We will also inevitably juxtapose names of various standing, representing different generations. Although the notes of particular composers certainly merit careful and separate treatment, including in relation to their output, such a "global" cross-section has one major advantage: it enables us to discern an overall picture and better reflects the survey idea that informs the whole festival.

<sup>23</sup> The author has no hesitation in mentioning "corporations" such as Boosey & Hawkes, Chester Novello and Faber Music. He also employs a number of terms such as "impression management", "other-enhancement" and "ingratiation" to describe psychological techniques enabling a composer to control the reactions of potential clients. See G. Downie, (2008). Cultural Production as Self-Surveillance: Making the Right Impression, *Perspectives of New Music* 46/1, pp. 198–200.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

From a broader perspective, analysis of the content of composers' commentaries may help to answer the question as to how they shape an additional plane of communication with receivers, what they tell us about discourse on the subject of new music and the extent to which they expand the categories of its description.

### *a) Inspiration and creative process*

The composer Jonathan Harvey, author of the extensive study *Music and Inspiration* (1999), defines inspiration as the "catalyst of the creative process" and the "hidden cause" of creative work.<sup>25</sup> He also points to a number of peculiarities related to this category. They include the fact that, although answers to the question of the nature of inspiration vary greatly, no one involved in music has any doubt that it exists. Inspiration is also a highly personal domain, largely inaccessible to research, and at the same time an experience familiar to all composers, forging a special sense of community among them. Among the different meanings of the notion of inspiration, Harvey mentions "drawing in of breath", and also a mystical "divine influence" or a "sudden brilliant or timely idea",<sup>26</sup> which is the effect of the conscious and unconscious incubation of important creative ideas.<sup>27</sup> Inspiration understood as a sudden mental "illumination" may accompany the artist at different stages in work on a piece.

One of the most important functions of programme notes is to show a composition from the perspective of its creation. In the age of Internet communication, when systematic diaries and traditional correspondence are rare, programme notes represent a valuable contribution to our knowledge of creative inspiration. They reveal its sources, pinpoint the moments of its arrival and document the unfolding of the creative process. They also place works within a broader context, inscribing them within a composer's inner development, and within a continuous process of asking questions and solving problems.

<sup>25</sup> See J. Harvey, (1999). *Music and Inspiration*. London: Faber and Faber, pp. ix–x.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15. I write in greater length about Harvey's book and his research into inspiration in the article E. Schreiber, (2016). „Mam w sobie wiele osobowości". Kompozytor i inspiracja w pismach Jonathana Harveya. In: Marcin Trzęsiok (ed.), *W ogrodzie muzyki. Eseje interdyscyplinarne*, Katowice: Akademia Muzyczna im. Karola Szymanowskiego w Katowicach, pp. 133–150.



In their notes, composers refer to the actual experience of inspiration, attempt to capture its nature and describe its unequivocal connection with a work. Sławomir Kupczak, who generally prefers to remain silent about his compositions or to speak of them in a reluctant tone, in his note to the open-air performance piece *Nie wiem* [I don't know] (2016) describes inspiration as the principal impulse of creation: "I like the moment when 'I don't know' fuels creative work. 'I don't know' makes me anxious, interrupts my sleep, deprives me of pleasure; it is like a drug without which everyday life has no sense. [...] It is a question. The answer to 'I don't know' does not simplify anything".<sup>28</sup> Onutė Narbutaitė, in her note to *Melody in the Garden of Olives* (2000), quotes lines from the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke, and also a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke, before concluding: "It was not my intention, however, to illustrate any of those reflections with the sound of my music. They remained an inspiration – a region in which music is born, and a stimulus for singing. It is a kind of music that strives to sing, and sing only".<sup>29</sup>

Another important element of self-reflection is reference to the concept of a composition, which often remains elusive even to the composer themselves. Brigitta Muntendorf, in her note to *Key of Presence* (2014–2015), describes the vision of "a revolving door to the present that guided things from the past, present and future through", before elucidating: "I'm writing now about something that triggers the composition, but that is not the composition itself. A composition can never be, it's always an idea that is transforming at every moment of resonance."<sup>30</sup> Dominik Karski, in a note to *Certainty's Flux* (2013), wrestles with his own notion of a work after its composition and seeks a suitable metaphor to express the character of a composition: "Having completed *Certainty's Flux* very recently, and before its premiere, I'm finding this to be a very elusive work to describe. But, with a fresh image of the piece in my mind, it occurs to me that listening to it might be like a walk in a park... but in the opposite sense to the idiom's meaning

– a walk in a very strange, even hostile park."<sup>31</sup> Tristan Murail draws attention to the difficulty arising from the premature titling of works and, in a note to *Winter Fragments* (2000), underscores the difference between a work's conception and its actual form in sound: "In principle I do not like giving titles to my pieces before they are finished; doing so is a bit like counting chickens before they are hatched. In its final shape a composition can differ much from the original plan. A plan is a general concept and ideas for sounds, whereas the final product [consists of] sounds organized in time. There is a gulf between the two."<sup>32</sup>

Programme notes document various factors and moments when inspiration strikes. Ondřej Adamek, in his commentary to *Karakuri - Poupée mécanique* (2011), admits that even at an advanced stage in his work on a composition, "I hadn't found a convincing *raison d'être* for the sounds and motions that I'd discovered quite intuitively while experimenting with my own voice and arm. The pieces lacked a story, a connecting thread."<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, the integrating thread consisted of the titular mechanical doll from nineteenth-century Japan and the relations between the singer's voice and her hand. Bruno Mantovani, in his note to *Si près, si loin (d'une fantaisie)* (2007), declares that in arriving at his goal, which was a synthesis between "the extravagance of the material and the directionality of the form", he was helped by an unexpected recollection of the music of György Ligeti, shortly before that composer's death: "I thus imagined a dramaturgy that starts with dazzling piano figures, rapid relays, and contradictory shocks of energy, but which progressively distances itself from these initial gestures, giving rise to tentative, more continuous, even static textures."<sup>34</sup>

Highly conventional, although by no means all that frequent on the pages of Warsaw Autumn programme books, is the strategy of pointing to a source

**28** S. Kupczak, (2016). I Don't Know. In: W. Bońkowski, E. Radziwon-Stefaniuk, A. Suprynowicz, E. Szczepańska-Lange (eds.), 59. "Warsaw Autumn". *International Festival of Contemporary Music*. Warsaw: Warsaw Autumn, [henceforth WA 2016], p. 59.

**29** O. Narbutaitė, (2013). *Melody in the Garden of Olives*. In: WA 2013, p. 202.

**30** B. Muntendorf, (2016). *Key of Presence*. In: WA 2016, p. 255.

**31** D. Karski, (2013). *Certainty's Flux*. In: WA 2013, p. 123.

**32** T. Murail, (2006). *Winter Fragments*, In: B. Bolesławska-Lewandowska, M. Kubicki, E. Szczepańska-Lange (eds.), 49th *International Festival of Contemporary Music*. Warsaw Autumn 2006. Warsaw: Warsaw Autumn, [henceforth WA 2006], p. 182.

**33** O. Adamek, (2016). *Karakuri - Poupée mécanique*. In: WA 2016, p. 240.

**34** B. Mantovani, (2010). *Si près, si loin (d'une fantaisie)*. In: B. Bolesławska-Lewandowska, A. Suprynowicz, E. Szczepańska-Lange (eds.), 53rd *International Festival of Contemporary Music*. "Warsaw Autumn" 2010. Warsaw: Warsaw Autumn, [henceforth WA 2010], p. 113.

of inspiration that may suggest a pictorial description of a work. Andrzej Panufnik, in his note to the String Quartet No. 2 *Messages* (1980), invokes the childhood memory of placing his ear to telegraph poles: "I decided I would try to draw upon those childhood fantasies – he adds – allowing them to suggest to me both design and musical material."<sup>35</sup> Wojtek Blecharz refers to the motif of trauma, so frequent in his output, in his note to *[one][year][later]* (2014): "Our days pass by; life sometimes falls to such small pieces that there is nothing left to pick up – only smithereens and the whirling dust that rises at the moment of breaking. [...] At some places *(one)[year][later]* becomes a contemplation of falling apart, of permanent destruction, but also an exploration of the 'forbidden places' of traditional Chinese instruments."<sup>36</sup>

Composers often give an account of the work they have accomplished. In such instances, we are dealing with a step-by-step description of the creative process, which is often accompanied by a flair for research. Also accentuated in commentaries are a number of possibilities placed before composers and the crucial significance of the choices they make. Sławomir Wojciechowski, in his note to *Blind Spot* (2011), creates a sort of chronicle of the work's composition, containing a detailed description of aesthetic considerations and technical solutions, in particular a description of a preparation (inserting matches between the three lowest strings of a violin and a viola) designed to enable fiddlers "to fiddle" once again. As he relates: "Playing on prepared strings has always been particularly exciting to me, as it was only in the process of performance that I could learn the rules. Work on my piece began with improvisation and selection of those sounds that I found interesting, examination of their stability and the degree to which they could be controlled. I recorded all the stages of discovering and assimilating sounds, so that I could always go back to them, change and complement my music. Out of those recorded sounds I finally put together an acoustic model of the whole composition which became an alternative form of 'notation' complementary to the score. [...] It is only by confronting the live recording – or its selected variants – with the graphic notation that we can define

a clear margin of performance freedom, of playing with expressive gesture and with the contents of the extended, mobile sound [...]"<sup>37</sup> Iannis Xenakis, whose training in engineering and mathematical-musical interests made him a singular example of the composer-scholar in the twentieth century, admitted in a note to *Nomos Gamma* (1967–68) "The work testifies to the current state of my compositional research after fifteen years of focusing on chance, randomness and probability – systematically, if in vain, 'by hand', as well as with the use of computers – in their character of being (atemporally) and becoming (in time), in their essence and not as illusions."<sup>38</sup>

Arthur Kampela mentions an interesting experiment in his note to *As if* (2013): "I wanted to attempt, with the specific materials used in *Percussion Study II*, yet another sonic reality or scenario for the elements used in the piece. For that purpose, we resolved to maintain the trajectory of the piece and, where the original presented more than one tendency in its possible compositional route (due to having originally one soloist that constrained the development of more ubiquitous surfaces), to open up new sonic avenues that otherwise weren't clearly visible, just implicit in the original compositional matrix."<sup>39</sup> Kaija Saariaho also writes about the possibilities generated by the creative process in a note to *Cendres* (1998). Constantly choosing between a closer collaboration among instruments and retaining their individual idiom, she mentions: "Between these two extremes there is an unlimited number of possible ways to create more or less homogeneous musical situations. The consciousness of this variety was the rope on which I was balancing whilst working on the piece."<sup>40</sup>

Marek Chołoniewski, in a lengthy commentary to the audiovisual composition *Passage* (2001), points out that the deliberate limitation of a composer's decisions may emancipate additional creative potential: "the choice of sound material was based on initial preparation of specific means of selection (algorithms), which in essence deprive the creator (in the positive sense of the word) the possibility of making individual decisions with regard to specific parameters of the musical work. [...] In this way

<sup>35</sup> A. Panufnik, (2006). II Kwartet smyczkowy „Przesłania”. In: WA 2006, p. 76.

<sup>36</sup> W. Blecharz, (2014). *[one][year][later]*. In: W. Bońkowski, E. Radziwon-Stefaniuk, A. Suprynowicz, E. Szczepańska-Lange (eds.), 57. *Warsaw Autumn. International Festival of Contemporary Music*. Warsaw: Warsaw Autumn, [henceforth WA 2014], p. 113.

<sup>37</sup> S. Wojciechowski, (2013). *Blind Spot*. In: WA 2013, p. 276.

<sup>38</sup> I. Xenakis, (2007). *Nomos Gamma*. In: WA 2007, p. 85.

<sup>39</sup> A. Kampela, (2013). *As if*. In: WA 2013, p. 146.

<sup>40</sup> K. Saariaho, (2003). *Cendres*. In: B. Bolesławska, E. Szczepańska-Lange (eds.), 46. "Warsaw Autumn". *International Festival of Contemporary Music*. Warsaw: Warsaw Autumn, p. 139.

the creator is partially freed from personal preferences, crossing over into the field of experiment, which in the case of *Passage* has been given precise, strict control."<sup>41</sup>

Finally, the creative process, as an experience that engages the composer in physical, intellectual and emotional terms, generates powerful experiences that can themselves become a source of inspiration. Georg Friedrich Haas writes about a particular splice of those two elements in his note to AUS.WEG (2010). The composer explains that he employed a two-dimensional table of chords, moving vertically and horizontally, and time was determined by means of a series. "I have not worked with predefined time structures for 15 years and have not used chord sequences for eight years. This 'regression' to former compositional methods was initially an exciting, then an ever more disturbing experience. Towards the end of the piece, I free myself from these compositional reminiscences." At the end of his note, Haas adds the telling words: "For the listeners, my issues with compositional technique are probably irrelevant. But I hope that the act of freeing myself, which I experienced when writing this music, is conveyed to others as well."<sup>42</sup> The creative process imbued with the experience of inner growth is also mentioned by Wojciech Ziemowit Zych, in his commentary to the work *Różnia* [*Différance*] (2007–2010): "I originally wanted to make this a symbolic and very personal digression, but beyond this, it has also become a certain epoch in my life, and at the same time its record, full of autobiographical detail. It is also a process and a summary of my compositional, artistic, but also personal, human, path to maturity".<sup>43</sup> Galina Ustwolska speaks of her creative endeavour most forcefully: "If I put my entire 'I' into my works, all my might, then it's necessary to listen to me in a new way, and to put all your might into listening to it as well!"<sup>44</sup>

Some composers relinquish creative process in favour of describing the effects of their work. On the pages of "Warsaw Autumn" festival books, we find numerous analytical notes presenting the formal, harmonic or tonal

shape of a composition, the relations between instruments, expression, and also the musical references occurring in a work.<sup>45</sup> In some commentaries, the analytical layer is entwined with depictive comparisons, and the composer adopts the listener's perspective. In a note to the composition D'OM LE VRAI SENS (2010), inspired by the cycle of mediaeval tapestries *The Lady and the Unicorn*, Kaija Saariaho proposes a suggestive description of the musical layer, referring to particular senses: "In the first movement (*Hearing*) the calmly breathing orchestra is interrupted by a call from the clarinet. *Sight* opens up a more mobile landscape in which the orchestra gets into position behind the solo instrument to develop the musical motifs this supplies. *Smell* is colour music. I associate the harmony with scent; it is immediately recognisable intuitively and the impression is too quick for thought. The clarinet languidly spreads its colour over the orchestra, where it hovers, transforming as it passes from one instrument to another."<sup>46</sup>

All the utterances quoted here document the composer's distinguished status, his or her work and compositions, confirming the festival's rooting in the tradition of European art music. Besides the role of inspiration, other crucial elements of those utterances are the work ethic, the weight of decisions taken and the notion of a work as a certain finite whole. The possibilities for communicating with the listener are manifest here on many levels: there are revelations of moments of inspiration, of the creative process and of the human struggles and emotions that accompany it, and also vivid descriptions of a work. Even if, from a research perspective, the question of the composer's sincerity will remain unresolved, the most important thing would appear to be what image of his or her activities the composer wishes to communicate to the listener.

### *b) Science and technology*

Among twentieth-century composers of the so-called second avant-garde, a distinguished position in the

<sup>41</sup> M. Choloniewski, (2001). *Passage*. In: I. Malec, A. Suprynowicz, E. Szczepańska-Lange (eds.), "Warsaw Autumn" 2001. 44th International Festival of Contemporary Music. Warsaw. Warsaw Autumn, [henceforth WA 2001], p. 127.

<sup>42</sup> G. F. Haas, (2013). AUS.WEG. In: WA 2013, pp. 71–72.

<sup>43</sup> W.Z. Zych, (2010). *Różnia*. In: WA 2010, p. 225.

<sup>44</sup> G. Ustwolska, (2001). My thoughts about the creative process. In: WA 2001, p. 21. In this instance, we are dealing not with a classic programme note, but with an extract from an article published in *Musik Texte* 2000 No 83, p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> Similar notes have been written by such composers as Krzysztof Meyer, Barbara Buczek and Krystyna Moszumańska-Nazar. See K. Meyer, (2006). String Quartet No. 12. In: WA 2006, pp. 73–74; B. Buczek, (2006). Transgressio. String Quartet No. 2. In: WA 2006, p. 84; K. Moszumańska-Nazar, (2001). Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra. In: WA 2001, p. 268.

<sup>46</sup> K. Saariaho, (2012). D'OM LE VRAI SENS, In: B. Bolesławska-Lewandowska, W. Bońkowski, E. Radziwon-Stefaniuk, A. Suprynowicz, E. Szczepańska-Lange (eds.), 55. "Warsaw Autumn". International Festival of Contemporary Music. Warsaw: Warsaw Autumn, [henceforth WA 2012], p. 234.



creative process is held by models offered by mathematics and by the natural and technological sciences.<sup>47</sup> The artist adopts the role of researcher and inventor, and the creative process is perceived as experimentation, which requires adequate tools. The musical material may derive from both conventional and electronic sources.<sup>48</sup> As Carlos Palombini argues, it is within the arts, and especially post-war electroacoustic music, that an important confrontation between modern man and technology comes about.<sup>49</sup> Palombini invokes the views of Martin Heidegger, according to which technology is not just a tool, but also a way of perceiving and discovering the world. Nature, in isolation from natural mechanisms for obtaining energy, minerals and crops, begins to be treated as a repository of energy, and human activity serves to mould and store that energy. Thus our relationship with the environment and with the things around us alters.<sup>50</sup> So numerous composers' notes referring to science and technology reveal not just the creative tools, but also a certain worldview approach.

In composers' notes, the influence of technology is manifest on several levels. The first, most evident, dimension is the description of the techniques employed in a particular composition. An equally important, although less obvious, aspect is the permeation of quasi-scientific terminology (most often relating to physics or chemistry) into the metaphorical description of music. Finally, in composers' commentaries, especially among younger artists, we have been witnessing a return of the aspect of the modern circulation of information and the changing conditions of human communication. This aspect has been gaining significance in programme books over the last five years.

Composers often give a detailed account of the techniques they have used to create a work. They attach particular weight to the interaction between the acoustic

and electronic layers, and also to software. The need to document technical means is particularly visible among composers linked to research institutions or to electronic music studios, although in recent decades access to composer-friendly software has become much easier and much more common. In a note to *Pentacle* (2006), by Jean-Claude Risset, who came to prominence for his innovative exploration of tonal colour, we find a list of the sound effects obtained in particular movements (incl. echo, arpeggio and proliferation), and also of the spatial effects used (increasing densities, diffusion, rotation). The composer also mentions individuals who helped prepare the work, including the programmers and the principal performer: Elżbieta Chojnacka. The beginning of the note reads like a summary of the fruits of a group research project: "Sound synthesis and processing is used to echo and extend the live performance and to move the music in space".<sup>51</sup> Another composer linked to the IRCAMem, Marco Stroppa, in his note to *élet...fogytiglan* (1989–98), relates: "In the first version of this work, technology was used on two levels: visible and hidden."<sup>52</sup> A series of computer programs made it possible to form the harmonic foundation; "The second level concerned the new space of sonorisation: thanks to the enormous number of carefully distributed microphones and loudspeakers, I could capture the unique manner of radiation of sound from each instrument in space depending on the pitch; I could also amplify a given sound around the audience, create a whole series of spatial images which changed during the course of the composition."<sup>53</sup>

We find similar content in notes by that luminary of the avant-garde Karlheinz Stockhausen. His commentary to OKTOPHONIE (1990/91) contains a description of the arrangement of speakers in the concert space, the exact duration of particular sections of the work, and also the exact dates when particular work was carried out. Stockhausen keeps detailed documentation, with mechanical monotony, of the generation of the sound layers, the recordings on 24-band tapes and the spatialisation. Characteristic in his accounts is thinking about a composition in terms of a network of interconnected parameters. Let us add that

<sup>47</sup> See J. Humięcka-Jakubowska, (2013). *Intuicja czy scjentyzm: Stockhausen – Ligeti – Nono – Berio – Xenakis – Grisey [Intuition or scientism: Stockhausen – Ligeti – Nono – Berio – Xenakis – Grisey]*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk, p. 64. It should be pointed out that Humięcka-Jakubowska draws attention to the equally important role of intuition in the output of all the composers named in the title.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 64–66.

<sup>49</sup> See C. Palombini, (1998). Technology and Pierre Schaeffer: Pierre Schaeffer's Arts-Relais, Walter Benjamin's technische Reproduzierbarkeit and Martin Heidegger's Ge-stell. *Organised Sound* No. 3, pp. 35–43.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 37–39.

<sup>51</sup> J.-C. Risset, (2007). *Pentacle*. In: WA 2007, p. 128.

<sup>52</sup> M. Stroppa, (2010). *élet...fogytiglan*, In: WA 2010, p. 143.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Economic realities imposed a change of forces in the second version of the work, with new instruments introduced in place of the spatial layer used previously.

such a perspective was made possible by technology and by access to a microscale image of sound. "In order to be able to hear such movements – especially simultaneously – the musical rhythm must be drastically slowed down – we read in the commentary to OKTOPHONIE – the pitch changes must take place much less often and only in smaller steps or with glissandi, so that they can be followed; the composition of dynamics serves the audibility of individual layers – i.e. it is dependent on the timbres of the layers and the tempo of their movements; and the timbre composition primarily serves the elucidation of these movements."<sup>54</sup>

The technological aspect also penetrates instrumental works. Marc-André Dalbavie describes his composition *In advance of the broken time...* (1993) for flute, clarinet, piano and string trio in terms taken from an electroacoustic studio: "the opportunity to use virtuoso techniques led me to investigate the concepts of tempo as well as the differences in the parameters that form it (fast, slow, *accelerando*). It is precisely the use of speed that enables the phenomena of displacements to appear, from simple reverberation to more complicated processes created in electronic studios. In a certain sense tempo becomes the rhythmic and temporal equivalent of the condensation and expansion used in the field of harmonics."<sup>55</sup> Gérard Grisey, in his note to *Partiels* (1975), characterises the orchestra part by means of notions taken from an electronic studio, such as instrumental macro- and microsynthesis (by analogy with additive synthesis) and spectral fusion.<sup>56</sup>

Although aesthetic aspects are discussed less often, composers sometimes emphasise that technology makes it possible to bring together hitherto separate worlds. Krzysztof Knittel, in a note to *Dorikos* (1976–77), draws attention to new aesthetic values and a new kind of heterogenic expression, which arises where instrumental sounds meet natural sounds played back from a recording: "Music which is composed according to such assumptions fuses contrasting extreme situations; it abounds in contradictions and apparent contrasts. This is not a method of contrast any more; what reigns here

is emotional changeability, the clash of different styles, rhythms, scales and colours. [...] A complete fusion is unattainable and thus the very search of the 'impossible', the mere striving to achieve it, is of the greatest value."<sup>57</sup> Jonathan Harvey, in his note to *Speakings* (2007–8), refers the model of human speech to the sound of instruments: "It is as if the orchestra is learning to speak, like a baby with its mother, or like first man, or like listening to a highly expressive language we don't understand. [...] The orchestral discourse, itself inflected by speech structures, is electro-acoustically shaped by the envelopes of speech taken from largely random recordings. The vowel and consonant spectra-shapes flicker in the rapid rhythms and colours of speech across the orchestral textures."<sup>58</sup>

Documenting the use of technology in their works, composers often display historical awareness. A sense of the irreversible change in the tools that are used can result in nostalgia for past times. Cornelis de Bondt, in his note to *Karkas* (1981–83, rev. 2001), mentions an old apparatus: "It took me three years to write it, and it was for the first time I was using a computer for calculating all the series of both pitches and rhythm. The computer was one of the earliest IBM mainframes that was for sale in my country and which was part of my father's office. I also used [...] ten PCs which were enhanced to the mainframe. These PCs also belonged to the earliest types on the market, using two of these floppy disks of 128kB each. The PC itself had an internal memory of 32kB. During the evenings and weekends they would work for me, calculating my structures for *Karkas*."<sup>59</sup> Paweł Mykietyn reaches back even farther into the past. His *Wax Music* (2012) is a work devoted entirely to a "prehistoric" method of recording sound: "It was obvious to me (though it may seem paradoxical) that for that first historical sound recording technique (from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century), using exclusively mechanical processes at both the recording and reproduction stage (a cylinder, a stylus, a gramophone horn, a spring), I should use an acoustic layer impossible to generate in those times. [...] The cylinders wear off with every use; therefore each performance sounds different and the composition gradually degrades alongside its own recording."<sup>60</sup>

<sup>54</sup> K. Stockhausen, (2007). *Oktophonie*. In: WA 2007, pp. 297–298.

<sup>55</sup> M.-A. Dalbavie, (2001). *In advance of the broken time...*, In: WA 2001, p. 101.

<sup>56</sup> G. Grisey, (2014), *Partiels*. In: WA 2014, pp. 155–156. Work on spectral fusion and sound synthesis is mentioned also by Philippe Hurel in his note to *Tour à tour II – La rose des vents*, (See. P. Hurel, (2016). *Tour à tour II – La rose des vents*. In: WA 2016, pp. 37–38).

<sup>57</sup> K. Knittel, (2006). *Dorikos*. In: WA 2006, p. 88.

<sup>58</sup> J. Harvey, (2012). *Speakings*. In: WA 2012, pp. 44–45.

<sup>59</sup> C. de Bondt, (2010). *Karkas*. In: WA 2010, pp. 286–287.

<sup>60</sup> P. Mykietyn, (2013). *Wax Music*. In: WA 2013, p. 199.

Technology and current knowledge from the natural sciences determine not only the tools of composition, but also the language of programme notes. Irrespective of the forces and techniques employed, notions taken from physics, chemistry and biology penetrate descriptions of music, which becomes energy, movement, a physical phenomenon or a chemical reaction, and art a sort of commentary to modern science.

Major aspects of François-Bernard Mâche's work *Aera* (1978) are harmony and the overlapping of different tempi. Here, chemical process is identified with the world of modern harmony, far from functional tonality or modality: "It is rather a play of sound colours resulting from timbres that combine like chemical components. The principle behind the motion of these components is one of continuously renewed expansion, both homorhythmic and superpositional, with the use of two to six different tempi."<sup>61</sup> Among Polish composers, a marked predilection for chemical metaphors is displayed by Paweł Hendrich, as the titles of his works attest. The title *Sedimetron* (2012) combines the Latin word *sedimentum* (deposit), the Greek *metron* (measure) and the term for the process of sedimentation: "*Sedimetron* was composed using a multi-layer technique. The musical layers of the composition can be compared to the layers of sedimentary rock. Looking at the cross-section of the rock we can see the changes of ingredients, colours and texture."<sup>62</sup> In his note to *Emergon αβ* (2011), meanwhile, Hendrich explains that the title can be read in two ways: as referring to the Latin word "emergo" and to the process of emergence, familiar from the natural sciences, whereby the properties of a complex system cannot be derived from the properties of its component parts and their interactions. "In a composition based on the phenomenon of emergence, the superimposition of consecutive layers creates new sound qualities which do not result from hearing them separately."<sup>63</sup> Sam Hayden refers to this same phenomenon in his commentary to the work *Emergence* (2003–04, rev. 2010). Here, the accordion is meant to form the centre of a sound complex, and the whole composition is informed by an "anti-concert" formula: "This idea of emergence applies to the piece to the extent that its relatively simple micro-materials give rise to dense and complex textures whose relation to the basic materials is not always obvious

on the surface. Part of the dramatic intention of the piece is also the accordion's attempt to 'emerge' as an autonomous sonic entity, separate from the totality of the ensemble that surrounds it – something it perhaps never quite achieves."<sup>64</sup>

One composer to have taken a particular liking to physics metaphors is Dominik Karski. His note to *Overflow* (2006) is dominated by metaphors of process and energy. This work manifests instability and is composed of small elements, mainly short, broken sounds obtained in a percussive way: "The small elements within the material are like fragments randomly detached from a larger body as a result of turbulence or boiling – as if the work was made up of remnants that were spat out by the substance they came from. [...] Moreover, there is no unified process that the material proceeds through – rather, there are different processes occurring simultaneously in each voice, but the goals of the processes are related: they all have something to do with expending all energy. The trajectories of the different processes are mostly close to one another, and their interweaving produces interactions in which the instruments often seem to collide, or pierce through each other".<sup>65</sup> Bettina Skrzypczak, in her note to the work *Initial* (2005), declares that in her compositions she traces the links between different areas of life, including science and art. One of the aspects that she seeks to mould by means of music is movement: "What does it mean to compose movement? Here are some possible answers, in the form of aphorisms: measurement of the physical (outer) and harmonic (inner) space; change between sharpness and fluidity of shapes; a building up of tension between sound expansion and microstructural adventures; acoustic processes that become streams of mental energy; creation of impulses that overcome the passiveness of matter, opening new emotional and intellectual dimensions. Moreover, there always remains the question of the origins of sound and movement: what is the cause and what is the effect?"<sup>66</sup>

The range of modern metaphors also includes traditional organic metaphor, which in its modern version includes the aspect of genetic engineering. In her work *Homebox*

<sup>61</sup> F.-B. Mâche, (2010). *Aera*. In: WA 2010, p. 99.

<sup>62</sup> P. Hendrich, (2013). *Sedimetron*. In: WA 2013, p. 171.

<sup>63</sup> P. Hendrich, (2011). *Emergon αβ*. In: WA 2011, p. 214.

<sup>64</sup> S. Hayden, (2010). *Emergence*. In: WA 2010, p. 86.

<sup>65</sup> D. Karski, (2007). *Overflow*. In: WA 2007, p. 63.

<sup>66</sup> B. Skrzypczak, (2007). *Initial*. In: WA 2007, p. 142. In her note to the work *Toccata sospesa* (1999), the composer also mentions "the use of an energetic element" and "the disturbance of a balance of energies". See B. Skrzypczak, (2001). *Toccata sospesa*. In: WA 2001, p. 153.

(2000–01, rev. 2003), Misato Mochizuki refers to the metaphor of DNA, explaining that the piano, violin and orchestra draw in this work on a common pool of simple musical figures: "I order the chains of the 'musical DNA' and I break them, I weave the fabric of sound, make holes in it or fold it in half; I introduce again granular chaos into an ordered system. In this way an organic language is created, energy circulates and increases through the friction between colours and rhythms. Subcutaneous movements and sudden flashes coexist in the same space; soloists do not dominate the orchestra but are voices sounding among many; they are governed by the same logic as the others and they initiate the movements of this enormous body."<sup>67</sup>

Whilst for middle- and older-generation composers, technology was linked primarily to the tools that enabled them to realise their compositional aims, for composers born during the last decades of the twentieth century, the most crucial aspect is the change in the image of the world. In the programme books, we can find a number of commentaries linked to contemporary culture, to its welter of information and chaos, and also to the ubiquitous mediation of technology. One frequent rhetorical device used in notes of this type is enumeration, intended to personify a lack of hierarchy and a chaotic glut of categories. It is also meant to testify to the fragmentation of language that accompanies the progressive fragmentation of our image of the world. Anna Kierkosz, in her note to *Meme Opera* (2016) by Marta Śniady, which has the subtitle "Identity in the times of memes", enumerates: "Words: detached from thoughts and related to them, jabber, slogans, mottos, commercials, cult dialogues, popular jokes' punchlines, words with and without context, affirmations, well-known tunes, text messages, posts, memes. [...] Sounds attack us, lure, aggress, seduce, sneak and assault, creating a web of various aural experiences that compose the modern soundscape jabber – in which there is no valuation. Silence and noise do not exist as opposites but as reciprocal amplification of impulses."<sup>68</sup> Piotr Peszat, in his note to *The Message* (2016), merely signals a series of watchwords: "ASMR / cover / content / fandom / art / twitch / artist / makbung / message".<sup>69</sup> Juliana Hodkinson, in her commentary

to *Angel View* (2014), uses the metaphor of trash: "*Angel View* is an assemblage of urban and musical debris [...]. Chiselling cement, falling debris, scraping cutlery, breaking glass, criss-crossing cables, squealing tram-wheels, an upturned bicycle, a grid of cables, a travel souvenir, a shop window, a revolving carousel, a brace of monkeys, a wall under siege, a dining table laid for an ancestral dinner: it is a sonic bazaar."<sup>70</sup> The idea of rubbish also informs Wojciech Błażejczyk's composition *Trash Music* (2014). It influences the choice of instruments and recorded sounds: "In *Trash Music*, waste acquires the status of fully functional music instruments. [...] The textual layer of my composition makes use of cultural waste, i.e. of rejected, useless mass media content (*Fakt* tabloid, commercials, internet fora, telemarketing)."<sup>71</sup>

Distinguished within this context is Marcin Stańczyk's past-orientated note to the work *Sighs* (2008–2011): "Chopin's rubato – a suspension, or musical sigh – is one of his greatest secrets, the essence of his compositional style. After almost two centuries, I look at his rubato with respect and admiration. [...] Today, there is often no time for reflection: we experience emotions in a nervous hurry, under pressure from the sheer volume of subsequent events. The idea of rubato is gone."<sup>72</sup>

A survey of notes referring to science and technology allows us to formulate a few observations. The large number of such commentaries confirms the festival's openness to new media and new technologies, as Wielecki mentioned. Composers adopting the modernist approach of the researcher and the specialist thereby enhance their prestige, but they also increase the distance that separates them from their audience. On the other hand, references to rapidly changing technologies and to the quicker tempo of life in the modern world remind us that artists and listeners are subjected to similar mechanisms on a daily basis. Attempts to create a new metaphoric language linking the worlds of science and art would also seem very important, reflecting composers' individual searches and at the same time convincing us that music creates limitless scope for interpretation and consequently may serve as a model for the most disparate areas of reality.

### *c) Back to nature and renewing perceptions*

Programme notes linked to technology are complemented by commentaries that make manifest the idea of a "return

<sup>67</sup> M. Mochizuki, (2010). Homebox. In: WA 2010, p. 188.

<sup>68</sup> A. Kierkosz, (2016). Meme Opera. In: WA 2016, p. 69. Anna Kierkosz created the artistic concept of *Meme Opera* and the texts based on competition memes.

<sup>69</sup> P. Peszat, (2016). The Message. In: WA 2016, p. 257.

<sup>70</sup> J. Hodkinson, (2016). Angel View. In: WA 2016, p. 51.

<sup>71</sup> W. Błażejczyk, (2016). Trash Music. In: WA 2016, pp. 259–260.

<sup>72</sup> M. Stańczyk, (2014). Sighs. In: WA 2014, p. 133.

to source", understood in various ways. Here, idealised images of nature and a call for man to live in harmony with the natural world go hand in hand with an appeal for listeners to purify their minds, stir their full cognitive powers and regain direct contact with their acoustic environment.

Toshio Hosokawa, in his illustrative description of *Voyage IX "Awakening"* (2007), almost naive in its simplicity, introduces depictive parallels concerning forces and register: "the soloist symbolizes man, and the orchestra the universe, nature, and the world that encloses him within and without. Within the relationship with nature, man grows and discovers a deep harmony between nature and his true self. [...] The sustained note in strings at the beginning of this work represents vibrations on the water's surface; the lower register represents the world in the water; the further lower register represents the world in the mud at the bottom of the pond; the register above than the sustained note represents the world in the sky. Reaching slightly over the surface of the pond, the bud sings of its longing for blossoming and basks in the morning sunshine". In the central part of this note, the composer places another crucial equals sign: "The flower and I are one – the song of the flower is mine; the awakening of the flower represents my self-purification, my awakening".<sup>73</sup>

An important role in composers' images of nature is played by fascination with the elements, which allows for a description of unmoulded sonic material. In Philippe Leroux's note to *Le cri de la pierre* (2011) for bagpipes, Earth is personified, and sound is identified with an unformed mineral: "What dominates this work is its mineral aspect – what in sound still pertains to the domain of the formless, the crying desire. [...] This work uses atypical playing modes, bringing into play the air pocket, multiphonics, and other extended techniques. Initially walled in the impossible, the cry of the stone attempts to get out, runs up against the wear of the world and returns to the rock, yet transformed and containing the seeds of life. This music evokes the testimony of minerals, perhaps as though Earth – so often mistreated – were begging for the cessation of the wounds".<sup>74</sup> Frank Zabel, in his commentary to *Chant de la lave* (2004), refers to the elemental power of lava and the chaotic processes it triggers. "In *Chant de la lave* musical

gestures develop without a determined formal framework. They represent different states of energy that come together, part, coexist and interact. Consequently, every moment of the composition decides how it develops, and you never know if a certain interaction of gestures will have a consequence or not."<sup>75</sup>

Composers often evoke a specific geographic area in their commentaries and attempt to stir the listener's imagination by means of metaphors of natural riches, complexity and stratification. Grażyna Pstrokońska-Nawratil, in her note to *Lasy deszczowe* [Rainforests] (2013), shows nature as a model of different dimensions of time and various shades of light: "Eternal, inscrutable, with their 'polytime' of fauna and flora, their mysterious audio- and chromosphere... It is a symbolic wander through dark opalising colours of brushwood, a glowing kaleidoscope of colours all the way up to sun-lit, moving canopies."<sup>76</sup> And although what the composer says here brings to mind the approach of Messiaen, her description of nature is shadowed by an element of danger: "The composition is a symbolic homage to centenary trees, monuments of nature that can be abolished in a few minutes with *tools of civilisation*."<sup>77</sup> Tato Taborda, in a note to the work *Estratos* (1999), skilfully combines vocabulary attesting to the use of spectral techniques with geological metaphor referring to the Andes.<sup>78</sup> A similar metaphor is used by Michel Roth in relation to the Alps, in his note to *molasse vivante* (2007).<sup>79</sup>

The return to source also concerns the very ability to enter into contact with the world and the acoustic surroundings. One interesting fusion of these two strands is Tadeusz Wielecki's multi-dimensional note, almost autonomous in terms of the prose, to the composition *Dolina Suche Wody* [The valley of dry water] (2007), in which the composer relates work with youngsters, particularly on exercising their imagination, involving reconstructing from memory the image of a stream and the sound of water during a walk in the mountains: "Looking and 'listening' to the empty river bed, we were to recreate in our imagination the current and sound of that real creek, putting, so to speak, the remembered water back into the stone bed that lied silently in front

<sup>73</sup> T. Hosokawa, (2007). *Voyage IX 'Awakening'*. In: WA 2007, p. 173.

<sup>74</sup> P. Leroux, (2014). *Le cri de la pierre*. In: WA 2014, p. 53.

<sup>75</sup> F. Zabel, (2007). *Chant de la lave*. In: WA 2007, p. 111.

<sup>76</sup> G. Pstrokońska-Nawratil, (2016). *Rain forest*. In: WA 2016, p. 35.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> T. Taborda, (2014). *Estratos* [Layers]. In: WA 2014, pp. 74-75.

<sup>79</sup> M. Roth, (2013). *molasse vivante*. In: WA 2013, pp. 75-76.



of us. We stood and stood."<sup>80</sup> This process, described in various poetical ways, ultimately gains a metaphysical dimension. "We pricked up our inner ears and the eyes of our imagination to achieve full sound and movement. And we achieved the vision and sound... of existence and duration."<sup>81</sup> Artur Zagajewski, in his commentary to the performance piece *Sluchodrzewisko (Audio-Tree-Drama)* (2014), gives simply a sequence of instructions: "... stop and stand still ..., ... now kneel ..., ... sit down ..., ... lie down ..., ... close your eyes ... and ... listen..."<sup>82</sup> Andris Dzenītis, in his note to *Trataka. Point noir* (2010–2011), describes a yogic practice that involves staring at an external object, before explaining: "This piece is probably musically controversial, which has roots in its yogic programme. It is at the same time an attempt to escape the endless labyrinths of mind, electrified by the truly dizzying pace of our time and inspired by the infinite possibilities of truth and untruth. Basically the piece concentrates on the power of one note [...], naturally struggling to get away from these points of focus for longer or shorter periods in which chaotic powers take control."<sup>83</sup>

A highly individualised, even mystical, language is employed by Salvatore Sciarrino, and his notes refer to heightened, careful listening. In the commentary to *Quaderno di strada* (2003), we read: "We find ourselves on the borderline of silence, where hearing sharpens, and the mind opens to every sound, as if we were listening to it for the first time. Perception is revitalised, reception is governed by emotions. Can one call this 'direct (deep) communication'?"<sup>84</sup> Sciarrino's texts are dominated by metaphors of light and shade and of transparency, and silence is perceived as space. In the note to *Shadow of Sound* (2005), he writes: "in order to hear more, we need to enter into the shadow of sound. Let it resound in space, in the silence where the last vibrations fuse, and most of all, let it resound in the mind. [...] The transfiguration my music wishes to obtain comes from a perceptive reset more than from a truly innovative sound: the new sound is not one never heard [...] but a new way of hearing what already exists".<sup>85</sup>

A desire to touch sound and for a return to direct contact with it also pervades Jagoda Szmytka's note to *happy deaf people* (2012): "One of the most precious ways of perceiving music is touch. Through touch, musicians experience sound while playing the instruments; for example a cellist 'embraces' the cello and feels directly through the body the vibration of the sound."<sup>86</sup> [...] Perception through touch requires a real presence and directedness – one needs to be in a concert hall, one needs to play the instrument. [...] To touch the sound one has to be in the right place at the right time – one has to be present."<sup>87</sup>

It is worth stressing that "ecological" rhetoric is by no means followed by a simplification of musical procedures or the abandonment of advanced technological tools. The most important role is discharged here by a change of language to one that is more vivid and closer to man and by an attempt to enter into deeper contact with the listener. It is in these commentaries that is manifest also an important need of contemporary composers: the need to stimulate perception and to teach themselves and their audience to listen anew in the altered civilisational conditions and within the context of a new musical language.

#### *d) Ambiguous titles and plays on words*

A separate, but highly popular, strand comprises notes in which composers not so much explain the techniques they have used or forge contexts for their works as attempt to create plays on words that represent a sort of alternative to musical works. Such texts often question the very role of the note and the conventions of the artist's communication with the listener. Wolfgang Rihm begins his note to *Stück* (1988–89) with the words: "This *Piece* is a piece and that is why it is so called. It ends differently from the way it begins, which changes nothing!"<sup>88</sup> Cezary Duchnowski, in his note to *Broda* [The beard] (2005), admits: "My enthusiasm for festivals of programme notes and commentaries is being overgrown, even though they are the faithful married couples of music festivals. After all, at a concert, a crafty note is sometimes the only way to kill time."<sup>89</sup> Michał Moc's text to the work *Po-wer*

<sup>80</sup> T. Wielecki, (2007). *Dolina Suche Wody*. In: WA 2007, p. 233.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p. 234.

<sup>82</sup> A. Zagajewski, (2014). *Audio-Tree-Drama*. In: WA 2014, p. 66.

<sup>83</sup> A. Dzenītis, (2013). *Trataka. Point noir*. In: WA 2013, p. 274.

<sup>84</sup> S. Sciarrino, (2006). *Quaderno di strada*. In: WA 2006, p. 133.

<sup>85</sup> S. Sciarrino, (2016). *Shadow of Sound*. In: WA 2016, p. 278.

<sup>86</sup> J. Szmytka, (2012). *happy deaf people*. In: WA 2012, p. 216.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>88</sup> W. Rihm, (2011). *Stück*. In: WA 2011, p. 212.

<sup>89</sup> C. Duchnowski, (2006). *The Beard*. In: WA 2006, p. 145.

(2012–13) makes use of a sequence of associations and puns: "Sometimes a thought occurs: it is *after* [Polish: *po*]. (...) *After* is an immaterial being, a soul which according to Chinese philosophy is responsible for the surge of emotions. The emotions are irrational, but there is responsibility. This is the context, with no *after*-thoughts. Simply *after*. [...] *Wer* is more rational: it is nearly half of 'ver-dict', or half of Ver-sailles; in German, it actually means 'Who?'.<sup>90</sup> Only at the end of the note do the two components join together in the titular *Po-wer*.

Artur Zagajewski is fond of concise, enigmatic notes. In his note to the work *canto* (2012), he first uses the word *cantabile*, which is then gradually broken down into syllables, resulting in a passing "ble", before finally the syllables elegantly reform as "bel canto".<sup>91</sup> Dobromiła Jaskot, in her note to the work *Linearia* (2007), presents a poem that contains both a visual and an auditory message: "a labyrinth of tangles/ ribbons on the wind/ scraps glitter with colours/ light... shades/ rough, coarse... velvet/ tangles rustle/ whistle".<sup>92</sup> In his note to *The Valley of Dry Water*, Tadeusz Wielecki also spins out variations on the theme of the image of a dry torrent: "The Dry Creek longs for water/ The Dry Creek asks for a torrent/ The Dry Creek is thirsty/ A thirsty creek/ A river taken out/ I move the current of the river/ I move a torrent/ An abstracted creek/ The creekness itself of a creek/ Running water/ I carry a water stream/ I put it to bed".<sup>93</sup>

Another common strategy is to refer to a title that opens up the possibility of perceiving a work in different ways. Philippe Hurel, in his note to *Localized corrosion* (2009), composed for the Ensemble Nikel, declares: "I like titles with a double meaning: in my piece, I try to attack the stability of the Ensemble Nikel in order to make the musicians musically stressed and nervous, and at the same time to destroy the musical material zone by zone and area by area."<sup>94</sup> The titular "corrosion" affects both the rhythmic pattern and the harmonic material calculated by computer. In his note to *brut* (2014), Zagajewski gives the French etymology of the word: "raw, rough, unpolished, unworked, unpurified, primitive, primeval, brute...",<sup>95</sup> and he also admits to a fascination with brutalist architecture and Le Corbusier.

PRASQUAL, in his note to YMORH (2009–10), gives two meanings of the title, both equally mysterious: "YMORH – a word meaning death or dreaming or madness. A word as a sigh of hopelessness./ YMORH – a word from the inner kingdom of 16-year-old Deborah Blau suffering from schizophrenia."<sup>96</sup> Georg Friedrich Haas, in the above-mentioned work AUS.WEG, stresses that "The title leaves the meaning of the second word open to interpretation: 'Weg' meaning 'path/way' or 'weg' meaning 'gone/go'."<sup>97</sup> Simon Steen-Andersen uses the simple title *Ouvertures* (2008–2010) to describe the different meanings of the work: "The piece consists of many openings and beginnings – doors to different musical spaces, each time revealed or explored a bit further, in one room the Chinese *Song of Four Seasons* is put under a microscope, so that one can hear details which are normally not audible. [...]. The guzheng is tuned in a special way in order to play along on this strange melody consisting of very small intervals."<sup>98</sup>

These utterances show that composers increasingly often relinquish their privileged position and distance themselves from elucidating their work. They treat ambiguity and fluid interpretation as a virtue and perceive the note as one more domain in which to play with the listener or as a pretext for intermedial art, as specifically understood.

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Following this survey of composers' notes, one immediately arrives at the rather obvious conclusion that their content goes far beyond analytical commentary to a work. They also rarely serve as a simple programmatic description of a composition. One is struck above all by the variety of the content, and also by the individual, non-standard language. In various ways, composers' commentaries help to forge a relationship with the receiver. They tell of the composers' experiences and efforts, create their image and reveal their worldviews. They also document attempts at creating a new, metaphorical language, combining the world of music with science or with nature. As a consequence, they forge vivid images and suggest interesting interpretative contexts.

Although in many respects the contents of the notes confirm the avant-garde profile of the festival, thanks to

<sup>90</sup> M. Moc, (2013). *Po-wer*. In: WA 2013, p. 350.

<sup>91</sup> A. Zagajewski, (2012). *canto*. In: WA 2012, p. 215.

<sup>92</sup> D. Jaskot, (2007). *Linearia*. In: WA 2007, p. 51.

<sup>93</sup> T. Wielecki, (2007). *Dolina Suche Wody*. In: WA 2007, p. 234.

<sup>94</sup> P. Hurel, (2010). *Localized corrosion*. In: WA 2010, p. 125.

<sup>95</sup> A. Zagajewski, (2014). *Brut*. In: WA 2014, p. 39.

<sup>96</sup> Prasqual (2010). *YMORH*. In: WA 2010, p. 140.

<sup>97</sup> G.F. Haas, (2013). *AUS.WEG*. In: WA 2013, p. 71.

<sup>98</sup> S. Steen-Andersen, (2014). *Ouvertures*. In: WA 2014, p. 190.

their vividness and variety they also shatter the hermetic stereotype of contemporary music. Perhaps the best summary of the role played by composers' commentaries are the words of Wojciech Ziemowit Zych from his note to *Différance*. "It is a self-contained world of sound. It is my world, to which you are invited".<sup>99</sup> And it is a world – one might add – that unites us.

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