

Reception of the Warsaw Autumn Festival in Lithuania:

*Cultural Discourse and Political
Context**

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to offer a broader understanding of the Lithuanian reception of the Warsaw Autumn festival in relation to the modernisation of national music in Lithuania since the late 1950s – early 1960s. Based on a micro-historical and comparative approach to the network of individuals and events, it is intended to explore the shifts of reception through analysis of musical criticism, composers' work and discourse, and artistic exchange between the Lithuanian and Polish new music scenes. The author discusses the cultural and political factors which affected the changing role of the Warsaw Autumn festival and its impact on the modernisation processes in Lithuanian music. In addition, the asymmetries of mutual understanding and interests between the Polish and Lithuanian music cultures have been highlighted both during the Cold War and the post-communist transformation periods.

Keywords: reception of Warsaw Autumn, post-communism, Lithuanian music

The place for encounters and confrontations of Eastern and Western music: this image of the early Warsaw Autumn festivals has established itself in the international reception of the Festival as an event of a distinct and unique profile. This image did not pale with the decline in the political and ideological tensions of the Cold War, but was enhanced with new ideas of the function and international role of the event. In Lithuania, the reception of the *Warsaw Autumn* was not free of political connotations. At the same time, it developed in close relation to the narratives of Lithuanian music modernisation that started forming in the early post-totalitarian period (at the end of the 50s – the beginning of the 60s). In the context of self-awareness of the national music revival, the Warsaw Autumn immediately occupied a unique place. No other foreign contemporary music event received comparable attention before to the Restoration of Independence. The view of the Polish Festival as a “window on ideas” did not change in evaluations of the Soviet-time processes even after 1990. Although Lithuanian musicians attended various contemporary music events abroad, either through official channels or on their own private initiative, even before the Restoration of Independence – festivals in other countries were accessible to the very few. Only the Warsaw Autumn was attended in large numbers, either as part of official delegations or privately. This prominence given to the Warsaw Festival is not unique to the Lithuanian community of composers and musicologists: the significance of the event and, more broadly, of contemporary Polish music for the processes

of modernisation has been emphasised by musicians from the countries of Poland's other neighbours.¹

On the other hand, one can trace ebbs and tides in the reception of the Warsaw Autumn in Lithuania. That can best be demonstrated through an analysis of festival reviews in the Lithuanian press and through the comparison of different texts, comments by, and interviews with Lithuanian composers from different periods. It should immediately be noted that in the Soviet period few articles or reviews of the Warsaw Autumn were published. Occasionally the Lithuanian press reprinted translated texts related to the themes of the Festival.² The number of the Festival-related publications by Lithuanian music critics and composers particularly increased in the last decade of the 20th century, during the period of political changes in Lithuania, when restrictions on trips to Poland were lifted. Nonetheless, more than by political events or ideological restrictions, the reception of the Warsaw Autumn in Lithuania was determined by cultural factors: the development of national music and generational change, cultural self-reflection and the position in the international stage of contemporary music. The processes of Lithuanian music modernisation provided a relevant context for distinguishing different trends in the reception of foreign events. In the Soviet period, the outward-oriented modernisation discourse promoted by the movement for political liberalisation – the “thaw” (the “windows on ideas”, external inspirations for the renewal of music traditions, the search for new music language resources) had been exhausted by the mid-70s. Based on Pierre Bourdieu's anthropological analysis of conversation, the new type of expression (from the mid-70s) can be defined as a discourse of familiarity (the spirit of communion), as opposed to the earlier outward-oriented discourse.³

¹ Cf. S. Savenko, (1997). Poslevoyenniy muzikalnyy avangard. In: *Russkaya muzika i XX vek. Russkoye muzikalnoye iskusstvo v istorii khudozhestvennoy kul'tury XX veka*. Mark Aranovskiy (ed.). Moscow: Gossudarstvennyy Institut Iskusstvovedeniya, pp. 410–411.

² See, e.g., T. Kaczynski, (1968). Lenkų muzika šiandien. *Kultūros barai*, No. 11, pp. 32–33; S. Kisiulewski, (1970). Avangardas, arba bejėgiškumas. *Literatūra ir menas*, 03-10-1970.

³ According to Bourdieu, the discourse of familiarity is based on the supposed commonality of values, cultural codes, and experiences of the native world, which is taken as self-explanatory and does not require additional explanation. See: P. Bourdieu, (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 18.

In the post-Soviet period, in exactly the same way, opposed cultural orientations came one after another. The strengthening of national identity and the declaration that national music belonged to the Western civilization (the post-communist turning point) was accompanied by a critical reassessment of the cultural identity, no longer related to national attributes, in the global context (the period of European integration and EU membership).

In this context, another no less important factor in the reception of the Warsaw Autumn in Lithuania were the relations between Lithuanian and Polish musicians and the representation of Lithuanian music in Poland. Lithuanian musicians saw the Polish contemporary music scene not as an external object, not solely a source of musical information. They saw it as a prospect for cooperation and a springboard for international artistic careers. Before 1990, Lithuanian music reached Poland in a fragmentary fashion through various channels: hierarchically through the official centralised institutions of the USSR, vertically through bilateral exchanges between institutions, and horizontally through informal channels, by developing privately-established creative partnerships. For this reason, the reception of the Warsaw Autumn festival in Lithuania was not entirely neutral. The events of the festival were interpreted in correlation with national music processes, while the international evaluations of music critics influenced the local interpretations of the music. It seems that such correlations between the reception of the Festival and the dissemination of national music may have been typical of other neighbouring communist bloc countries as well. For all of them, the Warsaw scene was an important platform for international recognition. In the case of Lithuanian musical culture, this link was strengthened by the geographical proximity and by long tradition of cultural exchange. In the present article, in order to discuss the interrelation between the Lithuanian reception of the Warsaw Autumn festival and the dissemination of Lithuanian music in Poland, I shall refer to Alfred Gell's concept of cultural practice as the networks of individuals and events which encourage the consideration of the diversity of creative agencies and actors' relationships.⁴ In his model of creativity mediation, the anthropologist identified four categories important for the analysis of the world of art: spatial, temporal, social, and cultural. By applying these categories to the analysis of the interactions between contemporary music dissemination

and reception, I have identified the following aspects to be discussed in detail: 1. the articulations of innovation and tradition, and their relationship to the external historical-cultural time: "modernity", the "avant-garde", "tradition", "post-modernity", and other categories of historical consciousness; their synchronisation / non-synchronisation with other areas of modernisation (the temporal dimension); 2. the relations in and identification of the national musical scene, influences and interactions, and the cultural contexts of reception (the spatial dimension); 3. creative partnerships and musicians' networks, institutionalisation of contemporary music, and the social status of music / musicians (the social dimension); and 4. the relationship of author / his or her work to other works, artistic ideologies, technologies, and a critical discourse (the cultural dimension). The categories in question are to be highlighted through the socio-cultural dynamics of the network of individuals and events and the micro-historical and comparative perspective.

THE AVANT-GARDE CHALLENGES: LOCAL ATTEMPTS AT UNDERSTANDING AND EXPRESSION

In his summary of the 2nd Warsaw Autumn festival (1958) in the Czech music journal "Hudební Rozhledy", Jaroslav Jiránek wrote: "I think that one West German music publicist expressed a deep truth when, asked about his strongest festival impressions, he answered that it was the confrontation of the world of Schönberg, Berg, and Webern with that of Prokofiev and Shostakovich."⁵ The confrontation in question found resonance in the early Festival reception in Lithuania. In 1958, Lithuanian composer Balys Dvarionas, the most influential figure in the post-war musical culture of the Lithuanian SSR, attended the event with the official Soviet delegation. The fact that the composer's speech was published in the official organ of the press *Tiesa* proved that the festival and its context were still little known both in the milieu of the official cultural policy makers and in the community of Lithuanian musicians.⁶ Even the title of the article was probably suggested by the editorial staff – "A Warm Warsaw Autumn". It confirmed the idea

⁴ Cf. A. Gell, (1998). *Art and Agency*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁵ J. Jiránek, (1958). Varšavské meditace nad soudobostí. *Hudební Rozhledy* 11, No. 20, p. 823.

⁶ B. Dvarionas, (1958). Šiltas "Varšuvos ruduo". *Tiesa*, 23-10-1958.

of the post-war musical culture in Poland as a “satellite” of the communist bloc. Irina Nikolskaya noted that, in that particular period, the attitude of the Soviet cultural authorities, and also of a number of Russian composers, to Polish music was “politely official”.⁷ This attitude explains the fact that – quite unusually for an official press organ – Dvarionas’ exhaustive comments were published, with abundant descriptions of individual works and details of performance, by means of which he hoped to acquaint readers with the achievements of the “neighbour democracy”.

The Warsaw Autumn of 1958 came as a big surprise and a challenge to the numerous representatives of the Soviet Union who participated in it. After the 1st edition of the Warsaw Autumn in 1956 – comparatively modest and only sparingly reflecting the post-war innovations – the second festival for the first time introduced a wide musical panorama of the 20th century and the trends of the second musical avant-garde, as well as the musical tendencies in the Western and Eastern blocs in the Cold War period. A closer look at the international comments on the Warsaw Autumn of 1958 proves that the second edition was a turning point which shaped the image of the event as a unique platform for meetings, discussions, and confrontations of the East and West.⁸ Among the abundance of foreign comments and reviews, one key leitmotif stood out: the question whether the Festival objectively reflected the trends and diversity of contemporary music. Not only Soviet music critics, but also Western musical press was ambivalent on that issue.⁹ The second avant-garde experiments received especially ambivalent comments. In this context, it is worth mentioning the assessment of Everett Helm in the “New York Times”, who claimed that the

culmination of the Festival programme was not the “circus” of the avant-garde, but the performances by the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Yevgeny Mravinsky), the Russian pianist Sviatoslav Richter, and the Juilliard Quartet. In addition, the maturity of interpretations presented by the symphony orchestras of Warsaw Philharmonic and Polish Radio, the chamber orchestra, and the young Polish conductors were praised.¹⁰

Dvarionas was also greatly impressed by the performance culture at the 2nd Warsaw Autumn Festival. However, he did not engage in a detailed discussion of the Russian and Soviet works presented there and concentrated on the less familiar music. Even though the Lithuanian composer was an influential figure in the post-war establishment, he was famous for his independent character and the habit of expressing his individual opinions, which did not always blindly coincide with the official doctrine of Soviet music.¹¹ Similarly as his peers – the Polish composers and critics who reviewed the festival (e.g., Stefan Kisielewski, Zygmunt Mycielski), Dvarionas almost unconditionally praised the presentations of Western 20th-century classics, particularly – of Béla Bartók’s suite *The Miraculous Mandarin* (1918–1919/1927), Benjamin Britten’s opera *Peter Grimes* (1945), Arnold Schönberg’s *A Survivor from Warsaw* (1947), as well as compositions by Paul Hindemith, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, and Alban Berg. The outstanding works of the post-war avant-garde performed in Warsaw in 1958, such as Karlheinz Stockhausen’s *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1955–1956) and Christian Wolff’s *For Piano with Preparation* (1957), provoked a negative response in Dvarionas. He called them soulless, degenerated and worthless, sneering at the millennium-old tradition of music history, and only fit to end up on the waste heap: “For instance, the performance of one of such ‘masterpieces’ even involved the performer repeatedly slapping the instrument with his hand.”¹²

7 I. Nikolska, (2005). Polska muzyka w Rosji – XX wiek. In: <http://culture.pl/pl/artykul/polska-muzyka-w-rosji-xx-wiek>.

8 In the opinion of Anne C. Shreffler, the Warsaw Autumn Festival was one of the most striking proofs of the Soviet control over and impact on the Communism bloc being far from absolute. On the contrary, the event’s scope of impact symbolised the USSR’s loss of power over and influence on the Eastern and Central European cultural development, which paradoxically took place at the same time when various political sanctions were imposed in the region (the events in Hungary in 1956, the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, and the Prague events of 1968). See: A. C. Shreffler, (2007). Review of Recent Titles on Music and Politics. *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, No. 60/2, p. 458.

9 Cf. L. Jakelski, (2017). *Making New Music in Cold War Poland*. Oakland, California: California University Press, pp. 43–44.

10 E. Helm, (1958). Warsaw Autumn: East and West Meet at Polish Festival. *New York Times*, 19-10-1958.

11 Even given the practice of censorship at the time, the article does not seem to have been significantly expurgated and therefore presents quite a reliable expression of Dvarionas’ views and musical taste. On the other hand, some passages in the text, which espouse the principles and normative judgments compulsory for Soviet music, may have been inserted by the editors. Their authenticity is hard to judge from the present perspective.

12 B. Dvarionas, (1958). Šiltas “Varšuvos ruduo”, *op.cit.* He comments on Christian Wolff’s composition performed by pianist David Tudor.

In Dvarionas' view, the qualities of the contemporary Polish music scene deserve a separate discussion. With Tadeusz Baird, Grażyna Bacewicz, Witold Lutosławski, and Tadeusz Szeliński listed among the large number of artists whose works were performed at the Festival, the composer focused on the neo-Classical *Concerto Giocoso* (1957) by Michał Spisak. Meanwhile, the more recent Polish music, and, more specifically, the so-called new school of Polish composers which would soon start inspiring Lithuanian composers, was only mentioned in passing, and some remarkable phenomena were ignored altogether. For example, the debut of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki with his rebellious *Epitaph* (1958) at the 1958 Warsaw Autumn, as well as Lutosławski's revolutionary *Musique funèbre* (1958) – representing a new idiom of individual musical style – generated widespread international interest. His disregard, or overlooking, of the most recent music is related to Dvarionas' artistic worldview, which was a version of national romanticism influenced by Soviet ideology. The categories by means of which the Lithuanian composer contemplated the music he heard – missing national colour in it, having doubts about the form-and-content relationship in some works, looking for an optimistic hero, and paying attention to the emotional effect of music – have little to do with the contemporary musical discourse. From that point of view, Dvarionas was close to those Russian composers and musicologists who, having visited the Warsaw Autumn, declared a sincere rejection of, and failure to understand the avant-garde. Nikolskaya, who studied the reception of the festival and more specifically of Polish music in Russia, noted that what the guest musicians who dissociated themselves from the more abstract musical structuring and the new sound mainly missed was emotion, lyrical experience, melody and harmony.¹³

A qualitatively new relation toward the Second Avant-Garde and the Warsaw Autumn as a platform of exchange was outlined in another early publication – an article on the 7th WA edition of 1963 written by musicologist Vytautas Landsbergis, who had visited the Festival with the group of Soviet composers and musicologists. It remained unpublished, although part of the material was used in an educational publication on aleatory and electronic music in 1965.¹⁴ As far as genre

is concerned, the full unpublished version of this article can be defined as a polemical literary essay, supplemented with abundant informative material about the forms of new music and with extensive descriptions of individual compositions. The article already represents elements of Landsbergis' general concept of music that would later be developed in his studies of, and reflections on, the unique styles of Lithuanian composers in the 1970s and 80s. The openness to innovations in this representative of the new generation (who eventually became the most influential critic of the Soviet music doctrine in Lithuania) is evident in the fact that the music he had heard at the Warsaw Autumn was not classified in accordance with the ideological confrontational criteria of the Cold War, and he avoids the artificial distinction between Soviet and Russian music. The musicologist was still intrigued by the second avant-garde experiments, provocations, and contrasts. However, his text is an attempt to understand not only the boundaries of new music, to articulate its aesthetic and technical traits, but also to elucidate the fundamental issues of the meaning, impact, and understanding of music. One of the most prominent leitmotifs in this text are the changing boundaries of the musical past and present and the relativity of tradition and innovation:

A large part of the Festival programme consisted of compositions by S. Prokofiev, B. Bartók, and I. Stravinsky. They are the classics of contemporary modernism who were once attacked for their "overly indolent" novelty, while nowadays in some cases attempts are made to attach them to the past as "traditionalists"... Only the old Igor Stravinsky, who celebrated his eightieth birthday two years ago, keeps pace with music life.¹⁵

Meaningful emphasis is placed in Landsbergis' text on the latest classifications of musical diversity, which Landsbergis tried to redefine in his own way. Through attentive analysis of the technical traits of dodecaphony, aleatory music, *musique concrète*, electronic and experimental music, instrumental theatre, and genre transformations, the musicologist sought to represent the communicative aspects of new music, its ideological contexts, and the characteristics of music perception

a year later the publication of this almanac was suspended. Fragments of the text were published in the article "Šis tas apie aleatorinę ir regimąją muziką" in the culture monthly *Kultūros barai*, No. 1, 1965, pp. 38–39). An edited original version of the *Varšuvos nuotrupos* [Warsaw Fragments] was first published in the collection *Geresnės muzikos troškimas* [Thirst for a Better Music] in 1990.

¹³ I. Nikolska, (2005). *Polska muzyka w Rosji – XX wiek*, op. cit. See also I. Nikolska, (1996). *Rosjanie a polska muzyka współczesna*. *Ruch muzyczny*, No. 12, pp. 7–9.

¹⁴ The article, originally written at the beginning of 1964, was intended to be published in the almanac *Muzika ir teatras*, but

¹⁵ V. Landsbergis, (1964). *Varšuvos nuotrupos*. In: *Geresnės muzikos troškimas* (1990). Vilnius: Vaga, p. 260.

presupposed by the new types of expression. The very fact that his article gave sufficient attention to a wide range of composers and to such different works as as Franco Donatoni's *Per Orchestra* (1962), Frederic Rzewski's *Poem* (1959), Cornelius Cardew's *February Pieces* (1959–1961), Kazimierz Serocki's *A piacere* (1963), Kazimierz Sikorski's *Antiphons* (1963), Lucian Berio's *Circles* (1960), Arno Babadjanian's *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra* (1959), Lutosławski's *Trois Poèmes d'Henri Michaux* (1962–1963), Wojciech Kilar's *Générique* (1963), Olivier Messiaen's *Cinq Rechants* (1948), Luigi Nono's ballet *Il mantello rosso* (1954), and others – proves that Landsbergis did not identify himself with any particular ideology or did not look for one, unambiguous code of modernity. His way of studying musical examples deserves a brief discussion. With reference to the descriptions of the compositions presented in the text, one can argue that Landsbergis interpreted the social status and functions of music based on the concept of music as a culturally significant phenomenon, which was opposed to the Soviet doctrine of anti-formalist art. The *Warsaw Fragments* formed a musical image – musical-communicative worlds which, through their structure and various connotations, reflected, and simultaneously directed toward, the areas of individual and collective experience. By comparing Landsbergis' article with comments by Kisielewski – one of the most active and controversial reviewers of the festival – concerning that year's Festival edition, one can note some similarities of meaningful accents between the two musicologists, but also observe the differences of national context that determined their insights and statements. The efforts to discover the communicative codes of new music evident in the Landsbergis' article of are echoed by Kisielewski's observation that the 7th Warsaw Autumn tended to focus on what united different forms of modern expression rather than on what made them different, and that for the first time the Festival presented a sense of a more authentic sound of new music and its manifestations. However, in the context of comparing the two texts, it should be noted that the Polish music critic entered into a debate with diverse musical ideologies and reconsidered the boundaries of the new and old, academic and popular music, the categories applied to contemporary expression, etc., based on the views and opinions expressed by specific Polish music critics and composers.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the Lithuanian

musicologist's lexicon, still affected by a certain vacuum of discourse in his own national cultural space, unfolded as a self-discourse, an attempt to universalise individual experiences. The understanding that new music was a category that required new vocabulary and a new axiology was summarised in the coda to Landsbergis' text, where he opposed the normative definitions of Soviet music:

Much is unclear in that music, much may be hard to explain, just as in any controversially developing art which combines a rational understanding of its tasks with intuitive discovery of new aesthetic psychological regularities. And the "new" is not necessarily a synonym of "good", yet not necessarily of "bad", either... Only knowledge, analysis, and a desire to first understand it, only then judge – can help here. ... Of course, it is not necessary urgently to change the assessment methods when we face the breaking of the piano or the organ, musical sadism and similar "problems"; however, rejecting everything that does not fit into textbooks is not only the easiest, but also the most hopeless method.¹⁷

The two cases of the early Warsaw Autumn reception in Lithuania discussed here indicate that, from the very beginning, the role of the festival as a "window on ideas" was significantly supplemented by its transformative function. For Lithuanian musicians – both the representatives of the musical establishment and non-conformists – the festival was an encounter with a new world of music whose verbalisation required new conceptual tools and vocabulary. Thus, the experiences gained during the festival provided an incentive to move away from the normative categories of Soviet music and to form a national discourse of music modernisation.

LESSONS OF POLISH MUSIC

In discussions concerning the impact of the Warsaw Autumn on the evolution of music in the neighbouring countries, the opportunity to get acquainted with the latest developments in Western music – much appreciated by Eastern European composers – has frequently been emphasised. Considerably less attention has been paid to the circulation of musical innovations between the communist bloc countries, although the importance of that aspect of the festival programme only increased in the long run. The comments of Lithuanian composers, their interviews, articles, and memoirs of later times, published in the Soviet-time periodicals, testified to the fact that during their visits to the Warsaw Festival – apart

16 S. Kisielewski, (1963). Siódma jesień. In: *Warszawska Jesień w zwierciadle polskiej krytyki muzycznej. Antologia tekstów z lat 1956–2006* (2007). K. Droba (ed.). Warszawa: Warszawska Jesień, pp. 75–76.

17 V. Landsbergis, (1964/1990). *Varšuvos nuotrupos*, op. cit., p. 269.

from the experience of Western new music – they were equally impressed by the Polish school.

As early as in the 1960s, foreign music recordings brought from the Warsaw Autumn, as well as from some other festivals and events, were demonstrated (listened to) and discussed during sessions at the Lithuanian Composers' Union. At that time, Vytautas Barkauskas, who was the most active figure in the dissemination and promotion of the latest music, hinted in the press that it was the members of the renewed and revived youth section of the Union who were the most intensely involved in those regular discussions.¹⁸ Even though Barkauskas admitted that he personally was most influenced by the compositions of Lutosławski, Penderecki, and Ligeti, a comparison of the composers' testimonies, articles in the press of the time, and the subsequent reception of music – demonstrates that in the context of the new Polish school Penderecki was for a long time the key figure in Lithuania. The fact that Penderecki's music provoked many discussions was mentioned by Barkauskas in his statements for the press in the 1960s; in his interview on the listening sessions, he focused on the Polish composer's *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960) and *St. Luke Passion* (1966).¹⁹ He recalled the same in other publications:

I remember one tragicomic event at our Conservatoire last spring. In the staff's aesthetics club, we listened to the records of Penderecki's *Passion* and *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* that I had brought from Poland. Some of the staff disliked his music and were even indignant, and one even stood up and fairly solemnly declared: "Penderecki has no idea what art and music are. He is not a composer, his works are hooliganism. It would be a good idea to send both the author and the promoters of his music to prison."²⁰

The fact that the atmosphere during the listening sessions was tense at the time is evident from Bronius Kutavičius' memories; talking about his study years in the Conservatoire (1959–1964), he said: "at that time, merely for listening to that kind of music such as Penderecki's compositions, one could be sent to prison."²¹

18 Kūryba ir gyvenimas. Pokalbis su kompozitoriumi Vytautu Barkausku [Creation and Life. Interview with composer Vytautas Barkauskas] (1967). *Literatūra ir menas*, 21-10-1967.

19 *Ibid.*

20 V. Barkauskas, (1968). Kšištofas Pendereckis. *Kalba Vilnius*, No. 20, p. 13.

21 Quoted after: R. Goštautienė, (1996). Recepcja muzyki Pendereckiego na Litwie, Łotwie i w Estonii. In: *Muzyka Krzysztofa Pendereckiego. Poetyka i recepcja*. M. Tomaszewski (ed.). Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, p. 155.

As Barkauskas later confirmed, the greatest scandal and negative response of the ideological supervisors was caused by the recording of the *Threnody* performed in the Warsaw Autumn Festival in 1961.²² The great controversy around Penderecki's creative explorations of in Lithuania was indirectly confirmed by the correspondence of the same decade between Dvarionas, totally unrelated to young composers' experiments, and Vladas Jakubėnas, who lived in exile²³. However, if we remember that as early as in the 1960s Polish conductor Andrzej Markowski conducted Penderecki's *Threnody* and Lutosławski's *Three Postludes* (1958–1960) in a concert in Vilnius, one can infer that the tensions were mostly fuelled by confrontations in the local milieu.²⁴

When trying to find out facts about the reception of the early, avant-garde-period Penderecki and, more broadly, of the new Polish school, one is confronted with several problems. First of all, there is a shortage of direct, historical documents (reviews, comments on specific compositions, etc.), although Lithuanian composers visited the Warsaw Autumn festivals quite frequently. Moreover, in the 1960s, a number of Polish music companies gave concerts in Lithuania and included new music in their programmes²⁵, while some contemporary Polish works were broadcast on the radio. Under a bilateral trade agreement, Polish composers' scores were also available in the USSR; they were probably also brought by the composers themselves from the Warsaw Autumn and other events. However, the statements of Lithuanian composers, even in those cases when they talked about the impact of Polish music, lack

22 See R. Goštautienė, (2003). Between Socialist Realism and the Avant Garde: Lithuanian Music of the 1950s and 1960s. In: *Studies in Penderecki. Vol. II. Penderecki and the Avant Garde*. R. Robinson, R. Chłopicka (eds.). Princeton, New Jersey: Prestige Publications, p. 141.

23 In his letters to Vladas Jakubėnas in 1963 and 1964, Dvarionas shares his musical impressions of the second avant-garde, especially of Penderecki, and reports sent to *Ruch muzyczny* about the Polish composer. See: Balys Dvarionas. *Kūrybos apžvalga, straipsniai ir laiškai, amžininkų atsiminimai* (1982). J. Gaudrimas (ed.). Vilnius: Vaga, pp. 176, 178–179.

24 The significance of the event for concert life in Vilnius was commented on by conductor Juozas Domarkas. See: V. Gerulaitis, (2010). *Juozas Domarkas. Orkestro byla*. Vilnius: Versus Aureus, p. 115.

25 Thus, e.g., in the concerts of the Poznań Symphony Orchestra and Percussion Instruments Ensemble given in Vilnius in 1969, from among the composers more widely represented in the Warsaw Autumn programmes, Lutosławski's and Andrzej Koszewski's compositions were performed. See: V. Barkauskas, (1969). Karšti plojimai pažinimams. *Literatūra ir menas*, 17-05-1969.

specificity. Let me quote again Kutavičius' story about a listening session at the end of the 1960s. As the composer recalls, in 1969 a large audience gathered at the seat of the Lithuanian Composers' Union to listen to Penderecki's *String Quartet*. According to Kutavičius, everyone was listening attentively, yet "understood nothing, because those were the first steps not only of Penderecki, but also of new music in general"; however, the "unusually free idea" was appreciated the most.²⁶ In the absence of more specific comments by Lithuanian composers on what was learned from the Polish avant-garde school, as well as of reviews and discussions of individual compositions, I shall refer to a statement by Rodion Shchedrin: "First of all, of course, [we learnt] notation, the opportunities created by aleatory notation, and a new... look at the *divisi* issue."²⁷ In that respect, analysing the influences of the Polish school of composition in the works of Lithuanian musicians – also in the area of notation – it can be argued that, in the use of techniques, the Polish aleatoricism and sonorism made an impact on the Vilnius composers comparable to that of the second Western avant-garde that represented similar trends. This is particularly evident in such compositions representative of the turn of the 1960s as *Intimate Composition* for oboe and 12 string instruments (1968) by Vytautas Barkauskas, *Gothic Poem* for symphony orchestra (1970) by Vytautas Montvila, or concerto for violin and orchestra *Metaphony* (1971) by Antanas Rekašius, in which even notation characteristics are strongly correlated with the Polish aleatoricism and sonorism of that time.²⁸

Since the attitude toward tradition, the avant-garde, and modernism was changing, the attitude of the Lithuanian composers who made their debuts in the 1970s and 80s toward the Warsaw Autumn changed, too. The Festival came to be viewed less as a repository of creative resources and experiences. The change in question is vividly represented in Algirdas Martinaitis' experiences from the late Soviet-era, in a note after his visit to the festival:

When listening to Ligeti, Boulez, and others in the Warsaw Autumn of 1988, I seemed to be "smelling the air" in which those musical

ideas were moving and thriving. And strange enough, at the end of the concert, when it seems so recently you were paralysed by that avalanche of sound, you suddenly wanted to forget and never remember. You were bitter, as if you had just bitten a magic apple and left your decayed teeth in it... A complex? Yes. You felt like a "professional of naïve ethics," a poor small Lithuanian from a provincial elementary school. So kir-vir-bam – it is not for everybody!²⁹

Without a deeper analysis of why the Lithuanian composer, after visiting the Warsaw Festival, mentioned Ligeti and Boulez, and not for instance the opera of Penderecki performed in the same year or the compositions of Sofia Gubaidulina, Morton Feldman, and Paweł Szymański – who could have been closer to him in their aesthetic attitudes – I shall just note that the established images and vocabularies frequently affected the very process of the reception and comprehension of new music. In this regard, the conflict between the listening experience of the above-mentioned Lithuanian composer and his cultural expectations correlates with the insight of Vytautas Kavolis, a Lithuanian-born American scholar, to the effect that, for the emergence of new cultural meanings, equally important are both the experiences and the systems of categories that organises them and whose interactions of irregular transformations are particularly important in times of change.³⁰ The changes in the reception of the Warsaw Autumn in Lithuania in the 1970s and 80s reflected more general changes in the self-awareness and self-image of national music, which were also greatly influenced by the Polish factor. The Lithuanian composers who made their debuts in those decades avoided any declarative identification with foreign musical currents and, in particular, with the second avant-garde. Similarly, the influences of Polish music on their compositions spread in a non-declarative way and often indirectly. Thus, e.g., Algirdas Martinaitis, Vidmantas Bartulis, Mindaugas Urbaitis, and Onutė Narbutaitė – who made their debuts in the 1970s – developed a stylistic idioms that Polish critics labelled as neoromantic, and comparable with the contemporary strategies of Lutosławski, Penderecki and Górecki's, bidding farewell to avant-garde.³¹ In the musical works

26 Quoted after: R. Goštautienė, (1996). Recepcja muzyki Pendereckiego na Litwie, Łotwie i w Estonii, op. cit., p. 156.

27 R. Shchedrin, (1992). O proshlom, nastoyashchem i budushchem. *Muzikalnaya akademiya*, No. 4, p. 21.

28 I consulted this claim with by Krzysztof Droba, Warsaw, 20-09-2010.

29 Žemė ir dangus. Su A. Martinaičiu kalbasi R. Gaidamavičiūtė (1990). *Jauna muzika*. Druskininkai: Jauna muzika, pp. 25–26.

30 Cf. V. Kavolis, (1996). *Kultūros dirbtuvė*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos.

31 Similarly, I. Nikolska explains that it was Penderecki's *Passion* and his subsequent compositions that symbolised his turning back to the tradition that had a significant impact on the Russian trend of neoromantic music. See: I. Nikolska, (2005). *Polska muzyka w Rosji – XX wiek*, op. cit.

of that generation, more striking counterpoints with Polish composers unfolded only during the years of Independence, e.g., in the form of reconsidering the ways of returning to tradition as evident in Lutosławski's late symphonism (O. Narbutaitė's symphonic compositions) or through associations with manifestations of the new spirituality (A. Martinaitis, V. Bartulis), or intertextuality strategies (A. Martinaitis, M. Urbaitis).

When analysing the influence of the Polish school on Lithuanian composers and the importance of the Warsaw Autumn for the evolution of their creative activities, the dating of the memories is also important. Thus e.g. in 2006 when asked about their impressions of the Warsaw Autumn, the Lithuanian composers, most widely represented at the festival since the 1980s, already tended to play down the importance of their youthful experiences. Visiting the Warsaw Autumn since 1973, Osvaldas Balakauskas (who had experienced a strong impact of the second Western avant-garde and had later given it up) said that "the festivals were not a sensation, yet they greatly expanded the horizons of new music." Bronius Kutavičius, who had attended the festival since 1971, admitted that he did not care much for Polish composers and tended to appreciate only Lutosławski. Feliksas Bajoras, who first attended the festival in 1968, said: "What the Poles were doing was mostly uninteresting to us, we were doing things in a different way; although W. Lutosławski's and some of K. Penderecki's extreme experiments did impress us, as also did P. Szymański's from the younger generation."³² The change in Lithuanian composers' reception can be interpreted as a revision of experience and memory; the transformation of a fateful meeting into a moment of the first brief infatuation.³³

LITHUANIAN MUSIC IN POLAND: CURTAINS OF HEARING AND ASYMMETRIES OF RECEPTION

Geographic proximity does not always result in intensive cultural exchanges. That is especially true of the dissemination of Lithuanian music in Poland during the years of the Cold War. Thus e.g. before the end

of the 1970s, Lithuanian music occupied a particularly marginal position in the Warsaw Autumn programmes – in local opinion, even the compositions of Latvian and Estonian composers were heard in the Festival concerts much more frequently.³⁴ Over the more than two decades of the period under discussion, in the Warsaw Festival works by Lithuanian composers were included in the concerts of the Lithuanian String Quartet (1965) and the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra (1971, 1978) organised by Goskoncert and PAGART as part of the cross-border cultural exchange agreement between the USSR and the Polish People's Republic. The programmes of such concerts were often decided shortly before the festival, while the Festival's Repertoire Committee treated the exchange concerts as a necessity. However, in the music exports policy of the USSR's central institutions, Lithuanian composers and Lithuanian performers were by no means the favourites, as compared to other allied republics. According to the protocols of the Foreign Commission of the USSR Composers' Union, works by Lithuanian composers were particularly rarely included in the list of the scores sent abroad.³⁵ This was evidenced by the data of the Library of the Polish Composers' Union: next to the works of Russian composers, scores by artists from the Caucasian republics were particularly abundant.³⁶ Therefore in 1965, when a Russian group was rather accidentally substituted for by the Lithuanian Quartet, the event did not attract the attention of Polish music critics: at a Festival marked by a cult of the second avant-garde, the compositions of Lithuanian national modernists (Juozas Gruodis, Julius Juzeliūnas) were probably attributed to the standard trends of Soviet music.³⁷ Meanwhile, the first performance by the Lithuanian

³⁴ Cf. V. Gerulaitis, (1977). Po „Varšuvos rudenį“ pasidairius. *Literatūra ir menas*, 03-12-1977.

³⁵ It's evident from the protocols of the International Commission of the USSR Composers' Union from the 1960s and 1970s, preserved in the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art. For example, in 1966 only two recordings of compositions on a war subject by Lithuanian composers Eduardas Balsys and Vytautas Jurgutis were sent to the Polish Composers' Union. RGALI, f. 2077, inv. 1, No. 2532.

³⁶ Based on the records in the Archive of the Polish Composers' Union (ZKP) and the Warsaw Autumn Festival Office, the above-mentioned tendency was especially characteristic in the 1960s and 1970s.

³⁷ The *Quartet in D Minor* (1924) by Juozas Gruodis and *Quartet No. 1* (1962) by Julius Juzeliūnas were performed. According to the records of the USSR Goskoncert, the Lithuanian Quartet replaced S. Taneyev String Quartet. RGALI, f. 3162, inv. 1, No. 219.

³² See: R. Gaidamavičiūtė, (2008). Lietuvių ir lenkų muzikos ryšiai. In: *Muzikos įvykiai ir įvykiai muzikoje*. Vilnius: LMTA, pp. 82–85.

³³ Cf. M. Tomaszewski, (2010). Życia twórcy punkty węzłowe. *Rekonasans. Res facta*, No. 11 (20), p. 79–90.

Chamber Orchestra in 1971 confirmed the music critics' habit of listening to unfamiliar music through familiar stylistic idioms – and Polish critics associated the works of Algimantas Bražinskas and Feliksas Bajoras with prewar Polish neo-Classical conventions, which the above mentioned composers hardly knew: “One listens to this music most pleasantly, because it is really nice, but this is all. It is hard to speak about any originality, one can simply enjoy the “irreplaceability” of neo-Classicism, but not the compositions that represented it here”.³⁸

From the late 1960s, under the Goskoncert and PAGART exchange agreements, Lithuanian performers were giving more and more concerts in Poland, and they included national music in their programmes.³⁹ Therefore, the statements by some Polish musicians that Lithuanian music was unknown in Poland for several postwar decades should be considered as a paradox.⁴⁰ Was it really unattended to, even though it was performed, for some other reasons? Apparently, even such a representative programme as that proposed by the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra in 1978, which presented the so-called unofficial Soviet music, did not receive any attention during the preparatory meetings of the Warsaw Autumn Repertoire Committee and was eventually scheduled as a day-time concert.⁴¹ In that concert, apart from Arvo Pärt's *Tabula Rasa* for two violins, prepared piano, and string orchestra (1977) and Alfred Schnittke's *Concerto Grosso* No.1 for two violins, harp, prepared piano, and strings (1976–1977), two Lithuanian compositions were performed: *Dzūkian Variations* for chamber orchestra and tape (1974) by Bronius Kutavičius and *Symphony*

No. 2 (1975) by Anatolijus Šenderovas; the soloists were violinists Gidon Kremer and Tatiana Grindenko, and pianist Alfred Schnittke. That concert, and more generally the end of the 1970s, can be viewed as a symptoms of change in Lithuanian music reception in Poland. It was during that period that the members of the Warsaw Autumn Repertoire Committee started including compositions by Bronius Kutavičius in the programme – not as representations of Soviet music, but as opposed to it – or simply as an interesting phenomenon of contemporary music. The change was promoted by two different inspiring music events in Lithuania and Poland.

In 1977, the first Lithuanian Music Festival was held in Vilnius to promote international dissemination of the national music. The propaganda aspect of the event initiated by the Lithuanian Composers' Union was complemented by commercial interest which was represented by the USSR Copyright Agency's branch in Lithuania, an active supporter of the festival. Although the organisers managed to secure the presence of only 13 guests, mostly from the socialist countries, the initiative had some international impact. The consolidated presentation of the national music of the 1970s contributed to changes in the reception of Lithuanian music, made it possible to dissociate its image from the Cold War ideological and stylistic confrontation-based representations of musical worlds and to recognize the unique configuration of national modernism.⁴² The festival was attended by Polish musicologist Tadeusz Kaczyński, a member of the Warsaw Autumn Repertoire Committee. Soon he proposed to include some of the compositions that impressed him in the Warsaw Autumn programmes (e.g., *The Small Spectacle* of 1975 by Bronius Kutavičius) and published a positive review of new Lithuanian music in *Ruch muzyczny*.⁴³

38 T. A. Zieliński, (1975). Oryginalność i konwencja. In: *Spotkania z muzyką współczesną*. Kraków: PWM, p. 263. In this concert Lithuanian compositions were performed: *Toccata* for chamber orchestra (1967) by Feliksas Bajoras, and *Chamber Symphony* (1967) by Algimantas Bražinskas.

39 Thus, e.g., Juozas Domarkas, Chief Conductor of the Lithuanian Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, claims to have considered Polish stages in the 1970s and 80s as “his second home”. In 1975 alone, when touring Poland with the said orchestra, he conducted a programme featuring the symphonic poem *In the Forest* by M. K. Čiurlionis, *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No.2* (1958) by Eduardas Balsys, and *Gothic Poem* (1970) by Vytautas Montvila. See: V. Gerulaitis, (2010). *Juozas Domarkas, op. cit.*, pp. 154–155.

40 E.g. Krzysztof Droba said that in the 1970s “in Poland more was known about, for example, Polynesian music than the music of the neighbouring Lithuania.” See: A zaczęło się – od Festiwalu w Stalowej Woli. Z Krzysztofem Drobą rozmawia Alwida Rolska (1990). *Kurier Wileński*, 27-11-1990.

41 The concert took place at 1 p.m. on 24-09-1978.

42 During the festival, 36 concerts were held and 70 compositions presented. Results: the music of 25 composers aroused great interest; after the festival, 150 compositions were sent to foreign institutions, later followed by another 554 works. They were expected to attract the interest not only of foreign sheet music and music publishers, but also of festivals and foreign performers, who were expected to include these compositions in their repertoires. The composers who were distinguished by the guests of the First Festival included Osvaldas Balakauskas, Eduardas Balsys, Feliksas Bajoras, Julius Juzeliūnas, Bronius Kutavičius, and Vytautas Montvila.

43 T. Kaczyński, (1977). Panorama muzyki litewskiej. *Ruch muzyczny*, No. 14, pp. 15–16. Nevertheless, Kutavičius' compositions proposed by Kaczyński (in 1978–1979) were not included in the festival programmes.

In the same year (1977), Lithuanian musicologist Vytautas Landsbergis attended the independent MMMM (“Young Musicians to the Young City”) festival in Stalowa Wola at the invitation of Polish musicologist Krzysztof Droba, and presented the works of Lithuanian music classic M. K. Čiurlionis to the Polish audience. The friendship of the two musicologists developed into solid informal ties which had a decisive influence on the dissemination of Lithuanian music in Poland. On the initiative of Droba and other Polish musicians, Lithuanian music from non-conformist festivals (after the Stalowa Wola events, there were also K. Penderecki’s private festivals in Lusławice, the Baranów, and Sandomierz festivals organized by the Academy of Music in Kraków) entered the official concert halls of the Warsaw Autumn, as well as Polish radio programmes. From the historical point of view, it seems especially important that all of the above-mentioned musical events not only presented outstanding works by Lithuanian composers of that time, but also initiated commissions for new works. For the geopolitically restricted Lithuanian composers, those were the first solid commissions by foreign institutions – an escape from the constraints imposed by the official Soviet system and the establishment of creative (and personal) freedom.⁴⁴

As demonstrated by private correspondence between Krzysztof Droba and Vytautas Landsbergis, attempts were made in the 1980s to propose works by Lithuanian composers to the Warsaw Autumn Repertoire Committee through informal channels, since Lithuanian authors considered as modern non-conformists were not included in the official listings of proposals.⁴⁵ But for the festival organisers to start paying attention to the innovations of music in the neighbouring country, the aesthetic attitudes of the Warsaw Autumn programme makers first had to change. At the end of the 1970s, after the 21st edition of the Festival (1978), a statement was made that the event finally bade farewell to the standpoint of the avant-garde propaganda and began reconsidering the virtual boundaries of new music and its concept-related categories. The head of the Festival’s Repertoire Committee Józef Patkowski described the Warsaw Autumn transformations as a kind of a paradox:

⁴⁴ The first commissions came from K. Penderecki’s festival in Lusławice (from 1980).

⁴⁵ Correspondence between Krzysztof Droba and Vytautas Landsbergis, stored in their private archives, shows that the most active attempts to enter the Festival were made between 1980 and 1983.

“In the first Warsaw Autumns, we discussed structures, series, permutations, and other purely technical problems, and then it seemed unbelievable that, 20 years later, we should be talking about ideas, emotions, and the human soul.”⁴⁶

On the other hand, the Warsaw Autumn Festival Committee had little confidence in the proposals submitted through official channels and tended to independently select more valuable works. From the 1980s, the works of Lithuanian composers were included in the Festival programmes solely at the suggestion of the Committee members. Characteristically, in the 1980s, four Lithuanian compositions were performed at the Festival by Polish artists: in 1983, it was the oratorio *The Last Pagan Rites* (1978) by Bronius Kutavičius; in 1984, *Triptic* for voice and piano (1982) by Feliksas Bajoras; and in 1987, Osvaldas Balakauskas’ *Silence - Le Silence* for voices and chamber orchestra (1986) and Kutavičius’ romance *Die stille Stadt* for voice and piano (1987), both commissioned by the Festival. It was the oratorio *The Last Pagan Rites* by Kutavičius (performed by soprano Mariola Kowalczyk, the Polish Scouting Union Girls’ Choir, an instrumental ensemble, and conductor Stanisław Welanyk) that proved to be the turning point in the reception of Lithuanian music. In the 1983 Warsaw Autumn, held immediately after the events of the martial law and a year’s break, the ritualised composition by Kutavičius received extremely wide and sufficiently controversial reception. The oratorio was enthusiastically received by Polish critics: after its performance, Andrzej Chłopecki wrote:

The Rites belongs to those rare works which, when they appear, change the image of music in us, revise it, and adjust its proportions. It seems that *The Rites* had to be written by someone, that it waited to be distinctly expressed, and was necessary for our culture. [...] After listening to *The Rites*, the insignificance of many works and their uselessness stand out – the fact that their existence is of little use; true, they were written, yet for no good reason. What are these works about? Perhaps *The Rites* is not a “festival” piece, however, it illuminated, and even interpreted, the whole picture shown to us during the Warsaw Autumn.⁴⁷

In the evaluation of the composition, the differences between the views of the Polish and international music critics were revealed, as well as their contrasting views on

⁴⁶ Quoted after: R. Augustyn, (1978). Neoestetyzm. Wokół programu XXI Warszawskiej Jesieni. In: *Warszawska Jesień w zwierciadle polskiej krytyki muzycznej*, op. cit., p. 202.

⁴⁷ A. Chłopecki, (1983). *Jesień odzyskana*. In: *Warszawska Jesień w zwierciadle polskiej krytyki muzycznej*, op. cit., p. 235.

the relationship between musical expression and political context. Thus, e.g. for Ulrich Dibelius, “the semi-ritual naturalistic oratorio – not from deep Africa, but from Lithuania” was memorable only due to its primitive clusters, while Claus-Henning Bachmann hesitated as to whether to assign this work to kitsch or to art.⁴⁸ If Western critics tended to associate the aesthetic value of the oratorio by Kutavičius with political connotations (according to Lutz Lesle, the work was *politicum ecclesiasticum*⁴⁹), for Polish music critics the value of musical expression itself had a political weight (as a strategy of opposition to official dogmas).

In Lithuania, the performance of Kutavičius’ oratorio in the wider context of Lithuanian music dissemination in Poland was mentioned only in one publication by Vytautas Landsbergis.⁵⁰ In the 1980s, information about cultural events in Poland was particularly limited in the cultural periodicals of the USSR for political reasons, and many texts of that and other musicologists were censored or left unpublished. However, even in these conditions, information about the dissemination of Lithuanian music in Poland and its international recognition was spreading and it affected the local cultural self-awareness.⁵¹ At the end of the Cold War, the Polish music scene became the most important axiological centre for Lithuanian modern music, as an alternative to the official Moscow. In public space, the significance of the Warsaw Autumn and other Polish festivals and of international music relations only became acknowledged in the post-Soviet years.⁵²

Lithuanian music performers returned to the *Warsaw Autumn* scene only in 1990, the year of political changes. After the restoration of the independent Republic of

Lithuania, it was in the last decade of the 20th century that the relations between Polish and Lithuanian musicians developed with full force. Symptomatically, at that time the ensembles invited to the festival were not those that had won international recognition in the Soviet times, but rather – the newly formed groups of musicians associated with the Soviet-era informal scene or with new independent initiatives – from the New Music Ensemble (dir. Šarūnas Nakas), which specialised in Kutavičius’ oratorios, to the young Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra (cond. Gintaras Rinkevičius), established in 1989, and the independent ensemble Ex Tempore, which started its activity in 1991.⁵³ Similarly, up to the early 21st century the Lithuanian composers most widely represented in the *Warsaw Autumn* programmes were the trio of the outstanding modernists of the late Soviet period – Kutavičius, Balakauskas, and Bajoras. In retrospect, the presentation of Lithuanian music at the Warsaw Autumn Festival by Lithuanian and Polish artists in the late 20th century was rather selective. Perhaps only the panorama of Kutavičius’ oeuvre presented a more detailed picture of the composer’s style and his key compositions from different periods.

However, even such a selective presence of Lithuanian music in the Warsaw Autumn programmes had a tremendous influence on the change in the reception of Lithuanian music both in the international space and in Lithuania itself. The image of non-conformist and original Lithuanian music, reinforced on the Polish music scene, contributed to the legitimacy of new creative hierarchies in post-Soviet Lithuania. The first international contemporary music festival Gaida, established in Lithuania in 1991, continued the trend of that non-conformist mainstream canonisation trend, while Lithuanian music criticism was heavily influenced by Polish reception. Especially effective was the Polish image of Lithuanian musical exoticism, which accompanied most of the performances of Kutavičius’ music.⁵⁴

THE REGIME OF NORMALISATION

Since 1990, the Warsaw Autumn became an attraction centre for several younger generations of Lithuanian musicians who no longer associated the Festival with

48 Cf. U. Dibelius, (1983). *Trauermusiken. Der Warschauer Herbst 1983. MusikTexte*, No. 1, pp. 46–47; C.-H. Bachmann, (1983). *Sendung für der ORF Wien – Studio Neue Musik: “Warschauer Herbst ’83”*. Das 26. Internationalen Festival für zeitgenössische Musik. 15.12.1983. Typescript, Archive of “Warsaw Autumn” Festival Office, Warsaw, Poland.

49 L. Lesle, (1983). *Vorbei am Endzeitticken der Weltuhr. DAS*, 23-10-1983.

50 The article presents a brief survey of the Polish press, with special emphasis on Krzysztof Droba and Tadeusz Kaczyński’s interpretations. See: V. Landsbergis, (1984). *Lietuvių muzikos derlius Lenkijoje. Literatūra ir menas*, 14-01-1984.

51 Paradoxically, the previous performances by Lithuanian artists, unnoticed by Polish music critics in 1960s and 1970s, were widely announced and highly praised in the national press.

52 Cf. V. Landsbergis, (1990). *Geresnės muzikos troškimas*, op. cit.; R. Gaidamavičiūtė, (2008). *Lietuvių ir lenkų muzikos ryšiai*, op. cit., pp. 76–97.

53 The above mentioned ensembles gave concerts in 1990, 1993, and 1997, respectively.

54 The interpretations of Krzysztof Droba and Andrzej Chłopecki, still abundantly quoted in the works of Lithuanian musicologists, were particularly influenced by that image.

the political confrontations of the Cold War. The new pilgrims were still influenced by the legend of the Festival as a global forum for contemporary music. Therefore, the younger generation was particularly concerned with the formula of the Festival. Such sometimes exaggerated expectations and attempts to attack the creative recipe of the festival's "myth" were also reflected in numerous published reviews in the Lithuanian periodicals: "The Warsaw Autumn organisers have a very clear concept: several celebrities, a thematic line, some exoticicism, marginal and modern classics, importantly – something never heard of, and, of course, a lot of Polish music – of different generations and of different quality."⁵⁵

Even though after 1990 a boom in contemporary music festivals started in Lithuania, Poland's main festival scene continued to attract because of the very wide variety of global phenomena represented there, and their intriguing selections. Even with the opportunities to visit festivals in different countries, the Warsaw Autumn was valued by the new generation for its ambitious programme policy, while the organisers and the Repertoire Committee were characterised as supporting the "high temperature of the festival itself and the controversial polemical aura surrounding it, the fact that they try promptly to notice and highlight even the slightest geo-cultural changes in their Festival concerts."⁵⁶

The fact that the new music generation was interested in closer acquaintance with Polish music and found the Polish cultural self-reflection in the period of the post-communist transformation relevant – is evident not only in the exhaustive representations of Polish music (as performed at the Warsaw Autumn) in the reviews of the last decade of the 20th century, but also in interviews with the festival organisers and translations of articles written by the Repertoire Committee members and other music critics, which were published in Lithuanian periodicals. Critical assessments of the actual condition of the Festival and its prospects in the texts of Rafał Augustyn, Andrzej Chłopecki, Krzysztof Knittel, and Krzysztof Droba, as well as other music critics, published in Lithuania, remained in sharp contrast to the otherwise essentially quite euphoric reception of the Warsaw Autumn in post-Soviet Lithuania. Although Rafał Augustyn claimed that "the traditional Eastern European function [of the Festival]

as a window (or an air-vent) to the world ended in Poland probably as early as in the 1970s"⁵⁷, and in Lithuania it undoubtedly happened in the 1990s, the experience and the scale of the Warsaw Autumn were still a model for other festivals, and a benchmark for all the new regional initiatives. Simultaneously, after 1990, one of the most important motives of the Festival's reception in Lithuania was the issue of the international contextualising of Lithuanian contemporary music. For attempts to understand what linked Lithuanian music with, and what separated it from, the wider world after five decades of political and cultural isolation, the comprehensive character of the Warsaw Autumn programmes was particularly helpful. Trips were taken from Lithuania to Warsaw to hear new works by Lithuanian composers too – in the first decade of Independence, foreign institutional commissions were a strong factor of musical renewal.⁵⁸ In the course of dialogue, and sometimes sharp debate over the reception of Lithuanian music in Poland, new definitions and descriptions of Lithuanian music were forming, no longer related to cultural locality.

There is no single answer as to what caused the decline of interest in the Warsaw Autumn in Lithuania in the 21st century – the Internet era or the normalisation of political and cultural ties. Even though in the Festival programmes of the last 17 years one can find the names of Lithuanian composers (let me only note the presentations of compositions by Onutė Narbutaitė, Rytis Mažulis, and Justė Janulytė), the relations between Polish and Lithuanian musicians once again became more active through horizontal channels and are more often expressed in private initiatives or on local Polish scenes.⁵⁹ Symptomatically, in the new century the Warsaw Autumn programming decisions are no longer influenced by political factors. Thus, for example, after Lithuania and the other two Baltic republics – Latvia and Estonia – had joined the European Union, Lithuanian music has been widely presented in contemporary music festivals in Germany, Austria, and other countries – and yet the Polish organisers were not inspired. Nevertheless, even in

⁵⁵ R. Goštautienė, (1994). Fragmentai iš Varšuvos: muzika atsisveikina, atnašauja, meldžiasi, elgetauja, parsiduoda.... *Lietuvos rytas*, 30-09/07-10-1994, pp. 42, 44.

⁵⁶ D. Budraitytė, (1996). Senasis naujos muzikos festivalis. *Kultūros barai*, No. 12, p. 46.

⁵⁷ R. Augustyn, (1996). Ko gi mes siekiame? Atsakymai į klausimą "Ar mums reikalingas Varšuvos ruduo?". *Literatūra ir menas*, 19-10-1996.

⁵⁸ After 1990, works by Lithuanian composers were commissioned not only by the Warsaw Autumn, but also by the Polish Radio, PWM, and the Academy of Music in Kraków.

⁵⁹ E.g., in the period between 1989–2010, 11 conferences of Polish and Lithuanian musicologists were held, during which concerts were organised.

the last few years, the Lithuanian pilgrims continue to travel to the Warsaw Autumn – mostly the young and early-career composers as well as music critics. Therefore a question naturally arises for the youngest music critics, such as Paulina Nalivaikaitė, who reviewed the *Warsaw Autumn* of 2016, whether, “with no censorship on music dissemination left, with the appearance of YouTube, and finally, with our own festivals, such as the Gaida, it still makes any sense to go to Warsaw.”⁶⁰ However, as can be gleaned from recent publications in the Lithuanian press, even the youngest generation of Lithuanian musicians are still impressed by the same things that were emphasised by the first Warsaw Autumn pilgrims from Lithuania more than 50 years ago – the special festival atmosphere and musical diversity, as well as the aesthetic and stylistic pluralism that does not impose a dogmatic image of contemporary music.

CONCLUSION

The reception of the Warsaw Autumn in Lithuania has been one of the most important topics in the discourse of Lithuanian music modernisation in the years of the Cold War and the early post-Soviet period. As evident from the examples and cases presented, it has not been a one-way process following the logic of progress, but rather ebbs and flows of cultural interactions, equally affected both by general political and cultural transformations and by specific, individual events and interpersonal meetings. The asymmetries of mutual understanding and mutual recognition of Polish and Lithuanian musical cultures were noticeable both during the Cold War and the post-communist transformation periods, which prompts one not to give too much prominence solely to political factors.

To sum up the impact of the Warsaw Autumn Festival on the Lithuanian music modernisation processes, I shall highlight several aspects of its significance for Lithuanian musical culture. Indeed, the popular image of the festival as a “window on ideas,” established in the works of musicologists and in the speeches of composers, overshadows and neglects other areas of its influence. In addition to the informative function, the Warsaw Autumn stimulated critical self-reflection and transformations of cultural practices. In this respect, in Lithuania the festival had an impact on the Lithuanian contemporary music

field: on the process of moving away from the doctrine of Soviet music, evaluating the innovations of the national composers and the culture of modern music performance, the dissemination of Lithuanian music, and incorporation of Lithuanian national art into the international space. Particularly during the Soviet era, when Lithuania had no international festivals of contemporary music similar to the Warsaw Autumn, the Warsaw scene partly compensated for the traditional function that was important from the early festivals in the 1920s and 1930s – to help define the boundaries of contemporary music and the very concept of contemporaneity in music. No less (and probably even more) important was the identification and recognition of the most prominent figures in Lithuanian music. In the process of forming the modern identity of Lithuanian music, the events of the Warsaw Autumn and the interpretations of Polish musicologists found strong resonance in Lithuania. Simultaneously, one can talk about the participation of contemporary Polish music and musicology – real and symbolic – in the Lithuanian music modernisation processes in the second half of the 20th century. From the historical perspective, the reception of the *Warsaw Autumn* reflects the peaks of cultural exchange between Polish and Lithuanian musicians, a unique and probably never-to-be-repeated stage in the quality artistic and personal relationships between Lithuanian and Polish musicians in the years of ideological restrictions (the 1980s) and political change (the 1990s). With reference to Ulrich Gumbrecht’s concept of the presence culture and the moments of intensity⁶¹, those upsurges in cultural exchange can be regarded as rhythmic synchronisation of two different music modernisation processes in Poland and Lithuania, which was inspired by intense experience of the political and cultural present.

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- Krzysztof Droba *archiwum* (KD) – Krzysztof Droba *private archive*, Mielec, Poland
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Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Literaturi i Iskusstva (RGALI) – *Russian State Archive of Literature and Art*, Moscow, Russian Federation

⁶⁰ P. Nalivaikaitė, (2016). „Varšuvos ruduo“: ir drąsus, ir konservatyvus. *Muzikos barai*, No. 9/10, p. 24.

⁶¹ Cf. U. Gumbrecht, (2003). *Production of Presence. What Meaning Cannot Convey*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, pp. 91f.

Gossudarstvennoye koncertnoye obyedineniye SSSR (Goskoncert SSSR) – the USSR State Concert Union
Soyuz Kompozitorov SSSR – the USSR Composers' Union
Biuro festiwalu „Warszawska Jesień” (WJ) – Warsaw Autumn Festival Office, Warsaw, Poland
Archiwum Związku Kompozytorów Polskich (ZKP) – Archive of the Polish Composers' Union, Warsaw, Poland

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