

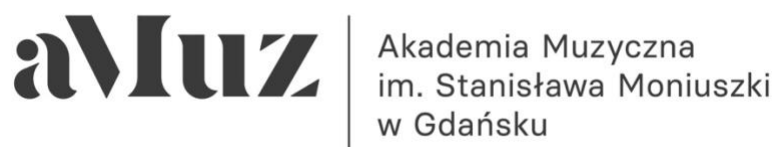
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***Piaśnicka Symphony* for mezzo-soprano, reciter, choir
and symphony orchestra
in the context of the memory of genocide preserved in music
of the 20th and 21st centuries**

Doctoral thesis written under the supervision of
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Introduction

Collective memory — especially that concerning experiences of extreme violence — is one of the foundations of cultural identity in communities. Today, however, social, media and political processes increasingly favour fragmentation, relativisation and erosion of historical memory. In a world where the pace of life and an excess of stimuli weaken our ability to remember things for a long time, it is particularly important to protect those areas of history that define us not only as a society but also as a moral community. One such place is Piaśnica — one of the largest and, for decades, most deeply silenced areas of civilian executions on Polish soil.

The Piaśnica crime, involving mass executions carried out by the German administration and police apparatus in 1939–1940, was an act of systematic extermination, aimed primarily at the Polish intelligentsia, clergy and local community leaders. Although its scale and brutality place it among the greatest acts of German terror in Pomerania, for decades it remained overshadowed by the narratives dominant in Polish memory culture. This memory gap — resulting both from post-war historical policy and the limited presence of Piaśnica in artistic discourse — is one of the key reasons for undertaking the subject of this dissertation.

In the face of contemporary tensions, doubts and anxieties, the question of the role of art in sustaining collective memory takes on particular importance. Music — as *a special medium* combining emotional, symbolic and ritual dimensions — has a unique ability to restore meaning to events and figures that have been erased or silenced. The 20th and 21st centuries have produced numerous works that address the theme of memory through innovative sound and narrative strategies, turning music into a space for commemoration, dialogue and resistance to oblivion. This dissertation therefore fits into the current of research on musical representations of memory, analyzing both their historical origins and contemporary consequences.

In this context, *the Piaśnica Symphony* is an example of a work that seeks to restore dignity and voice to the victims, while at the same time bringing their history into the space of contemporary experience. The work was created out of an inner need to commemorate the victims of the Piaśnica Massacre — as a response to the increasingly noticeable fragility and susceptibility of collective memory to oblivion. The symphony

functions both as a musical composition and a symbolic monument, using sound, text and the dramaturgy of form to recreate the process of 'restoring life to memory' present in the prophetic vision of the Book of Ezekiel.

This dissertation is interdisciplinary in nature: it combines musicological, historical and cultural perspectives. Its aim is to present *the Piaśnica Symphony* as a work embedded in a multi-layered context – from historical realities and memory studies, through contemporary compositional strategies, to structural, textual and sonic analysis. Based on an analysis of historical sources, musicological literature and my own exegesis of the work, this thesis aims not only to interpret the work, but also to place it in the broader tradition of musical testimonies of the 20th and 21st centuries.

The research focus of this dissertation centres on the question of how music can serve as a vehicle for collective memory and what compositional means allow this function to be realised in the context of commemorating traumatic historical events. In particular, the work addresses the question of how *the Piaśnica Symphony* – through its structure, narrative, textual symbolism and sound dramaturgy – can become a form of artistic testimony and a tool for preserving the memory of the victims of genocide in the Piaśnica Forests. Thus, the research problem concerns the relationship between musical language and memory processes, as well as the possibilities offered by contemporary composition in the creation of commemorative works.

The first chapter presents the historical context of the crimes in Piaśnica, the process of shaping the memory of the victims and the evolution of its presence in contemporary culture. It also discusses compositional strategies related to the music of memory, analysing the works of composers such as Luigi Nono, Krzysztof Penderecki, Dmitri Shostakovich, Andrzej Panufnik and Tigran Mansurian. Identifying their common features and different approaches allows us to understand the place of *the Piaśnica Symphony* in the panorama of commemorative music.

The second chapter is devoted directly to *the Piaśnica Symphony*: the circumstances of its creation, the choice of text, an analysis of its content, and a detailed discussion of its formal architecture and sound dramaturgy. Each of the four parts of the work has been analysed in terms of semantic relationships, compositional techniques and

symbolic functions, taking into account their significance for the overall musical narrative.

The entire dissertation aims to show that music can serve as a medium for memory that is just as important as words or images, and that *the Piaśnica Symphony* – as a musical monument to the Victims – fits into this tradition both through its profound reflectiveness and its conscious responsibility for preserving history from oblivion.

Chapter I. Historical context

I.1. History of the crime and socio-cultural memory of the Victims

Piaśnica is, alongside Katyn, the largest site in terms of the number of victims of crimes committed against the Polish population during World War II. Although both genocides were committed by different aggressors, alongside the hell of the Holocaust, they constitute one of the darkest chapters in human history.

In the context of crimes committed against the population of Pomerania, Piaśnica is the place most often mentioned. However, it should be remembered that there are many places throughout the region where the Germans carried out massacres of the Polish population. As E. Grot notes: "Poles arrested in the first days and months of the Nazi occupation were murdered between autumn 1939 and spring 1940 in mass executions in Piaśnica, Szpęgawsk, Barbarka, in the forests near Toruń, Chojnice, Rudzki Most, Starogard, Skórcz, Koronowo, Karolewo, Kokoszkowe, Leśna Jana, Grupa and many other places"¹. All of the places mentioned share one goal of the German occupiers – the complete extermination of the non-German population, starting with the social groups that posed the greatest threat: the intelligentsia, the clergy and politicians.

I.1.1 Historical overview

Immediately after the occupation of Pomerania, the Germans began the systematic liquidation of the Polish elite. These actions were preceded by provocations and acts of sabotage prepared by local structures of the German minority. After the outbreak of war, mass arrests quickly spread throughout the region, and the victims were sent, among other places, to the prison in Wejherowo, from where they were transported to the Piaśnica forests. In October 1939, the Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreussen was created, whose governor, Albert Forster, sought to quickly Germanise the area and remove Poles. The arrests included clergy, intellectuals and people considered "enemies of the state". November 1939 saw an intensification of executions. The overcrowded cells of the prison in Wejherowo were the last place of residence for the victims before they were taken to

¹ E. Grot, *Acta Cassubiana*, "Hitler's Crimes in Piaśnica. State of Research and Proposals," 2001, vol. 3, p. 29.

the forest. Prisoners from concentration camps were also transported to Piaśnica, which increased the number of those murdered to around ten thousand.

The Piaśnica forests were chosen because of their remoteness and terrain. One of the few descriptions of the events is the account of Elżbieta Ellwart, a resident of Orla. This testimony, although drastic, is crucial to understanding the scale and nature of the events. The woman witnessed shootings, mass graves and violence against the victims. She also described the atmosphere of terror and threats made by the perpetrators against witnesses².

In the second half of October or in November 1939, I travelled from Orla to Leśniew. The shortest route led through the Piaśnica forest. (...) When I found myself on a small hill through which the path led, I suddenly heard a loud shout: "*Stehen bleiben!*"³ " A German soldier was standing in front of me (...). The soldier walked away from me, ordering me to stay where I was until he returned. I looked around and saw, not far from where I was standing, the body of Father Bolesław Witkowski, the parish priest of Mechowa, hanging from a tree (...). I also noticed two men under another tree (...). Both were covered in blood, and one of them was holding a child, perhaps two years old, by the legs, tearing it apart and then hitting its head several times against the tree. At that moment, the men noticed me. One of them threw the child on the ground and both ran towards me (...). They asked me if I had seen the warning signs (...). After a moment, the SS men told me that if I ever said anything about what I had seen here, not only would I die, but my whole family and the entire village would die too (...). I looked around and saw a freshly dug rectangular pit with many dead bodies in it (...). I also saw dead bodies lying on the ground next to the pit and a dozen or so people crawling on the ground (...). Then the soldier who had stopped me earlier and was now watching me closely came up to me, tapped me lightly on the shoulder and said: "*Machen sie, dass sie verschwinden!*"⁴ (...). "*Gehen sie schneller!*"⁵ (...). I forced myself to move forward (...). Tired, I sat down. I cried loudly the whole time (...). Soon I found my way and returned to Orla (...). The residents of Orla told me that they had also witnessed executions in the Piaśnica forests (...). They saw how the condemned had to line up over a dug pit, and then, shot by the Germans, they fell into it⁶.

² The account is quoted in excerpts from B. Bojarska. They come from the files of the A. Forster trial, vol. VI, pp. 1526–1528.

³ Own translation: *Stop!*

⁴ Own translation: *Get out of here!*

⁵ Own translation: *Please hurry up!*

⁶ This account by Elżbieta Ellwart was written down by Barbara Bojarska in 1962.

Recalling this account, despite its brutal nature, plays an important role in reconstructing the events in Piaśnica. It allows us to realise not only the scale of the crime, but also the extent of the trauma that weighs heavily on the memory of local communities.

In 1962, Elżbieta Ellwart was the only living eyewitness to the genocide. Many Poles saw the executions, such as Leon Myszk from Orle, who died in a hospital in Wejherowo in 1943, but the account of the woman from Orle remains one of the few surviving accounts of the events in Piaśnica.

In the face of the approaching Eastern Front in 1944, the Germans began to cover up the traces of their crimes. Prisoners from the Stutthof camp were employed to dig up and burn the bodies, after which they were also murdered. To this day, traces of those events — including burnt trees — remain a silent testimony to those actions.



Photograph 1 . and Photograph 2 . Trees around the pyres on which the bodies of the victims were burned in 1944.
(own photographs).

"After the burning of the bodies was completed, all the prisoners employed in this task were murdered and their bodies were also burned⁷ ," concludes Bojarska.

⁷ B. Bojarska, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

After the war, the search for graves began. In 1946, 26 of the 30 graves found were examined. Some of them contained unburned remains, while others had been emptied as a result of earlier attempts to cover up the traces. This work made it possible to make a preliminary estimate of the scale of the crime, although research on the remaining area continues to this day.

I.1.2 Memory of the Victims during the Polish People's Republic

During the Polish People's Republic, the memory of the events in Piaśnica was largely marginalised as a result of censorship and a lack of historical education. Knowledge of the crime survived mainly among local communities thanks to oral tradition, and its public commemoration was limited to a few initiatives, such as the unveiling of a monument in 1955. The narrative of the authorities, hostile to the pre-war intelligentsia and independence circles, distorted the facts, manipulated the numbers of victims and omitted the context of the extermination of the Polish elite.

At that time, the Catholic Church and the inhabitants of the region played a special role in preserving the memory, organising pilgrimages, services and prayers at the site of the massacre despite restrictions. As early as 1946, thousands of people gathered for the first large pilgrimage, and a year later, the execution site was consecrated. Thanks to the consistent efforts of local communities, the tradition of annual ceremonies has survived to this day, and the Piaśnica Sanctuary remains one of the most important memorial sites in Pomerania.

I.1.3 Activities to commemorate the victims of the crimes in the Piaśnica Forests

Over the last 40 years, most of the monuments in the forest have been restored. Ordinary concrete kerbs have been replaced with dignified and sophisticated monuments. The memorial site is decorated with numerous sculptures and commemorative plaques with quotations from the Holy Bible and Polish poets.

Over the decades, countless academic publications have been produced with the aim of documenting the Piaśnica crime, analysing its historical context and preserving

the memory of the victims of this gruesome event. Commemorating the victims has also become a creative imperative in many fields of art⁸ :

Literature:

- *Piaśnica. Poetry and Prose Fragments* (1971) – an anthology edited by Wojciech Kiedrowski containing literary works by Lech Bądkowski, Augustyn Necel and many other local authors,
- *Piaśnica oczami poetów* (Piaśnica through the eyes of poets) (2001) – selected and edited by Wojciech Kiedrowski,
- *Moja Piaśnica* – a collection of poems by Mirosław Odyński
- *Requiem w leśnej katedrze* (*Requiem in the Forest Cathedral*) – a short story by Maciej Tamkun
- *In the Shadow of Piaśnica* (2014) – a novel by Eugenia Drawz,
- *Remember Piaśnica* (2019) – a collection of poems by Joanna Ryszkowska
- *Las Piaśnicki* – a comic book by Tomasz Mehring

Film:

- *Las Piaśnicki* (1990), directed by Tadeusz Wudzki
- *In the Piaśnica Forests* (2008), dir. Lech A. Kujawski
- *Memory. The Mystery of the Piaśnica Forests* (2011), dir. Mirosław Krzyszkowski, Dariusz Walusiak
- *Piaśnica* (2018), dir. Mariusz Sławiński,

Music:

- Andrzej Nanowski *Requiem Piaśnickie* (2001) for four soloists and organ,
- Karol Krefta *Piaśnica Funeral Mass* (2019) for mixed choir,
- Szymon Chyliński *Piaśnica Lament Song Cycle* (2019) for voice, clarinet, violin, double bass and accordion

⁸ The list does not include sculptures and paintings due to their number and the difficulty in identifying their authors. In the Piaśnica forest alone, there are countless statues and sculptures dedicated to the genocide or referring to this subject.

I.1.4 Summary

Recalling the facts concerning German actions in Pomerania serves to show the scale and ruthlessness of the planned extermination of the Polish population, the effects of which – in the form of intellectual, cultural and social losses – were felt for decades and remain a warning against the destructive power of the ideology of hatred. The historical perspective provides an interpretative foundation for the Piaśnica Symphony, allowing us to understand both the motives behind its creation and its place in the artistic reflection on collective trauma. Thanks to its multi-layered structure, the music opens up a space for contemplation that is inaccessible to words alone, and the monumental form of the symphony combines vocal, instrumental and narrative layers, creating an artistic testimony to a tragic past and proof that art can serve as a tool for memory, communal reflection and identity building

I.2 The theme of memory in contemporary music

I.2.1 The origins and theoretical conditions of the theme of memory

The theme of memory, both collective and individual, is fundamental to contemporary reflections on cultural identity and ways of processing traumatic events. The classical approach to memory as a social construct was proposed by Maurice Halbwachs, who in his work *La Mémoire Collective* demonstrated that memory is not an individual function, but is deeply embedded in group social structures. Halbwachs argues that memory is a "shared heritage" that constantly evolves through human interaction, as well as through rituals and symbolic representations⁹.

In turn, in Paul Ricoeur's approach to the memory of trauma, memory serves not only to document the past, but also to reconstruct it, allowing painful experiences to be processed. In his view, memory is a dynamic process in which traumatic experiences are reinterpreted through cultural narrative. Music thus becomes one of the most important media of this process¹⁰.

The contemporary perception of memory as a dynamic phenomenon that shapes individual and collective experience highlights its key role in cultural processes. Both Maurice Halbwachs' concept of the social construction of memory and Paul Ricoeur's reflections on trauma and its reinterpretation through narrative open up new perspectives for analysing music as a medium of memory. Through its unique ability to evoke emotions, recall memories and create symbolic references, music becomes not only a space for artistic expression, but also a tool for shaping identity.

⁹ M. Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective*, (1950), in: www.psychanalyse.com
https://www.psychanalyse.com/pdf/memoire_collective.pdf (accessed on 11 February 2025).

¹⁰ Cf. P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. J. Margański, Krakow 2007, p. 583-584.

I.2.2 The aesthetics of memory in contemporary music – compositional strategies and means of expression

In the context of evoking memory in musical works, the role of intertextuality should also be emphasised – a phenomenon in which a work refers to earlier cultural texts in the form of fragmentary memories and symbols associated with the past. However, in line with the postmodern attitude towards tradition, fragments of the past serve only as a kind of game, the aim of which is not to faithfully recreate past events, but to transform and reinterpret these fragments in a new context. In contemporary music, this means that quotations from older works, motifs referring to well-known melodies or stylistic borrowings become a tool for dialogue with the past¹¹.

Contemporary music that addresses the theme of memory balances between a postmodern game with the past and a deeper reflection on its meaning. In contrast to compositions that treat historical references as an element of aesthetic play, there is a trend in creativity in which the memory of the past is not subject to deconstruction, but becomes a tribute to the victims and a testimony to trauma.

The rest of this text will therefore focus on works and techniques that do not fit into the postmodernist game, but concentrate on preserving memory through emotional involvement, symbolic references and conscious allusions to traumatic events. Compositions constructed in this way express a concern for memory, which is an essential element of collective and cultural identity.

Examples of a dignified and authentic approach to memory, in which references to tragic events are not a "game with tradition" but a form of tribute and testimony, can be found in numerous works of the 20th and 21st centuries. In contrast to postmodernist tendencies, which focus on deconstruction and reinterpretation, the compositions discussed here seek to preserve the memory of the victims through deep emotional engagement, conducting a conscious dialogue with history.

The following list includes selected symphonic works¹² in which the memory of the victims of genocide is the central theme and the artistic message is based on an authentic approach to the subject of collective memory:

¹¹ M. L. Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music*, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis 2005, p. 55–68.

¹² This criterion was chosen due to the need for a specific reference to *the Piaśnica Symphony*.

- Luigi Nono *Il canto sospeso* (1956) for three solo voices, choir and orchestra
- Krzysztof Penderecki *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* (1961) for 52 string instruments
- Dmitri Shostakovich Symphony No. 13 *Babi Yar* (1962)
- Krzysztof Penderecki *Dies irae* (1967) for three solo voices, mixed choir and symphony orchestra
- Andrzej Panufnik *Epitaph for Katyn* (1967) for symphony orchestra
- Tigran Mansurian *Requiem* (2016) for solo voices, mixed choir and symphony orchestra

The rest of this paper will present a general analysis of the works presented, based on four criteria that will allow for a multidimensional understanding of the role of memory in compositional work:

- Historical context;
- Inspirations, ideas, assumptions;
- Compositional means and techniques used;
- Reception and interpretations.

An analysis of the historical context allows us to understand the background against which the works in question were created. Knowledge of the events and socio-political realities in which the composers worked is a *sine qua non* for understanding their creative intentions and the depth of their message. The historical context also reveals the links between the composer's personal experiences and the collective memory of the genocide, which forms the basis for further interpretations.

The analysis of musical works in the context of the memory of genocide requires consideration not only of their historical and stylistic character, but also of their ideological assumptions and artistic message. Composers who address the theme of genocide are often inspired by specific sources – historical, literary and philosophical. Taking this perspective into account allows us to better understand the composer's intentions and discover how music becomes a vehicle for memory and a testimony to the past.

The choice of specific means of expression by composers is not accidental, but results from their artistic quest to convey emotions and the value of memory. Hence, there is a need to analyse compositional techniques in order to identify how the form of a work, its orchestration or other sound techniques reflect the nature of trauma, mourning and tribute to the victims. Discovering these means will enable a deeper understanding of how selected compositions communicate with the audience and fit into a broader dialogue with the tradition of music of remembrance.

The final aspect of the analysis focuses on how the works in question were received by critics, performers and audiences. Examining their reception reveals how the artistic message reaches the collective consciousness and how interpretations of the works have changed over time. This will make it possible to determine the extent to which the composers' authentic approach to memory has influenced the shaping of cultural narrative and collective memory.

Conducting an analysis according to the indicated criteria will provide a comprehensive view of the works in question. This will not only make it possible to read their artistic value, but also to show how, through compositional work, it is possible to preserve the memory of the victims of genocide and build a lasting dialogue with the past. Thanks to this, the compositions in question are not only an expression of artistic reflection, but also an important element of collective cultural identity, the analysis of which is of great importance in research on the music of memory.

1.2.2.1 Luigi Nono *Il canto sospeso* (1956) for three solo voices, choir and orchestra

- Historical context

Luigi Nono composed *Il canto sospeso* in 1955–1956, at a time when reflections on the atrocities of World War II were particularly vivid. However, this work should also be viewed in the context of the growing tensions resulting from the Cold War.

- Inspirations, ideas, assumptions

The work is a cantata for solo soprano, alto and tenor, mixed choir and orchestra, and its title can be translated literally as 'Suspended Song'. Nono used excerpts from farewell letters written by European resistance fighters who had been sentenced to death by the Nazis. The texts were taken from the anthology *Lettere di condannati a morte della Resistenza europea*, published in 1954 by Giulio Einaudi¹³.

- Compositional means and techniques used

In terms of macroform, the work is divided into nine parts. In each of them, the composer uses a specific performing apparatus, creating a kind of discourse between the individual layers:

- I. Orchestra
- II. Choir
- III. Soprano, alto, tenor solo with orchestra
- IV. Orchestra
- V. Tenor solo with orchestra
- VI. Choir and orchestra
- VII. Soprano solo and choir
- VIII. Orchestra
- IX. Choir and timpani

In all of the indicated sections, the composer bases the progression on an all-interval series with a scissor structure¹⁴:

¹³ The information is based on the description of the work on the Schott publishing house website: https://www.schott-music.com/en/il-canto-sospeso-no405721.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com (accessed on 13 February 2025).

¹⁴ K. Kwiatkowski, *Master of Sound and Silence. Luigi Nono*, Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, Warsaw 2015, p. 62.



Example 1 . A series used by Luigi Nono in *Il canto sospeso*.

The ascetic '*as if sostenuto*' in the initial phase of the work introduces the listener to a fundamental mood of reflection. The composer gradually expands the orchestration while simultaneously densifying the rhythmic structures in the individual voices, building up to a climax, after which the expressive flow returns to a euphonious aura. The tension built up and released in this way anticipates the entry of the choral part, in which – in contrast to the orchestral layer – the interval structuralism is more elaborate.

Giving the choral melody a formative function is linked to the emphasis on the text, which was carefully and consciously chosen by the composer and is based on fragments of farewell letters written by resistance fighters.

In segment III, traces of the melody performed by the choir can be heard in the returning orchestral part. The initial course seems to be a reminiscence or conclusion of the choir's presentation. At the same time, it is a section preparing for the appearance of the solo voices. It is worth noting that despite the change in interval structuralism compared to the course of segment I, the composer retains the energetic character, making this section very obviously and homogeneously consistent with the course of segment I.

The entry of the solo voices enlivens the course of the piece. Based mainly on melodic leaps, the solo layers progress in the ever-increasing tension of the orchestra, which at first only accompanies the soloists, but with time it takes on the role of co-leading the expressive course to a climax, in which an almost orchestral *tutti* is achieved.

Segment IV allows the climax to resound in its initial phase through *pianissimo possibile* and the flageolet sound of the string instruments. In the further phase of development, the use of serial melody is very clear, with each degree being brought out by a different instrument. The wind parts are performed using the *frullato* technique, which helps to build tension. The use of the xylophone, vibraphone and marimba

contributes to the development of colour, as play their parts organically with the wind instruments, using *tremolo*. The climax built up by these means is withdrawn almost immediately, and its release is no longer accompanied by *frullato*. The cast participating in the narrative is limited. At this stage of the work, one can therefore perceive *the* titular *sospeso* – perceived as a kind of restraint or suspension.

The next, fifth section of the piece bears the hallmarks of recitative in the Baroque tradition, where recitative was a form of free, expressive narration with a metre and rhythm similar to natural speech, which allowed the text to be conveyed with an emphasis on content. The prosody of the words in this part of *Il canto sospeso* and the textural arrangement, where the tenor soloist leads the main narrative, expressing the content of the text, leave no doubt as to the composer's intentions to highlight the text as much as possible.

The composer divided segment *VI* into two sections, *a.* and *b.*, the first of which contrasts with the previous part in terms of both energy and dynamics as well as texture and sound. The melodic movement disappears. Each layer realises the sound material in a repetitive manner. Combined with very high volume, it expresses the poignant text: "The doors open. Here are our killers. They kick us out out of the synagogue."

The next part, segment *VII b.*, stands in expressive opposition to the above. The orchestra layer returns to its function as an ascetic background, while the choral part expresses the rest of the text through fragments of melody: "How difficult it is to say goodbye forever to such a beautiful life¹⁵". The whole is maintained at a very low volume and with sparse orchestration, which is also a direct preparation for the arrival of segment *VIII*, which is another recitative. "Addio mamma". The composer uses a soprano recitative to set to music the text in which the daughter says goodbye to her mother. The use of the harp, celesta and bells may evoke strong associations with innocence and the world of children, giving the fragment an ethereal character. The delicate sound of the harp and celesta creates an atmosphere of fragility and transience, emphasising the emotional dimension of the farewell, which, combined with the overall context, gives it an almost macabre character.

The intimate and euphonious atmosphere is interrupted by the decisive intervention of the orchestra at the beginning of segment *VIII*, with the use of brass

¹⁵ Translated from the score of *Il canto sospeso*, Ars Via Verlag (Hermann Scherchen) GmbH 1957.

instruments and the high register of the flute. In terms of its energetic character, this part resembles the initial phase of the piece. However, the sounds heard and 'placed' in the first segment have been replaced or evolved into loud repetitions. The penultimate link thus constitutes a kind of conclusion to the serial course, remaining a strong echo of the expression of the previous parts. Considering the course of the entire *Il canto sospeso*, segment VIII could be a very convincing ending, concluding the work as a "strong *coda*". However, the composer entrusts the ending to the choral layer accompanied by timpani. Just as he did not allow the strong expression flowing from the theme of death to develop throughout the work, 'restraining' each climax time and again, so too in the fragment ending the composition he does not opt for strong exaltation. The choir, in a very ascetic sound aura, creates space for the last words of the proud Victims going to their execution to resound:

"...I am not afraid of death",

"I will be calm and composed before the firing squad.

Those who condemned us are so calm,"

"I go with faith in a better life for You"¹⁶

- Reception and interpretations

The premiere of the work took place on 24 October 1956 in Cologne under the baton of Hermann Scherchen. *Il canto sospeso* is widely regarded as one of the most important works of serial music of the 1950s, combining advanced compositional technique with a deeply emotional message¹⁷.

The work was presented at a time when the war crimes committed by German firing squads just 10 years earlier were not yet widely discussed. The presentation of the work in Cologne inevitably aroused a great deal of emotion¹⁸.

The choice of texts, combined with the use of serialism, caused considerable controversy. Heinz-Klaus Metzger criticised Nono, calling him a "serial Pfitzner" who

¹⁶ Translated from the score of *Il canto sospeso*, Ars Via Verlag (Hermann Scherchen) GmbH 1957.

¹⁷ Cf. C. Nielinger, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 'The Song Unsung: Luigi Nono's *Il canto sospeso*', 2006, vol. 131, no. 1, pp. 88–89.

¹⁸ See C. Nielinger, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

used serious texts to gain the recognition of a bourgeois audience. The heated debate about Nono's work was fuelled by Theodor Adorno's statement in his essay *Das Altern der neuen Musik*: "writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric"¹⁹. The uproar that followed the premiere of *Il canto sospeso* clearly shows how vivid and unhealed post-war emotions were at the time.

It should be stated with certainty that Luigi Nono's *Il canto sospeso* was a groundbreaking work in terms of compositional technique and emotional message, which at the same time became the subject of discussion on the ethical boundaries of art in the face of war trauma. The construction of a musical work based on letters from members of the resistance movement created a bond with history that was strongly rooted in the composer, who was also a social and political activist. After all, in addition to the Venice Conservatory, he also graduated in law from the University of Padua²⁰. He himself summed up his post-war activities with the words quoted by Justyna Humięcka-Jakubowska: "For us young people at that time, the memory of the Resistance and opposition to fascism was the driving force of our lives. (...) "²¹.

In conclusion, it is worth quoting K. Kwiatkowski's apt statement: "*Il canto sospeso*, Nono's most expressive work from the 1950s, is also one of the best examples of the enormous diversity of ways of forming sound material developed in post-Schoenberg and post-Webern music."

¹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²⁰ See J. Humięcka-Jakubowska, *Intuition or Scientism: Stockhausen – Ligeti – Nono – Berio – Xenakis – Grisey*, Poznań Society of Friends of Science Publishing House, Poznań 2013, p. 286.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

I.2.2.2 Krzysztof Penderecki *Requiem for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1961) for 52 string instruments

- Historical context, inspirations, ideas and assumptions

In 1959, Krzysztof Penderecki entered the Polish Composers' Union Competition for Young Composers, where he won all three prizes. One of them was for a piece entitled 8'37" for 52 string instruments. It was only after the premiere and subsequent performances in Poland did audiences and critics begin to notice that this peculiar study in sonorism, full of intense and tense narration, contained strong references to the macabre themes of death and post-war trauma. In view of these associations, and under the influence of suggestions from friends and the artistic community, Penderecki changed the title and sent the manuscript to the mayor of Hiroshima. The new title, *For the Victims of Hiroshima – a threnody*, was intended to 'stir emotions' in the Cold War reality and the still vivid post-war trauma, which was likely to contribute to the work's more effective existence on the international stage. This move proved extremely effective, as the work, which during its creation had nothing to do with commemorating the victims of the bombing of Hiroshima, received a UNESCO award, and the composer received a medal and a number of awards in Japan for his artistic tribute – a kind of musical monument to the victims a medal and a number of awards in Japan²². The enormous success of *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* probably meant, as Tomasz Tarnawczyk claims, "that Penderecki's works were commissioned and then graced so many important events of the past century"²³. Among these events, the author mentions: the 700th anniversary of Munster Cathedral, the 25th anniversary of the United Nations, the 700th anniversary of Moscow, the 1000th anniversary of Gdańsk and the 3000th anniversary of Jerusalem²⁴.

It can be said that the path taken by *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima*, from a sonoristic experiment to a work of deep symbolic meaning, reflects Penderecki's words: "*Only wandering – a roundabout way leads to fulfilment*"²⁵, quoted by Mieczysław

²² J. Topolski, *Krzysztof Penderecki, 'Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima'*, in: culture.pl, <https://culture.pl/pl/dzielo/krzysztof-penderecki-tren-ofiarom-hiroszimy> (accessed on 17 February 2025).

²³ T. Tarnawczyk, *Expressionist elements in Krzysztof Penderecki's work*, in: *Musical work – work of art. Hermeneutic Analysis and Reception of Musical Works. Integral Analysis and Philosophy of Art*, ed. Alicja Gronau-Osińska, Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music Publishing House, Warsaw 2007, p. 177.

²⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

²⁵ M. Tomaszewski, *'Only Wandering...' Penderecki's Creative Path*, ed. K. Droba, in: *MUSIC THEORY. Studies, Interpretations, Documentation*, Krakow Academy of Music Publishing House, Krakow 2016, p. 223.

Tomaszewski in the journal *Teoria Muzyki*. It was not a direct creative intention, but later interpretations and historical context that gave the composition its ultimate profound meaning, making it an important part of the musical legacy of the 20th century.

Regardless of the composer's intentions, *the Requiem for the Victims of Hiroshima* should be viewed in terms of music dedicated to the memory of genocide, for it is as such that this music has gone down in history.

- Compositional means and techniques

Throughout the composition, Penderecki uses bands of dissonant sounds and sonoristic effects in the form of clattering and murmurs, in a subjective approach to shaping time, as pointed out by Tomasz Tarnawczyk²⁶.

Krzysztof Bilica puts forward the thesis that when Penderecki began composing *the Toccata*, he wanted above all to:

- to try out sound material based on what were then unconventional methods of producing sounds from string instruments,
- to oppose Western European strict serialism with his own technique (...),
- introduce a modified, more practical musical notation²⁷.

An analysis of the expressive course of *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* should begin with the statement that the initial 'howl' of high dissonant sounds places the emotionality of the work in the realm of deep trauma, which resonates both with personal and collective experiences of tragedy.

In this way, the listener is immediately introduced to a space dominated by a dramatic, anti-war lament, reflecting the pain, horror and hopelessness resulting from war experiences and the threat of modern military technologies. The composer allows this expression to resound throughout the first minute of the piece, only to smoothly transition into a densification of movement achieved through the accumulation of sonoristic means. The quasi-percussive course finds its outlet in the wailing that returns in section 10, reminiscent of sirens – so closely associated with bombings. The construction of sections

²⁶ T. Tarnawczyk, *Expressionist elements in the work of Krzysztof Penderecki*, in: *Musical work – work of art. Hermeneutic Analysis and Reception of Musical Works. Integral Analysis and Philosophy of Art*, ed. Alicja Gronau-Osińska, Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music Publishing House, Warsaw 2007, p. 179.

²⁷ K. Bilica, *Threnody – To the Victims of Hiroshima for 52 string instruments*, in: *The Work of Krzysztof Penderecki: From Genesis to Resonance: Interpretations. 2, A Time of Trials and Experiments 1960-1966: the phase of Threnody, De natura sonoris and Death Brigade*, ed. Mieczysław Tomaszewski, Krakow Academy of Music Publishing House, Krakow 2010, p. 8.

10 to 19, based on ascending and descending *glissandos*, or the sophisticated superimposition of individual layers of sound, demonstrates an excellent use of space and creates an atmosphere of impending 'impact'. In this way, however, the anticipated climax takes the form of a diffuse fabric of percussive clatters and murmurs, creating an atmosphere of chaos and panic, reaching its peak in segment 62, where the 'howl' returns – this time expressing ultimate terror.

The composer has divided the above phenomena into distinct, numbered sections in macroformal terms, which, contrasting with each other in a continuous manner, attack the listener with another dose of strong expression.

Among the various compositional techniques used by Penderecki, the following should be highlighted:

- **pitch approximation**, i.e. not specifying specific pitches,
- **temporal approximation** (segments 62-65),
- **aleatoricism**, manifested in the freedom of choice of given groups of sounds by the instrumentalists,
- **punctualism**, i.e. the frequent use of sounds isolated in space and time,
- **serialisation of the lead** in terms of timbre, pitch, volume and duration (within individual groups),
- **cluster technique**, allowing for the use of highly condensed sound bands
- **hocket technique**.

In summary, Penderecki's use of a wide range of innovative techniques allowed him to create a work of complex, multi-layered expression. Experiments in the form of unconventional ways of producing sounds from string instruments not only made it possible to effectively counter the rigid norms of Western European serialism.

The innovative compositional strategy manifests itself in a dynamic transition from the initial "howl", deeply rooted in trauma, through the growing drama and atmosphere of the impending impact, to the culmination of chaos. All this makes *Tren – To the Victims of Hiroshima* not only a powerful anti-war manifesto, but also a testament to artistic courage and an experimental approach.

- Reception and interpretations

Tadeusz A. Zieliński, in an article entitled *Krzysztof Penderecki's New Works* in *Ruch Muzyczny* (1961), devotes a significant part of the content to *Threnody*, commenting that Penderecki, treating his music as a composition of colours, abandons sounds of a specific pitch, (...) and all these effects proved to be a pretext for creating a profound, grammatical and even shocking work²⁸.

Zygmunt Mycielski comments on *the Threnody* with a slightly more tongue-in-cheek tone, also writing in *Ruch Muzyczny* (1964) that the work is like oysters, snails or vodka. He explains that *the Requiem*, constructed from static elements and devoid of rhythm, should not have the right to exist, and yet it 'works', which, in his opinion, demonstrates Penderecki's extraordinary sonic and structural imagination²⁹.

In November 1961, the piece was scheduled to be performed in Stockholm, but during the first rehearsal, the performers refused to play Penderecki's work, arguing, as Ludwik Erhardt writes, that "this is not music and they have no intention of destroying their instruments"³⁰. Ultimately, thanks to the conductor's diplomatic efforts, the performance went ahead. However, shortly afterwards, the planned performance at the 15th Festival in Venice was cancelled for the same reasons. Erhardt adds that "the same thing happened in Cologne and many other cities"³¹.

Tren – To the Victims of Hiroshima remains to this day (2025) a groundbreaking work that combines bold sonoristic experiments with a profound historical message.

Penderecki's work, composed in 1960, has inspired many composers, and to this day, none of Penderecki's successors, as Erhardt states, have taken even a single step forward in experimenting with string instruments"³².

It is disturbing that today, in the third decade of the 21st century, a large group of composers are trying to imitate the aesthetics of *the Requiem* in an unreflective way. As early as 1964, Mycielski stated: 'I already know several pieces written in the style of *Tren*. Scandalous! Academic avant-garde, searching for a ten-złoty coin that flew into the piano. That's dead now. But *the Threnody* lives on"³³. These words sound remarkably fresh and relevant not only four years after the premiere of the *Threnody*, but also sixty-

²⁸ T. A. Zieliński, *New works by Krzysztof Penderecki*, *Ruch Muzyczny*, 1961, no. 12, p. 17.

²⁹ Z. Mycielski, *I Survived the 8th Warsaw Autumn*, *Ruch Muzyczny*, 1964, no. 21, p. 5.

³⁰ L. Erhardt, *Meetings with Krzysztof Penderecki*, PWM, Krakow 1975, p. 36.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³² Cf. L. Erhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

³³ Z. Mycielski, *I Survived the 8th Warsaw Autumn*, *Ruch Muzyczny*, 1964, no. 21, p. 5.

four years later. Penderecki himself said the following thirty years after the creation of *the Threnody*:

"I began my career at a time when there was still much to discover. A new reality was opening up before me, new visions of art and the world. However, I quickly realised that this innovation, which mainly boiled down to experimentation and formal speculation, was more about destruction than rebuilding (...). Escaping from the avant-garde trap was made possible by my return to tradition (...) I was guided by a desire for synthesis, a desire to integrate the multitude of experiences that are the lot of contemporary man"³⁴.

I.2.2.3 Dmitri Shostakovich Symphony No. 13 *Babi Yar* (1962)

- Historical context

On 29–30 September 1941, near Kiev, one of the most tragic chapters in modern human history, which will forever remain a testimony to unimaginable suffering and demonic cruelty. During those days, the Germans killed about 34,000 Jews in the ravines near Kiev. In the following years of World War II, hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war and psychiatric hospital patients were brought to Babi Yar for extermination. It is estimated that the number of victims of German crimes near Kiev is around 100,000 people³⁵.

- Inspirations, ideas, assumptions

In the Soviet Union, the commemoration of Holocaust victims was often neglected, and any celebrations, if allowed, were not publicised and were held very modestly and symbolically. The Soviet authorities viewed Holocaust-related commemorations as "disrespectful and neglectful" of the large number of Soviet victims of World War II.

In 1961, Yevgeny Yevtushenko visited the execution site near Kiev. Shocked by the enormity of the suffering that had taken place there and the complete lack of

³⁴ Krzysztof Penderecki, *The Labyrinth of Time: Five Lectures at the End of the Century*, Warsaw 1977, p. 23.

³⁵ V. Moskalets, *Babi Yar: Memory and Oblivion*, available online: <https://www.jhi.pl/artykuly/babi-jar-pamiec-i-zapomnienie,4570> [accessed on 18 February 2025].

commemoration, he wrote a poem entitled *Babi Yar*, which begins very eloquently with the words: "There are no monuments at Babi Yar." Published in the same year, the poem delighted Shostakovich, who almost immediately set about adapting it – initially as a choral work. However, ideas for further plans quickly emerged, ultimately resulting in works for solo bass, male choir and orchestra³⁶. Shostakovich divides them into five parts, each of which uses a different poem by Yevtushenko as its textual basis. These texts were published at different times, and the poem *Fears*, on which the fourth part is based, was written for Shostakovich especially for the *Symphony*³⁷.

- Compositional means and techniques used

Dmitri Shostakovich, as Tadeusz A. Zieliński states: "was not a revolutionary in terms of sound technique and often used quite traditional means. However, he owes his important position in history to the great nobility of his inventiveness, perfection, craftsmanship and very individual style (...)"³⁸.

All these characteristics of Shostakovich are highlighted in his Symphony No. 13. It is a structurally and emotionally diverse work that reveals the composer's exceptional sensitivity to complex historical and political themes.

The overall formal structure of the work is as follows:

- I. *Babi Yar* – Adagio
- II. *Humour* – Allegretto
- III. *In the shop* – Adagio
- IV. *Fears* – Adagio
- V. *Career* – Allegretto

In the first part of the piece, the composer emphasises the thematic nature of the individual layers. Both the strings (especially in the initial phase) and the wind

³⁶ Cf. D. Elphick, *Decoding the Music Masterpieces: Shostakovich's Babi Yar*, Available online: <https://theconversation.com/decoding-the-music-masterpieces-shostakovichs-babi-yar-82819> [accessed on 19 February 2025].

³⁷ See K. Meyer, *Szostakowicz*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Kraków 1973, p. 147.

³⁸ T. A. Zieliński, *Styles, Trends and Composers of 20th Century Music*, Central Centre for the Promotion of Culture Publishing House, Warsaw 1972, p. 107.

instruments move in seconds and thirds, creating an appropriate aura for the appearance of the *unison* choir, which, in its ascetic melodic and rhythmic structure, expresses the weight of Yevtushenko's poem. The theme of the initial phase plays a key role in the construction of the entire first part of the work, defining, as it were, the structuralism of the entire segment. The expression, conveyed through static melody, is accompanied by a steady increase in the number of performers in the orchestra. The climax, which the composer brings about, takes place without the participation of the vocal layer, allowing for the unhindered presentation *of the* orchestral *tutti*. Shostakovich does this masterfully, exploring the colouristic aspect of individual groups of instruments, while at the same time conveying the character of the death scene, thanks to a strong density of movement contrasted with a very wide range of chords played by the brass instruments. Gradually slowing down and resounding through long notes reinforced *by tremolo*, the climax finds its energetic outlet in the final phase, which directly refers to the expressive course of the initial section, only echoing the climax at the very end.

The climax of intensity and movement, evoked in the form *of the coda* of the first part, directly anticipates the arrival of Part II, where the vertical chords set the tone for the further course of the narrative. The bright colours of the orchestration contrast provocatively with the content of the text, which deals with how all rulers have commanded parades for generations. The 'humour' presented by Shostakovich is perverse – as if 'thumbing its nose', as evidenced by the alternation and mobility of the successive layers of the orchestra, accompanied by the soloist's solemn singing. This discourse and the peculiar alternation become the main formative element, shaping the highly dynamic narrative of the second part of the work, entitled [In the shop]. Particularly noteworthy here is the masterful variation of textures, which contributes to the constantly intriguing sound.

Part III. *In the shop* expresses in its text a revolutionary message for the early 1960s, reflecting on the role of women in society. The humorous narrative up to this point gives way to majestic solemnity thanks to the low register of the cellos and double basses, which express a theme that clearly brings to mind the beginning of Part I.



Example 2 . D. Shostakovich, Symphony No. 13, *Babi Yar*, Part III, bars 6-13.



Example 3 . D. Shostakovich, Symphony No. 13, *Babi Yar*, Part I, bars 1-4.

Shostakovich develops the sequence he has begun in a cascading manner, adding increasingly higher orchestral voices to the progression. The skilful shaping of the sequence in terms of counterpoint is noteworthy. The imitative progression of the narrative is gradually accompanied by repeated interventions of castanets and claves in a simple eighth-note rhythm, which give the narrative a melancholic character. Similarly, in the first movement, the gradually developing orchestration reaches a climax of tension at the end of the passage, expressed in the highest volume (*fff*), without abandoning its solemn melodic and rhythmic structuralism. Shostakovich, emphasising the importance of the initial theme, uses it to conclude the narrative of Part III, evoking it literally with a subdued *pianissimo*.

Part IV, *Fears*, brings a refreshing change in terms of the sound resources used. The opening tuba solo uses an almost atonal set of sounds. In the initial phase, the solo layer clashes with the remnants of the previous part's motifs, which can still be heard in the cello and double bass parts. Over time, they give way to newly presented melodic and rhythmic structures. The entrance of the choir does not disrupt the sound aura, as the melody of this part is based on a repeated *G sharp*, only leaning up a sixth in the final

phase. Krzysztof Meyer aptly comments on the events that take place later in the piece: "a poignant dialogue between the soloist and the bass clarinet, an unexpected fanfare motif played by solo trumpets with mutes (...) a simple mass song reminiscent of the 'revolutionary folklore' so often quoted by Shostakovich (...) followed by a symphonic development of this song, a climax and a motivic reference to the ending of *the Passacaglia* from *Symphony* No. 8"³⁹.

As Krzysztof Meyer writes: 'None of the five movements of *Symphony* No. 13 is based on traditional formal models. Only in 'Career' can certain analogies with a rondo be discerned'⁴⁰. The last movement also has a more cheerful character than the third and fourth, which is evident from the very first bars thanks to the bright sound of the flutes against the static strings and the clear reference to the waltz. Yevtushenko's poem tells the story of an artist's conscience. The semi-ironic and somewhat grotesque character of the finale can be interpreted as a kind of appeal to artists, condemning those who remain silent in order to preserve their careers. The chamber-like and at times solo texture of Part V momentarily takes on the dimensions of an orchestral *tutti*, then moves towards the end in a dying coda ending with a celesta *solo* against a backdrop of static strings, in which clear motivic references to the course of the previous parts are evident. This compositional device gives the ending of the hour-long Symphony, full of emotional narrative, a calm and reflective character.

- Reception and interpretations

The premiere of *Symphony* No. 13 was scheduled for 18 December 1962, but just before it was to take place, the Soviet authorities began to exert strong pressure to have the work removed from the programme. They set the condition that it could be performed, but without the first movement. Shostakovich was pressured in various ways, but the premiere ultimately took place. Applause broke out after the first movement, and after the presentation of the entire work, there was a standing ovation. Aram Khachaturian commented on the premiere in the heat of the moment with the word: "brilliant". The echoes of the premiere were so strong that, under pressure from Soviet propaganda, a "new version" of the poem *Babi Yar* was unexpectedly published, crudely passed through the censorship machine. Shostakovich was pressured to introduce new text into

³⁹ K. Meyer, *Shostakovich*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Kraków 1973, p. 150.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

the Symphony. The composer made changes, but left the musical material unchanged. The censored version of *the symphony* was performed for the second time in Minsk.

The politically correct changes made by the composer did not change the reception of the work. Reviews published in the Soviet Union in 1963 were overwhelmingly negative, and attempts were made to disrupt each subsequent performance. The composer had to struggle with these difficulties until the end of his life⁴¹.

In summary, Shostakovich's *Symphony* No. 13, *Babi Yar*, is not only a musical memorial to the victims, but also a clear appeal to remember the genocide. Using rich symbolism, the work transforms historical pain and suffering into a universal message of moral responsibility. Despite censorship and political pressure from the Soviet authorities, the work has survived to this day as a constant inspiration for reflection on the past, reminding us of the need to preserve the memory of the darkest pages in human history.

I.2.2.4 Krzysztof Penderecki *Dies Irae* (1967) for three solo voices, mixed choir and orchestra

- Historical context

Dies Irae, composed in 1967, was commissioned by the organising committee commemorating the victims of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp to mark the unveiling of the International Monument to the Victims of Fascism in Oświęcim-Brzezinka. Unlike *the Requiem for the Victims of Hiroshima* — a composition dedicated to the victims of the genocides committed in Auschwitz.

- Inspirations, ideas, assumptions

The title of the work directly brings to mind the liturgical sequence about the Last Judgement, but in this case it has only a symbolic and ideological dimension, as the composer does not decide to quote the famous Gregorian motif in the entire work.

In order to create a multidimensional reflection on the gruesome events at Auschwitz, Penderecki decided to use texts from *Psalms 114*, *the Apocalypse of St. John*,

⁴¹ K. Meyer, *Dmitri Shostakovich and His Times*, PWN Scientific Publishing House, Warsaw 1999, p. 283–285.

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, and texts by Louis Aragon, Władysław Broniewski, Tadeusz Różewicz and Paul Valéry. The biblical texts and those from Aeschylus' drama express universal themes, while the others have a particular connection with the macabre nature of the camp genocide, except for Valéry, who instils hope in the final passage: *The wind is rising! Let us try to live!*

- Compositional means and techniques used

In this three-part work, I. *Lamentatio*, II. *Apocalypsis* and III. *Apotheosis*, the arrangement of the text plays a huge role in terms of form. Jacek Targosz points to the clear symmetry of the structure of I. *Lamentatio* in this regard, stating that: "The fragment from Aragon is the central link. Around it, most of the text itself and the work as a whole is occupied by Broniewski's *Ciała* [Bodies], written in the form of a litany"⁴². The composer places strong emphasis on the word "corpora", meaning bodies, in shaping the narrative. The narrative layer of the solo voice is commented on, as it were, by the choir, which begins its "commentary" with this word, realising it in the form of repetitive, even chanted structures. This type of arrangement brings to mind the role of the choir in ancient drama, where it illustrates and emphasises the course of the action.

The course of the first part can be described as a dialogue between the solo and choral layers against the backdrop of the orchestra's static narrative expressed through cluster sound bands.

Part II. *Apocalypsis*, which begins with a powerful 24-voice choir, directs the expressive flow towards a much more restless atmosphere from the very beginning. The static nature of the orchestral layer remains unchanged. However, the composer expands the cast with percussive sound effects, which often complement the atmosphere of horror with their harsh metallic sound. The choir's performance is predominantly chanting, but expressed through *parlando*. The deprivation of the choir's pitch parameter introduces a new sound quality, but above all, it contributes to the aforementioned intention of changing the narrative tone. The long-unused pitch material returns in the choral layer for a specific purpose, in segment 5. After a while, it becomes a 'new' sound quality, through the build-up of which the composer creates a climax anticipating the arrival of a text that is key to the whole work: *VENIT DIES MAGNUS IRAE* (the great

⁴² J. Targosz, *Krzysztof Penderecki's Dies Irae*, in: *Instrumental and Vocal Music by Krakow Composers*, National Academic Session on the 30th Anniversary of the State Higher School of Music in Krakow, Krakow 1979, p. 2

day of wrath has come), which is spoken by the choir, but only after the climax has sounded in *piano*. The layer, which began in a subdued manner, takes on dramatic proportions, reaching the scale of a scream. After a general pause allowing the expressive message to reach the listener, there follows a fragment in which the previously static layer of the orchestra comes to life, concluded with another choral *un grido*. The tension and movement constructed in this way anticipates the arrival of the central link from the point of view of formal structure, in which the bass solo expresses the text of the apocalypse: "do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer" – as if announcing the arrival of the meaningful sentence: "I saw the beast", which appears only after the orchestral conclusion of the previous fragment. Scanned by the choir, it turns into a macabre, chaotic fabric. It is with this commentary that the composer ends Part II with a descending glissando leading *attacca* to Part III.

The final segment of *Dies Irae* takes the form of a tenor solo recitative with commentary by the choir in the later phase, immediately after the choral chord echoing the previous part. The tenor voice is joined by the soprano, then the bass. After the question expressed by the three solo voices: "Where is thy victory, O death?", the immediate appearance of the "ominous" static choral layer, supported by brass instruments in a subjective manner, may express the death evoked by the rhetorical question just asked. However, in this layer, the choir expresses a fragmented text: "The wind is rising. Let us try to live!" This text, fragmented between the individual choral voices, breaks through the sound layer in a non-obvious way. After the cluster band has sounded, the tenor solo responds: "Victory has swallowed death." The key word, *victoria*, is taken up by the choir, which expresses it in the most transparent way possible, in contrast to the previous entry, through *unison*. The conclusion of the tension achieved is reached by cluster chords of wind instruments in the low register – triumphant, yet sombre.

The fading narrative unexpectedly reveals, at the very end, an echo of the choir's quasi-litany interventions. *Corpora parvulorum*, or "bodies of children". This device seems to be a personal expression of the composer – a kind of artistic reflection on the innocence of the Victims.

An analysis of the narrative clearly shows that Targosz's statement is correct: "In the case of *Dies Irae*, the composition of the work is a simultaneous composition of text and music. This applies to both the common features of formal shaping and

the convergence in the development of tension and expression, and even certain illustrative moments"⁴³.

- Reception and interpretations

The premiere of the work on 16 April 1967 was a special event, as it took place in Oświęcim-Brzezinka. The performers were Delfina Ambroziak (soprano), Wiesław Ochman (tenor), Bernard Ładysz (bass) and the Orchestra and Choir of the Karol Szymanowski State Philharmonic in Krakow conducted by Krzysztof Missona.

Aleksandra Jagiełło-Skupińska, attempting to place the work in question in the context of Krzysztof Penderecki's entire legacy, quotes the theses of eminent researchers: "Regina Chłopicka places the expressive *Dies Irae* in the second phase of the composer's stylistic work, entitled 'In search of universal values. Between sonorism and polyphony' (1962-74). Tomaszewski, on the other hand, classifies the work as belonging to the third of Penderecki's creative periods, which he called the phase of 'Breakthrough and First Synthesis' and 'Phase of Passion' (1965-71)"⁴⁴.

Penderecki's work dedicated to the memory of the victims of Auschwitz resonated widely around the world, as evidenced by the fact that in 2011, *Dies Irae* was performed in Venezuela under the baton of the composer.

Numerous reviews of the work highlight the appropriateness of the means used in the context of commemorating the genocide. The *Gramophone* website emphasises the role of the atmosphere created, which balances the primitive sound effects used by the composer, while also drawing attention to the heavy use of the solo layer, which, according to Arnold Whittall, can become difficult to bear⁴⁵, the British newspaper *The Guardian* described *Dies Irae* as shocking, referring to the performance conducted by Antoni Wit⁴⁶.

⁴³ J. Targosz, *op. cit.*, p. 3

⁴⁴ A. Jagiełło-Skupińska, *Krzysztof Penderecki, 'Dies Irae'*, available online: <https://culture.pl/pl/dzielo/krzysztof-penderecki-dies-irae>, [accessed on 21 February 2025].

⁴⁵ A. Whittall, *Penderecki, Schoenberg and Van de Vate*, Available online: https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/penderecki-schoenberg-and-van-de-vate?utm_source=chatgpt.com, [accessed: 25 February 2025].

⁴⁶ T. Ashley, *Penderecki: Symphony No. 8; Dies Irae; Aus den Psalmen Davids, Raune/Rehis/Drabowicz/Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus/Wit*, Available online: https://www.theguardian.com/music/2008/feb/08/classicalmusicandopera.shopping6?utm_source=chatgpt.com, [accessed on 25 February 2025].

The fact is that *Dies Irae* marks the beginning of Penderecki's era of great oratorio and cantata works, in which he gradually moves away from the sound language he presented in his works of the first half of the 1960s.

In summary, it should be noted that by making a sophisticated selection of the musical language developed in his previous works, Penderecki creates a work which, through a convincing dialogue between music and text, commemorates the victims of Auschwitz in a dignified manner and transforms a macabre subject into a kind of manifesto of memory. *Dies Irae*, using precise manipulation of expressive tensions and symbolic references to biblical texts and ancient drama, becomes an artistic response to genocide, calling on the audience to reflect deeply on cruelty and moral responsibility towards history.

1.2.2.5 Andrzej Panufnik *Epitafium katyńskie* (Katyn Epitaph) (1967) for symphony orchestra

- Historical context

The very title of Andrzej Panufnik's work indicates its very clear creative intentions. *The Katyn Epitaph* is a tribute to the thousands of Polish prisoners murdered in 1940 by the Soviet NKVD in the forests near Katyn. The mass extermination of the population affected almost 22,000 people, including about 10,000 officers of the Polish Army and State Police⁴⁷.

- Inspirations, ideas, assumptions

The Katyn Epitaph is one of many compositions in which Panufnik, who lived in Great Britain emphasises his attachment to his homeland. The composer himself comments on the circumstances surrounding the creation of the work:

In Nazi-occupied Warsaw, in 1943, I heard for the first time the shocking news about the Katyn Forest in Russia, where several thousand defenceless Polish prisoners of war had been brutally murdered, their hands tied behind their backs, shot one by one in the back of the head, on the edge of a mass grave they had dug with their own hands. At that time, the Germans accused the Russians of the crime, while the Russians stubbornly insisted that the crime was the work of the Nazis.

⁴⁷ Cf. Katyń 1940. *Victims. They are no longer with us*, Available online: <https://katyn.ipn.gov.pl/kat/ludzie/ofiary/12144,Ich-juz-nie-ma.html>, [accessed on 25 February 2025].

Many years later, when all the other major war criminals had been captured and tried, I felt that the spirit of Katyn, a crime which was still not being talked about and which was officially unsolved, despite much evidence of Russian guilt, was haunting me. I wrote the Katyn Epitaph to express my sadness at the fact that the democratic countries of the West had allowed this crime to be forgotten. That is why I dedicated my work to the memory of 15,000 Polish patriots who were killed simply because they wanted to defend their homeland.⁴⁸

Living in exile allowed Panufnik to refer to the Soviet crime without restraint, unlike Penderecki, who remained in Poland but composed a monumental tribute to the victims of the German death camp in the very same year.

Both pieces, written in a very similar context, remain extremely different from each other.

- Compositional techniques and devices

Panufnik dedicates a small-scale orchestral work of very simple structure to the memory of thousands of murdered people. The solemn and lamenting sound texture is free of sonoristic effects that directly evoke an atmosphere of horror.

The restrained and lyrical violin solo, lasting about a minute, immediately defines the funeral character of the entire work. The narrative taken up in the further course of the piece leaves the emotional vector unchanged. In the second phase of development, the woodwind instruments continue the course with the use of an almost identical 'meandering' interval structuralism based on a second progression. The third phase, preceded by a clear *break*, appears as a continuous *crescendo*, becoming more dramatic with each new layer. The clear and lucid expressive flow is enhanced by the steady beats of the timpani, which, in the finale of the work, underpin the solemn-sounding static chords in a dynamic context. A meaningful break in *the* resounding orchestral *tutti* ends *the Katyn Epitaph*.

Panufnik's simplicity and economy of means give the listener plenty of space for reflection and contemplation, and thus for commemorating the victims. The narrative, based on a conventional progression in simple, lamenting melodies, reveals the

⁴⁸ *Katyn Epitaph (Katyn Epitaph)*. Available online: <https://www.panufnik.polic.pl/index.php/pl/tworczosc/omowienia-utworow/46-katyn-epitaph-epitafium-katynskie>, [accessed on 25 February 2025].

composer's humility towards the subject of the work, which, in this context, comes to the fore in terms of impression.

- Reception and interpretations

The Katyn Epitaph, composed in 1967, was not premiered in Poland. The work was premiered on 17 November 1968 at Carnegie Hall in New York by the American Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.

Jakub Ekier, reviewing a recording by the Polish Radio Orchestra conducted by Łukasz Borowicz in *Newsweek* magazine, described the *Katyn Epitaph* as a poignant, subtle lament⁴⁹, while according to Tomasz Cyz, the work sounded "like a growing collective cry, in which individual sobs could be heard"⁵⁰.

Undoubtedly, among the works discussed here that are dedicated to the memory of the victims of genocide, Andrzej Panufnik's *Katyn Epitaph* stands out as the most ascetic in every respect – both formally and structural-sonic. In its peculiar asceticism, the work expresses deep reflection, creating a unique space for the elusive imponderables flowing from traumatic experiences and painful national memory to resonate.

I.2.2.8 Tigran Mansurian *Requiem* (2016) for solo voices, mixed choir and symphony orchestra

- Historical context

Requiem for solo voices, mixed choir and symphony orchestra was written as a tribute to the victims of the Armenian genocide carried out in the Ottoman Empire in 1915–1917. As a result of systematic deportations, executions and starvation, an estimated 1 to 1.5 million Armenians died as a result of systematic deportations, executions and starvation.

⁴⁹ J. Ekier, *Andrzej Panufnik: Nocturne. Symphonic Works Vol. 1.*, Available online: https://www.newsweek.pl/andrzej-panufnik-nocturne-symphonic-works-vol-1/rvmv6zm?utm_source=chatgpt.com, [accessed on 25 February 2025].

⁵⁰ T. Cyz, *Epitaph in the radio studio*, Available online: <https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/1070-epitafium-w-studiu-radiowym.html>, [accessed: 25 February 2025].

- Inspirations, ideas, assumptions

Mansurian's work is a deeply personal and at the same time national form of mourning, set in an aesthetic that combines the Western canon of funeral masses with Armenian musical tradition. The composer, himself born in the diaspora, treats *the Requiem* as a form of spiritual reconciliation – not only with the past, but also between cultures. The work is an expression of the need to preserve the memory of a tragedy that has been silenced or denied for decades, and at the same time an attempt to give it a universal dimension through the language of sacred music⁵¹.

- Compositional means and techniques used

Tigran Mansurian uses compositional means and techniques that combine the Western canon of sacred music with the idiom of the Armenian tradition, creating a work of exceptional spiritual depth and restrained expression. The composer uses an economical texture – both in choral and instrumental parts. He avoids monumentalism and pathos. Instead, he opts for clear polyphony and subtle modality, in which he refers to Armenian musical systems. The harmony is often based on quasi-diatonic structures with a characteristic tension resulting from micro-modulation and slight harmonic shifts.

These characteristics are already evident in Part **I**, *Requiem aeternam*, where the composer repeatedly builds climaxes in a similar manner using repetitions of the word *Domine*.

The motoric rhythm of Part **II**, *Kyrie*, stands in opposition to the majestic first part and is a clear confirmation of the thesis about drawing on the Armenian musical tradition. The composer continues and expands on this rhythmic approach in Part **III**, *Dies Irae*. In fragment **IV**, *Tuba mirum*, Mansurian decides to use the voices of the *a cappella* vocal, which seems a necessary and logical move after the turbulent expressive course so far. He clearly highlights the text from the *Dies Irae* sequence, separating *Tuba mirum* as a separate part and, notably, in the dialogical narrative of the initial phase, he clearly refers to the textural approach proposed by Mozart in his *Requiem in D minor*, K. 626. Through a sudden instrumental intervention, the composer evokes the main motif of Part

⁵¹ Cf. Aram Arkun, *Mansurian Reveals the Roots of His Music and Requiem Prior to Boston Premiere*, Available online: https://mirrorspectator.com/2015/10/01/mansurian-reveals-the-roots-of-his-music-and-requiem-prior-to-boston-premiere/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

III. This fragment, which is a kind of 'echo', also emphasises the belonging of the *Tuba mirum* text to the *Dies Irae* sequence.

Part **V. *Lacrimosa*** reflects the narrative aspect of Part I. Euphonic harmonies and restrained rhythms create space for reflection, allowing for contemplation of the meanings contained in the text, as well as their reference to the Armenian genocide of 1915–1917. A special feature of Part **VI. *Domine Jesu Christe*** is the alternation of narrative in terms of the performers. The unique dialogue between the solo and choral layers, supported by the orchestra's accompaniment, leads the expressive flow to its main climax, which occurs exactly two-thirds of the way through, after which the composer introduces the text *Hostias*, which often begins the next part in the form of a funeral mass with this title.

Part **VII. *Sanctus*** A dialogue between the sombre instrumental layer, alternating with *the* choral *unison* of male voices dominates until the appearance of the *Benedictus* fragment, where dialogue ceases to be the main formative element – the vocal and instrumental layers run simultaneously. The role of the male voices is taken over by the female voices. All layers, i.e. female voices, male voices and orchestra, are used together in the last – key fragment of the work: *Hosanna in excelsis*. Such a transparent formal approach serves to separate the two main fragments of the hymn, which used to appear separately in the church tradition⁵².

The culmination of Tigran Mansurian's *Requiem* is Part **VIII, *Agnus Dei***, in which the composer emphasises and seals the formal transparency and asceticism in terms of texture and sound that permeates the entire work. The almost identical melodic and rhythmic structures used by Mansurian make the final section a kind of bracket for the entire work, and while remaining ascetic in its approach, it emphasises the meaning and character of the funeral mass.

The entire composition is characterised by a spiritual and contemplative aura, which gives the work a sacred dimension and allows it to be perceived as an act of remembrance and quiet opposition to the violence associated with the history of the Armenian genocide.

⁵² The *Benedictus* was a separate part of the Mass. In today's liturgy, it is part of *the Sanctus*.

- Reception and interpretations

The work has been widely acclaimed around the world. Among the numerous favourable reviews confirming the unique character of *the Requiem*, its emotional restraint, deep spirituality and skilful combination of Western liturgical form with elements of Armenian musical tradition were particularly often emphasised. Critics noted that Mansurian's composition avoids pathos, achieving strong emotional expression through simplicity of means and subtle musical narration. Reviews in *The Irish Times*, *Armenian Weekly* and on websites such as *Bachtrack* and *ECM Reviews* indicated that *the Requiem* not only serves to commemorate the victims of the Armenian genocide, but also constitutes a universal manifesto against violence and oblivion, appealing to listeners regardless of their cultural or religious background.

I.2.3 Summary and implications for *the Piaśnica Symphony*

Music dedicated to the memory of genocide should mobilise audiences to take a critical look at the mechanisms of forgetting and remind them of the need to nurture cultural identity. In this way, the composition gains significance both as an artistic manifesto commemorating tragic chapters in history and as an inspiration for preventive measures aimed at preventing similar tragedies from happening again in the future.

The Piaśnica Symphony does not fit into the postmodern approach to memory and tradition, as its primary goal is to pay tribute to the victims and faithfully evoke traumatic historical experiences, rather than deconstruction, playing with form or an ironic approach to the past.

Andrzej Panufnik's *Katyn Epitaph*, with its humble, ascetic approach, is an example of how limited form and subdued expression can convey the depth of personal grief and collective loss. However, in contrast to this, the monumentalism present in Penderecki's compositions – which make use of the full expressive power of the orchestra – captures memory in a more dramatic and elaborate way.

The Piaśnica Symphony, combining these two perspectives, will appear as a complex artistic construct: on the one hand, an at times economical epitaph form that allows for introspection and subtle reflection, and on the other, a monumental and orchestral message full of expression that engages the listener in intense meditation on the tragic events of the past. This combination is not only an artistic manifesto commemorating genocide, but also an inspiration for further educational and preventive actions, emphasising the need to nurture memory as the foundation of cultural identity in the postmodern era.

The Piaśnica Symphony is not merely a postmodernist experiment playing with tradition, but a profound, confrontational artistic expression that comprehensively integrates historical heritage with innovative means of expression. While some postmodern compositions limit themselves to deconstructing and distorting traditional forms, the symphony does not stop at superficial play, but speaks with the fullness of emotion, form and content. Its value lies in its ability to synthesise diverse layers, which gives it a universal and timeless dimension, thus surpassing all tentative interpretations or manipulative conceptualisations of tradition.

The Piaśnica Symphony sets new standards for the artistic processing of traumatic events, becoming a tool not only for cultivating memory, but also for education and social reflection.

Chapter II. *The Piaśnica Symphony* as a musical monument to the memory of the victims

The creative process behind *the Piaśnica Symphony* stems from the need to restore the memory of events which, despite the extreme intensity of the tragic experiences, have not gained the visibility they deserve in the collective consciousness. Piaśnica, the site of mass executions of the Polish and Kashubian populations in 1939–1940, remains one of those points in the topography of memory where, as Paul Ricoeur wrote, the threat of definitive oblivion is particularly strongly felt. The philosopher notes: "When it comes to definitive oblivion, which can be attributed to the erasure of traces, it is experienced as a threat: it is against such oblivion that we cultivate the work of memory, in order to slow down oblivion or even stop it"⁵³.

These words set an important interpretative horizon for this chapter. The Piaśnica Symphony becomes a work of memory both in an intentional dimension – as a conscious act of restoring the voice to the victims – and in a formal dimension, encoded in the musical structure, in the selection of texts and in the symbolism of sound.

Chapter II is devoted to presenting the work as a musical monument – an artistic form that not only commemorates, but also actively opposes the erasure of history. This analysis covers three main areas:

1. The circumstances surrounding the creation of the work, in which one can discern both the need for an individual creative gesture and a response to the contemporary cultural situation, in which memory is weakening and testimonies of the past increasingly need to be retold.
2. The textual layer, comprising both a selection of passages from the Book of Ezekiel and their semantic treatment, which is at once a medium for biblical narrative, a metaphor for revival, and the voice of the region, inscribed in the Kashubian heritage of the place.
3. An original musical analysis showing how the structure, orchestration, motifs and dramaturgy of the four parts of the symphony build a space of memory, of the

⁵³ P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. J. Margański, Universitas, Krakow 2007, p. 563.

harmony of history and the artistic act, and the symbolic transition from death to new life.

In this sense, *the Piaśnica Symphony* is not just a composition – it is an act of resistance against oblivion, a form of testimony and a sound monument that attempts to "halt oblivion", as Ricoeur wrote. The subject of the following subchapters will therefore be not only a formal analysis, but also a reflection on the way in which music can take on the burden of collective memory and give it a lasting, self-contained form.

II.1 Circumstances surrounding the creation of the work

The Piaśnica Forest is a special place, strongly marked by martyrdom. It is located near a busy main road, and this forest cemetery is often bypassed and left aside. However, in the consciousness of the inhabitants of the northern part of the Pomeranian Province, this place takes on a completely different dimension – it becomes an almost sacred point of remembrance, where the traumatic echoes of history meet everyday existence. The Piaśnica Sanctuary is a must-see destination for school trips. However, it is only later in life, after gaining greater maturity and deepening one's reflection on history, that one begins to analyse this place not only as an object of routine visits, but also as a space that enables a critical assessment of past events and influences the construction of collective memory.

A trip to the Piaśnica Sanctuary was the direct impetus for the creation of *the Piaśnica Symphony*:

In May 2020, I was driving past Piaśnica with friends from Warsaw. We stopped at the Sanctuary. It was a shock for all of us. It was their first time there, and my first time as an adult. We were there for only 15 minutes. We returned to the car. For the rest of the journey (about 20 minutes) in silence. Everyone was thinking about what they had just experienced. During that visit to the Piaśnica Forest, I experienced a distinct artistic impulse that prompted me to reflect more deeply on the issues of memory and cultural identity. Standing in the place where bodies were once burned and observing the charred trees bearing permanent traces of those gruesome events, I realised that they function as the last "living" witnesses of those times. At that moment, the idea was born to create a piece of music inspired by this place – a piece in which the forest, through its structure, would transform memory into sound, constituting a kind of musical message. The desire for the witnesses, i.e. the trees, to 'speak' found its expression in the form of a symphony, as the word *symphony* itself means "harmony of sounds" or "consonance of voices". I believe that this form, thanks to its multidimensionality, best conveys the intergenerational transmission of memory in a metaphysical and lasting way⁵⁴. The Piaśnica Symphony is part of a trend in my work that includes such pieces as *the Kashubian Requiem in memory of the victims of the Death March from the Stutthof concentration camp* and *Missa pro pace*. These works clearly combine compositional activity with reflection on historical traumas. They transform painful experiences into musical language and create a bridge between memory and contemporary aesthetic perception.

⁵⁴ The author's description of the circumstances surrounding the creation of the Piaśnica Symphony and personal reflection.

II.2 Textual layer

II.2.1 Choice of text

The literary basis for the Piaśnica Symphony was a biblical text from the Book of Ezekiel, which was engraved on one of the plaques at the crime scene, becoming an integral part of the memorial space.



Photograph 3 . Plaque at the site where the victims' bodies were burned, containing the biblical text

Ezekiel 37:1-14

(own photograph).

The plaque is located right next to the pedestal on which the words that directly inspired the creation of the work are engraved, and they read: **"The trees remember your crime."** At that very moment, the decision was made both to write the work and to determine the form of the text. The passage from the Book of Ezekiel refers in a symbolic and extremely apt way to the scenery and history of the Piaśnica forests, as in the "valley of dry bones" described in the biblical text, the symbolism of mass graves and oblivion is intertwined with the motif of the promise of life. The text resonates perfectly with the

motif of the artistic "revival" of the memory of the victims of Piaśnica. The transition from dead, silent matter to the testimony of an "army" rising to its feet becomes the symbolic axis of the narrative.

In the use of this text in *the Piaśnica Symphony*, the correspondence between historical genocide and the biblical motif of collective rebirth emphasises the universal dimension of hope and the will to remember.

Considering the desire to universalise the message of *the Piaśnica Symphony*, a Latin translation of the above text was used. The entire text, together with the translation, is as follows:

LATIN TEXT

I

- 1 *Facta est super me manus Domini et eduxit me in spiritu Domini et dimisit me in
medio campi qui erat plenus ossibus*
2 *et circumduxit me per ea in gyro erant autem multa valde super faciem campi
siccaque vehementer*
3 *et dixit ad me fili hominis putasne vivent ossa ista et dixi Domine Deus tu nosti*
4 *et dixit ad me vaticinare de ossibus istis et dices eis ossa arida audite verbum Domini*

II

- 5 *haec dicit Dominus Deus ossibus his ecce ego intromittam in vos spiritum et vivetis*
6 *et dabo super vos nervos et succrescere faciam super vos carnes et superextendam in
vobis cutem et dabo vobis spiritum et vivetis et scietis quia ego Dominus*

III

- 7 *et prophetavi sicut praeceperat mihi factus est autem sonitus prophetante me et ecce
commotio et accesserunt ossa ad ossa unumquodque ad iuncturam suam*
8 *et vidi et ecce super ea nervi et carnes ascenderunt et extenta est in eis cutis desuper
et spiritum non habebant*
9 *et dixit ad me vaticinare ad spiritum vaticinare fili hominis et dices ad spiritum haec
dicit Dominus Deus a quattuor ventis veni spiritus et insufla super interfectos istos
et revivescant*

10 *et prophetavi sicut praeceperat mihi et ingressus est in ea spiritus et vixerunt
steteruntque super pedes suos exercitus grandis nimis valde*
11 *et dixit ad me fili hominis ossa haec universa domus Israhel est ipsi dicunt aruerunt
ossa nostra et periit spes nostra et abscisi sumus*
12 *propterea vaticinare et dices ad eos haec dicit Dominus Deus*

IV

*ecce ego aperiam tumulos vestros et educam vos de sepulchris vestris populus meus et
inducam vos in terram Israhel*
13 *et scietis quia ego Dominus cum aperuero sepulchra vestra et eduxero vos
de tumulis vestris populus meus*
14 *et dederō spiritum meum in vobis et vixeritis et requiescere vos faciam super humum
vestram et scietis quia ego Dominus locutus sum et feci ait Dominus Deus⁵⁵.*

TRANSLATION

I

- 1** Then the hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out in the spirit,
and set me down in the middle of the valley. It was full of bones.
2 He made me walk all around them, and there were very many in the open valley.
They were completely dry.
3 He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live again?"
4 Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones and say to them, "Dry bones, hear the
word of the Lord!"

II

- 5** Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will give you spirit, and you shall live.
6 I will put sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with
skin,

⁵⁵ **Biblia-Online**, *Clementine Vulgate*, Księga Ezechiela 37 [Dostęp: 23.10.2025], Dostępny w Internecie:
<https://biblia-online.pl/Biblia/ClementineVulgate/Ksiega-Ezechiela/37/25?vt=2>

and I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.

III

7 And I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied, behold, there was a noise and a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

8 And I looked, and behold, the sinews were there, and the flesh grew, and the skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them.

9 And He said to me: "Prophecy to the spirit, prophecy, son of man, and say to the spirit: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O spirit, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the spirit entered them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

11 And He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, we are cut off.'"

12 Therefore prophecy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God:

IV

I will open your graves and bring you up from your graves, my people,
and bring you into the land of Israel,

13 and you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves
and bring you up from your graves, my people.

14 I will put my spirit in you so that you may live, and I will bring you into your own land,

and you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it, says the Lord God.

This text was written in the 6th century BC, during the Babylonian exile. The prophet Ezekiel, acting in exile, addresses the Israelites who have lost hope, promising them spiritual and national "resurrection". The book belongs to the literature of "spiritual"

prophecies (the so-called books of the goats-abandoned), emphasising the experience of a personal encounter with God and the promise of restoration of life.

II.2.2 Content analysis

The narrative of the text was the direct criterion for dividing the macroform of *Piasnicka's Symphony* into the four parts marked above. Verses 1-4, which constitute **the first part** of the work, are a kind of introduction in which the prophet describes the landscape of a valley filled with bones, and God speaks to him to instruct those bones to listen to the words of the Lord. The beginning of **part II** falls on verse 5, which is the first moment in which God addresses the dry bones. Together with verse 6, the entire second part expresses God's statement addressed to those bones. After God's breath of words, the prophetic call in verse 7 addressed to the dry bones initiates the process of biological resuscitation, which inaugurates part III. The prophet addresses the bones, and they begin to come to life in a biological sense, but they are still without spirit. Then the Lord God commands him to call forth the spirit. The awakened bones, called by God "the whole house of Israel", finally speak, but they express only hopelessness. This special moment, when the dead speak symbolically, resounds in the *Piaśnicka Symphony* in the Kashubian language as the voice of "This Land", which has been stained with the blood of the innocent.

*" Nasze gnôtë sq wëschlé, naja nôdzeja je ùszlô, z nama je ju kùnc "*⁵⁶

(Latin)

aruerunt ossa nostra et periit spes nostra et abscisi sumus

(English)

"Our bones are dry, our hope is gone, we are finished."

However, God does not abandon his people. He commands the prophet to convey his words to them: "Behold, I will open your graves and bring you up from your graves, my people, and bring you into the land of Israel." These key words open the fourth part – the

⁵⁶ Own translation from Latin into Kashubian.

triumphant finale of the Piaśnicka Symphony, using a hopeful text evoking a collective "resurrection" of memory and symbolic rebirth.

The above image of a valley filled with bones is one of four visions found in the Book of Ezekiel. According to biblical scholars, it is a direct reference and a kind of foreshadowing of the resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgement⁵⁷.

From a literary perspective, it is worth noting that the anaphora *et dixit* (and he said) becomes an element that gives rhythm and order to the successive stages of the vision, while the repeated formulas concerning prophecy emphasise the role of the word as creative and invigorating information.

II.2.3 Metaphorical sphere

The valley filled with dry bones, emerging from the biblical image, which is almost a photographic description, brings to mind the place of execution of thousands of people in the Piaśnica forests. Devoid of tissue and muscle, they metaphorically speak of a society deprived of the right to mourn, of a memory suppressed by violence. When a spirit appears in the biblical scene, the universal motif of the Holy Spirit resounds. It is the "breath of memory" that restores dignity to the Victims. In the context of Piaśnica, it acts as an act of revival – art and words allow the victims to "rise from their graves" and exist in the collective consciousness.

In turn, the reminder coming from the four corners of the world (the biblical breath of wind) expresses the fact that the memory of this tragedy cannot be only local. Each direction of the wind carries a message to pray for the murdered here and now, but also to constantly build awareness of this martyrdom testimony.

The final exhumation of the bodies from their graves becomes a metaphor for the return of history in defiance of oblivion. Poland, after the trauma of World War II, regains its "soul" and dignity – memory returns to its place, uniting the nation.

⁵⁷ K. Borowicz, *Resurrectio prima – resurrectio secunda* (Ezekiel 37:1-14; Isaiah 26:13-21), "Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny" [Biblical and Liturgical Movement], 1963, vol. V-VI, no. 2, p. 236.

The recurring motif of prophecy in the artistic act *of the Piaśnica Symphony* appears as a ritual call – music becomes a bridge through which the voices of those who died will join ours, merging into a single pulse of collective memory. The biblical text of Ezekiel 37:1–14 is a model of the biblical metaphor of resurrection – both in its individual and collective aspects. In the context of Piaśnica, it becomes a kind of template for the construction of an artistic monument, in which sound and word merge the scattered testimonies of the Victims into a single, living memory.

II.3 The architectural form and sound dramaturgy of the *Piaśnica Symphony*

The analysis of the musical narrative of the work will follow the sectional form used in *the Piaśnica Symphony*. This results from the desire to bring out the depth of the biblical text, divided into 14 verses, each of which carries its own integral content.

The analysis uses a multi-layered description method that combines structural, semantic and contextual perspectives. This stems from the nature of *the Piaśnica Symphony* itself, in which the musical, textual and symbolic layers form a system of mutual references that cannot be captured by a single research tool. The use of structural analysis allows us to capture the internal logic of the form, the organisation of the sound material and the processes shaping the sound dramaturgy. A parallel semantic analysis allows us to identify the relationship between the music and the content of the Book of Ezekiel, indicating how sound means were used to construct the meanings contained in the biblical text.

II.3.1 Part I. *Facta est super me*

Exposition of the theme.

In its episodic form, the theme is the building block of individual segments.



Example 4 . *Piaśnicka Symphony*, I. *Facta est super me*, opening theme.

Its two-part structure consists of symmetrical phrases, where the second is an inversion of the previous one, and its main feature from the point of view of interval structuralism is the absence of intervals larger than a major third (except for bars 11-12).

The beginning of the theme, presented in layers of flutes, bass clarinet and orchestral *tutti*, maintained mainly in *forte* dynamics, gives the Symphony a solemn character from the very first bars.

The structure of the theme, based on repetition in inversion, builds a symbolic narrative of revelation and response.

The choir takes over the narrative

The solemn exposition of the theme is followed by a fragment anticipating the entrance of the choir. This segment begins with *a cello solo* accompanied by the other string instruments. In order to maintain *the continuum* of the musical action, the thematic layer is based on the motif of the initial theme.

Selected wind instruments join in to show the increasing density of the texture in terms of both pitch and colour. This symbolises the raising of prayer and preparation for the prophetic act.

After a dialogue between the French horn, trombone and double bass (bars 26-32), the main thematic idea returns to the string quintet. The first violins and violas, playing an identical melodic layer, bring the narrative to *unison* – for it is in this form that the choir's first entry will be presented.

The image of the valley of bones

After a fragment of free development of the melodic layer, the initial theme is presented again, taken up by the choir.

The monophonic approach serves here to emphasise the role of the theme as the main building block of the musical narrative, but also to maximise the exposure of the text layer during its first appearance in the work.

The segment between bars 42 and 64 consists of three parts. First, the choir presents the title verse in unison, after which, in an antiphonal response, the theme is taken up exclusively by the male voices. Then, successive entries of individual choral voices build up to a climax, which reaches its peak in bar 64. It is worth noting that the material of the third section continues to be the interval structuralism of the initial theme. The entering voices begin at the beginning of the theme, sealing the whole with the homogeneity of the material and reinforcing the sense of formal coherence.

The continuation of the climax achieved is entrusted to the string quintet, which releases the tension built up so far in a four-bar bridge. The entries of the individual voices are again accompanied by the beginning of the theme. The gradual rise of the melodic layer reaches its peak on the words: in *spiritu Domini*. The appearance of the "Spirit of the Lord" in the text brings a revival in the woodwind section appearing in bar 79.

16 **Più mosso** $\frac{3}{4}$

The image shows a musical score for the woodwind section, specifically bars 77-80. The score is for Flute 1 & 2, Clarinet in Bb 1 & 2, Bass Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon 1 & 2, and Contrabassoon. The tempo is 'Più mosso' and the time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The score shows a change to 4/4 time at bar 79. Dynamics include 'ff' and 'leggiero'.

Example 5 . I. *Facta est super me*, bars 77-80. Woodwind section.

The deliberate change of character to *misterioso* in bar 81 is intended to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and anticipation. The text describes a scene in which the Lord leads the prophet to a valley, which, as it turns out, is full of bones. The moment this content appears (*qui erat plenus ossibus*) brings the hitherto very dense harmonic texture of the mixed choir down to *unison*. Once again, this technique serves to give the fragment a strong narrative weight. It should be emphasised that the interval structure is diametrically different from the motif of the initial theme. In bars 87-89, the dominant intervals are leaps of a fourth and a fifth. The expressive flow is once again reinforced by wind instruments – this time, however, both woodwind and brass, which contrast with the choir layer, performing the melodic material in small rhythmic values in the trumpet and trombone layer, which brings the tension to a new level of intensity. These parts not only serve to reinforce the sound, but also deepen the drama of the form, giving the whole a monumental character and leading the listener to the next turning point in the musical narrative. The main climax ends in bar 89 with a *glissando* technique in all choral voices.

The descent to the lowest possible note closes the fragment, adding an atmosphere of horror and anxiety.

The image shows a musical score for a mixed choir, with four staves labeled S. (Soprano), A. (Alto), T. (Tenor), and B. (Bass). Each staff contains a single line of music with the lyrics 'cam - pi qui e - - rat ple - nus os - - si - - bus' written below. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is a descending line, starting on a high note and ending on a low note. The dynamics 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'sf' (sforzando) are indicated at the beginning and end of the phrase respectively. The final note is a low B-flat, which is the lowest possible note for the Soprano part.

Example 6 . I. *Facta est super me*, pp. 86–89. Mixed choir part.

***A cappella* choir**

The distinguishing feature of the fourth phase of the first movement of the symphony is the use of a mixed choir *a cappella*. After a one-bar pause, allowing the drama of the previous phase to resonate, the choir in *pianissimo* sets a completely different direction for the narrative. All voices, set in long rhythmic values in a fairly narrow *range*, slow down the narrative. At this point, the second verse of the biblical text begins. The use of a diametrically opposite expressive and orchestration is dictated primarily by the desire to emphasise the form flowing from the text.

Section 4 is the most elaborate of the sections so far. Three main phases of its development should be highlighted:

- a. bars 92-104 – the aforementioned fragment of the *a cappella* choir presentation;
- b. bars 105-115 – a transformative phase building tension, expressing a gradual rise in pitch
- c. bars 116-124 – the climax and its fading away. Bar 116 is a direct reference to the climax of section 3, in which the text depicts a valley filled with bones. Here, however, it turns out that they are completely dry.



I. Facta est super me, bars 87–89.



I. Facta est super me, bars 116-117

Example 7 . I. Facta est super me – a comparison of fragments from bars 87–89 and bars 116–117.

Immediately following the choral climax, there is a repetition of the melodic material in the first and second violin, viola and cello parts, echoing the main choral motif. The *decrescendo* intervention of the string instruments becomes a link leading to a section that brings the narrative to a close. A further repetition of the words *siccaque vehementer*⁵⁸ (bars 118-124) emphasises the significance of their content within the overall expressive flow – this is the climax of the content so far. To illustrate the bone motif, the fading of the climax is accompanied by *col legno battuto* in the first and second violins and violas. The melodic material is based on an inversion of the beginning of the initial theme, which reinforces the uniform texture of the entire course of the work.

Dialogue phase

The gradual fading leads to the sound of C¹ in the clarinet part. From this emerges section 5, in which the entire expressive course changes dramatically. In the third and

⁵⁸ Trans. They were completely dry.

fourth verses of the text, there is a dialogue with a clear division of roles. The musical narrative, following the content of the verbal layer, takes on a quasi-soloistic approach. The narrator's part is taken over by the tenors, who are answered by the sopranos and altos. The layer accompanying the dialogue consists of the bass clarinet, bassoon and contrabassoon. The accompaniment motif is based on semitone movement, drawing directly from the beginning of the theme. The interval structuralism of the vocal parts is also organised in relation to the initial theme. With the second appearance of the narrator, the accompaniment changes – the bassoon part continues to be entrusted with the secondary motif (in inversion to the previous one), but the long background notes are taken over by the cellos and double basses. This is obviously related not only to the desire to diversify the course of the music, but above all to the fact that a different person is speaking in the text – the prophet responds to the Lord.

The dying phase

The introduction of another bar line (6) in bar 143 is dictated by the introduction of the next, fourth verse of the text. However, in this case, there is no significant change in texture or sound. The dialogue from the previous verse is continued. The role of accompanying the choral layer is taken over by string instruments, clearly returning to the *col legno battuto* technique, which already appears at this stage of the musical narrative as a motif of bones. In the last "shot", to use the nomenclature of the visual arts, it is to the bones that the prophet is to turn.

The conclusion of the sixth section, as well as of the entire Part I, is a fragment in which the note *C* opens a quiet narrative, and the dynamics – moving smoothly through *sussurando* to *pianissimo possibile* – accompany the symbolic speech of the 'bones' in the words: *audite verbum Domini*⁵⁹, subtly anticipating their future revival.

The above two-section fragment (5-6), lasting about two and a half minutes, is also significant in the context of the macroform of the work, as the deliberate fading out of the narration is a dramatic preparation for the second part, which will contrast strongly with the narrative so far.

⁵⁹ Translation: Hear the word of the Lord.

II.3.2 Part II. *Haec dicit Dominus*

The second part of *the Piaśnica Symphony* is a point of revelation in the entire cycle. Its text, taken from verses 5-6 of the Book of Ezekiel, is a direct continuation of the prophetic dialogue begun in the first part.

While Part I. *Facta est super me* showed the prophet's introduction to the valley of death, Part II. *Haec dicit Dominus* is the moment when God himself speaks – with a voice of indescribable power and creative force.

The musical fabric of this part can therefore be described as a sonic theophany – a manifestation of the word that creates. Its form can be divided into four main sections corresponding to the internal segments of the text and dramatic changes.

Preparatory phase (bars 1-38)

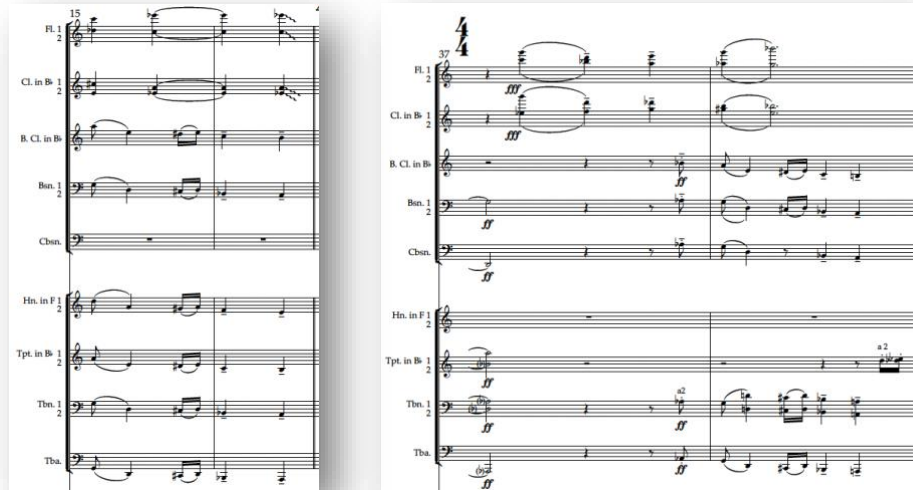
The beginning brings a violent *fortissimo* in a large choral and orchestral ensemble. The text "*Haec dicit Dominus Deus*" is spoken by the choir in a rhythmically disciplined declamation.

The motif of the orchestral layer, based on fourth and fifth intervals, contrasts with the previous section, which was dominated by third intervals. The orchestral layer in the first bars of the second part intensifies the rhythmic rhetoric of the words, and the short rhythmic values lend energy to the command.

The first expressive turn occurs in bar 17. The choir layer transitions to the *parlando* technique. This is the moment that begins the preparation for the direct embodiment of the divine word.

The string instruments take on a chaotic character, captured in aleatoric *col legno battuto*, which creates a murmur reminiscent of the crackling of broken branches or cracking bones. The motivic development of the other layers, based on repetitions, builds an almost trance-like tension.

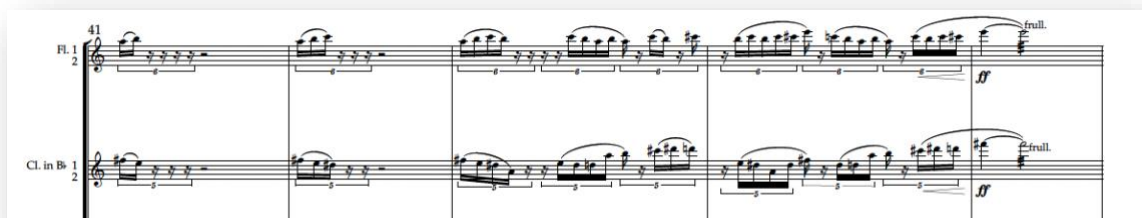
The choral declamation of the word *Deus* in bar 35 is the culmination of the growing tension of the entire section, and at the same time a turning point in its dramaturgy. Immediately after this, a melodic phrase appears (bars 37–38), which clearly evokes the interval pattern from bars 15–16, thus creating a clear sign of the internal symmetry of the form and heralding the entry into the next phase of musical development.



Example 8 . *Haec dicit Dominus*, bars 15–16 and 37–38: comparison of the ‘anticipatory motif’ in two different sections of the movement.

The divine message (bars 39–99)

Bar 39 marks the rhetorical climax. After reaching its peak, the tension suddenly drops, as if the sound material were dispersing. Over the next five bars (bars 41-45), a motoric motif develops, based on the hocket technique. The rhythmic accumulation, built up of sextuplet figures in the flutes juxtaposed with quintuplets in the clarinets, creates the effect of pulsating, tightening time. This rhythmic counterpoint prepares for the entrance of the reciter, whose appearance has a rhetorical consequence – the human voice takes over the energy of the instrumental impetus, giving it a semantic and symbolic dimension.



Example 9 . *Haec dicit Dominus*, bars 41-45 – rhythmic counterpoint of flutes and clarinets creating an effect of kinetic accumulation.

The moment of the reciter's entrance in bar 49, preceded by a descending fifth – *a tremolo glissando* on the timpani – takes on a symbolic dimension. The interval of a fifth, considered for centuries to be a sign of divine perfection and order, in its descending form becomes a musical image of the descent of God's voice from heaven to earth. This is not only a sound procession, but a theological act: a sound that flows down from above onto the valley of dry bones, filling it with the presence of the creative word. At this moment, the reciter utters the words "*Ossibus* his", addressing his call to the dry bones resting in the valley. The phrases are separated by long pauses – the rhythm of breath and silence becomes here the equivalent of the very process of breathing life.

The reciter's voice is accompanied almost exclusively by brass instruments, creating a majestic, hieratic sound aura. Their intensity and brightness bring to mind the biblical trumpets of Jericho – not so much a symbol of war as a sign of the divine presence that shakes the earth. Thanks to this combination, the narration takes on a sacred and solemn dimension. The voice of God continues in bars 57-65, addressing the bones: "Behold, I give you a spirit, that ye may live."

The choir, as it were, 'responds to the call' (bars 65-75), marked with the annotation *sussurando quasi pregare*, whispering as if in prayer – like an echo of the divine call that has just resounded. It is no longer a cry, but a humble response from creation. The *piano* dynamics and aleatoric approach of the mixed choir layer introduce a sense of dispersion and uncertainty – as if the awareness of life were just beginning to emerge among the choral voices. The sound produced illustrates the commotion among the revived: spontaneous, chaotic, not fully organised – the first breath of a new existence that recognises its Creator. Accompanying the dialogue between God and the people, the orchestra layer returns to a steady march in the clarinet parts.

The twelve-bar section (bars 66-77) is abruptly interrupted by the intervention of wind instruments and high strings. This sound, clearly static and ascending in direction, can be interpreted as a symbol of the divine voice re-entering matter – as if the Creator himself were speaking again, continuing the act of divine creation:

*'I will cover you with sinews and make flesh grow upon you,
and I will cover you with skin
and give you a spirit so that you may live and know that I am the Lord'*

Ezekiel 37:6

As the divine message resounds, the choir returns to regular chordal verticals, and a cluster-like, vertical sound gradually emerges from the earlier *parlando* texture. The individual voices of the choir enter successively, creating the effect of a layered texture. At the same time, the string quintet layer is enlivened; its entry is preceded by an inversion of the ‘anticipatory motif’ that already appeared in bars 15–16 and 37–38. The layer which in bars 17–34 illustrated the ‘dry bones’ (string quintet) is reactivated in terms of motif rather than sonority, with the use of *tremolo*, *staccato* and *sul ponticello* techniques, which intensify the effect of internal movement. Throughout the entire section, there is a clear motivic fragmentation, leading to a gradual integration of the structure around the original ‘anticipatory motif’.

The culmination of the process occurs in bar 99, in which the choir, in full dynamic unison, performs the declamation '*Haec dicit Dominus Deus*', constituting the point of greatest textural and dynamic density in this section. This is the moment of the creation of the body – a musical visualisation of the process described in the text: '*et dabo super vos nervos et succrescere faciam super vos carnes*'⁶⁰.

The integration phase (bars 100–122)

The resounding of divine words brings with it a phase of intense revitalisation of matter – a process of ‘merging’ sound elements into a single, organised organism. After the powerful unison in bar 99, which closed the previous segment, the choral texture remains motoric and pulsating, but the choir's cries are separated by longer pauses, during which God's invigorating words resound once again. The string orchestra develops material based on small rhythmic values and in an aleatoric manner, which drives the process of development. The *frullato* and rhythmic *ostinatos* appearing in the wind instruments give the whole a sense of growing internal energy.

The choir's repetition of short textual units ("*Haec dicit Dominus*") has an incantatory character, and the rhythmic repetitiveness and intense *crescendos* lead to a build-up of texture.

The string parts combine *col legno battuto* and *glissando* techniques, which layer themselves in intersecting registers – from low basses to high violins – creating an effect of organic pulsation, as if the body were moving. It is here that the music takes on the characteristics of 'biological' dynamics – tremors, vibrations, microscopic tensions.

⁶⁰ Translation: I will make you grow flesh and cover you with skin.

The gradual tightening of intervals, rhythmic accumulations and contrasting textures of the choir and orchestra lead to a textural and dynamic climax in the final bars of the section (approx. bars 121-122), where the fortissimo of the choir and the full orchestral tutti create the impression of a sonic ‘rise’, crowning the process of revival. The ‘anticipatory motif’ appears for the last time, this time in a descending form. It heralds the arrival of the coda.

Coda (bars 123–131)

The last section serves as a sonic epiphany – a moment of rest after the act of creation. The tempo slows down considerably and the texture becomes clear and transparent. The choir, ending the second part, returns to regular singing for the first time, abandoning the techniques of speech and whispering; thus, it achieves fullness of sound, as if it had definitively ‘come to life’ in the act of rebirth.

The harmony takes on a transparent form based on a single chord, sustained in a long, static duration. The string part features descending *glissandos*, which emphasise the final descent of the divine message – a sonic complement to the act of creation and a symbolic ‘embedding’ of the divine word in matter. It is worth noting that the motif of the last bars of this phase is based on the sound structures present during the presentation of the text about "bones" in Part I – *Facta est super me*. The material continuity preserved in this way creates a continuum of form between the two parts of the cycle, binding them together on a semantic and sonic levels.

The recurring motifs serve as a sonic reminiscence – as if the process initiated in the valley of death in Part I found its completion in the act of revival in Part II.

II.3.3 Part III. *Et prophetavi*

The third part of the Piaśnicka Symphony, *Et prophetavi*, is the central dramatic node of the entire cycle – the moment when the prophet, carrying out God's command, initiates the actual process of reviving the dry bones. Musically, this part follows a complex, multi-stage formative process, whose successive segments reflect the progression of events in the biblical narrative: from the gradual ordering of matter, through the dialogical stage of prophecy, to the build-up of energy leading to the climactic act of breathing life.

Introduction (bars 1-45)

In bars 1-45, the musical course develops gradually, based on a clear canon structure, which serves as a sonic organisation of the material – a successive ordering and ‘reproduction’ of its internal relationships. The successive entries of voices and the increasing density of the texture lead to a systematic increase in tension.

The local culmination of this process occurs in bar 34, where the linear progression is momentarily halted. The pause in the movement gives the phrase the character of a turning point, emphasising the transition between stages of internal form-building logic. After this pause, the development resumes, but in a different harmonic context. The harmonic turn in bar 39, clearly different from the earlier, more internal expression, initiates a new direction of tension – one that is more decisive and energetic in character. In bars 43-44, there is a clear rhythmic and textural revival, signalling a change in the dynamics of the narrative. This short section serves as a preview of the upcoming intensification of the process, marking the transition to the next dramatic phase.

Mezzo-soprano aria (bars 46–79)

The general pause in bar 45 marks a clear formal break, closing the phase of developing the material using the principles of imitation and preparing the space for the entry of a new dramatic element. As soon as it sounds, a fundamental change begins in the textural structure and the relationships between the layers.

In bar 46, the mezzo-soprano appears, whose monodic line initiates new melodic material, clearly distinct from the dense instrumental structure that has prevailed until now. The soloist's entry is initial in nature, marking a turning point in the organisation of the

material: the linearity of the solo voice is contrasted with the previous polyphony and repetitiveness.

At the same time, the orchestral layer, especially the strings, gradually begins to transform its material in response to the presence of the new vocal line. This process becomes clear in bar 58, where the strings become significantly denser and transition into a structure with a distinct rhythm based here on triplets. The orchestra's intervention at this point is strongly polarised: it juxtaposes a dense instrumental texture with the monodic, ascetic line of the mezzo-soprano.

This creates a clear textural opposition – the soloist uses linear, clear and semantically oriented material, while the orchestra constructs the energetic profile of the section: the string layer, through the use of faster rhythmic values and a gradual increase in dynamics, generates tension in preparation for the next climax.

In response to this intensification, the mezzo-soprano takes over some of the orchestra's momentum in bar 69, which, in rhetorical terms, is linked to the content of the words spoken: 'There was a noise and a crackling sound, and the bones drew closer to each other, one by one'. This convergence confirms the soloist's function as the narrator of the process, and not merely as the carrier of the melodic line – her voice serves here as a semantic complement. As this fragment of the text is sung, the string layer is gradually reduced, transitioning to a sound based on harmonics, which serve to sonoristically 'extinguish' the texture (bars 76–79).

As a result, the section between bars 46-80 creates a dialogical arrangement: the monodic vocal layer is juxtaposed with the growing energy of the orchestral plan, whose intensification leads to the designation of subsequent stages of the process of 'revival'. This brings to an end the approximately five-and-a-half-minute macroformal segment, comprising the introduction and an extended dialogue between the mezzo-soprano and the strings, which serves as a preparation for the next dramatic phase.

Reminiscence and intensification (bars 80–104)

After the end of the dialogue between the mezzo-soprano and the strings (bars 46–80), there is a clear dramatic change. The words spoken by the soloist, 'there was a noise and a crack, and the bones drew closer to each other one by one', are not immediately reflected in the music. The essential act of 'joining the bones' is deliberately postponed, introducing an element of multi-stage narration. Only after this semantic announcement

does the music move on to a new tonal configuration, initiating the next stage of the drama.

The reminiscence phase (bars 80–88)

The next phase of development begins with a radical change in colour. The texture is reduced to a group of wind instruments, leading the course in a *nota contra notam* approach. This eight-bar introduction has a stabilising function – it allows the listener to settle into the new soundscape and creates a neutral basis for the emergence of the reminiscence layer.

Over the course of eight bars, a cello solo appears, based on the opening theme of the symphony from Part I, *Facta est super me*. This juxtaposition indicates a conscious use of motivic cyclicalty, building a relationship between the beginning of the cycle and the process of revival in the third part.

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff is a cello solo in bass clef, spanning bars 80 to 88. It begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic, moves to *mp* (mezzo-piano) at bar 85, and ends with a *f* (forte) dynamic. The bottom staff is a vocal line in treble clef, spanning bars 42 to 54. It starts with a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic at bar 42, moves to *mf* (mezzo-forte) at bar 48, and ends with a *f* (forte) dynamic at bar 54. The lyrics are in Latin: 'Fa - cta est su - per me ma - nus Do - mi - ni et e - du - xit me in spi - ri - tu Do - mi - ni et di - mi - sit me in me - di - o cam - pi'.

Example 10 . Comparison of the cello solo (III. *Et prophetavi* – bars 89–92) with the initial theme of the symphony from Part I. *Facta est super me*.

The eight-bar passage serves as a preparation, heralding the build-up of energy leading to the main climax in bar 105.

Intensification phase (bars 89–104)

This section is a smooth transition from reminiscence to the climactic phase of revival. The soloist develops the horizontal material in line with the existing melodic line, maintaining a stable relationship between the vocal layer and the accompanying wind texture. The chorale-like texture of the wind instruments is joined by fragmented interventions of the strings, which act in clear tonal opposition, using *pizzicato* and *col legno battuto* articulations.

From bars 98–101, the strings shift to an aleatoric approach, which significantly changes the relationship between the textural layers – the aleatoric principle of string organisation acts as a link between the layers, causing rhythmic and timbral energy to permeate the wind layer. This results in a kind of ‘chain reaction’ in which elements previously typical of the strings begin to influence the texture of the wind section.

Parallel to the introduction of aleatoric elements, a percussion layer appears, which reinforces the process of building tension and acts as an impulse leading directly to the climax.

The whole of bars 89–104 forms a growing energetic sequence, culminating in a climactic attack in bar 105. This section serves as a progressive intensification, necessary to achieve the dramatic tension corresponding to the act of divine inspiration.

The musical score is for the piece *Et prophetavi*, bars 97-102. It features a variety of instruments. The woodwind section, highlighted by a large black box, includes Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in Bb (Cl. in Bb), Bassoon (B. Cl. in Bb), and Horn in F (Hrn. in F). The string quintet, also highlighted by a large black box, includes Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Contrabass (Cb.). A large black arrow points from the woodwind section to the string quintet, indicating the influence of the string quintet layer on the motoric nature of the wind instruments. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp*, *ppp*, *f*, and *ff*. The lyrics for the Maracas part are: "no - re fi - li no - mi ni ad - spi - ri - tum, va ti ci - na - re, fi - li ho - mi nis et di - ces ad spi - ri - tum haec di - ces".

Example 11 . *Et prophetavi*, bars 97–102 – the influence of the string quintet layer on the motoric nature of the wind instruments

Climax and reconstruction of the creative process (bars 105–118)

The tension accumulated in the previous sections finds its clear outlet in bar 105, which is the climax in both energetic and formal terms. At this point, the canonical material from the introductory section's ' ' phase, previously interrupted in bar 45, is restored. As a result, both segments – bars 1–45 and bars 105–118 – can be treated as directly corresponding to each other, despite the temporal distance and the introduction of new motifs in the mezzo-soprano section. We thus obtain a multi-threaded progression, reminiscent of narrative film strategies: fragmentation and parallel threads are merged at the moment of the climactic return of the main imitative process.

This musical score excerpt shows the climactic section of Example 12, bars 105–118. It features five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The music is characterized by a high level of energy, with dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *sf* (sforzando) indicating a powerful, accented sound. The notation includes various rhythmic values and articulation marks, creating a sense of intense movement and tension.

This musical score excerpt shows the juxtaposition of two sections from Example 12, bars 43–45 and 103–108. It features five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The music is characterized by a high level of energy, with dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *sf* (sforzando) indicating a powerful, accented sound. The notation includes various rhythmic values and articulation marks, creating a sense of intense movement and tension.

Example 12 . *Et prophetavi*, pp. 43–45 and 103–108 – a juxtaposition of two sections based on the principles of canon (processual continuity).

The recurring theme of the canon is intensified by an elaborate orchestral texture, which in bars 105–118 operates on two sonic levels. The main presentation of the theme belongs to the first violins, which carry the line in an uninterrupted sequence of short values. At the same time, the wind instruments operate with the same material, but in diminution, which results in a slowing down of the progression in relation to the string part. This leads to the creation of a texture characterised by parallel polyphony from different pitch points.

The harmonic and register structure of this fragment can be divided into two categories:

Basic layer (harmonic foundation)

- clarinets – **A flat**,
- French horn – **A flat**,
- tuba – **A flat**,
- double bass – **A flat**.

This set of voices creates a stable tonal core, serving as a low foundation around which the rest of the texture is organised.

Complementary layer (interval deviations from the base)

- flutes – **perfect fifth upwards**,
- bass clarinet – **major second up**,
- bassoon II – **perfect fourth down**.

This arrangement resembles the way voices are registered in organs: the fixed base (16' / 8') is gradually saturated with register distances (2', 4', 5 1/3'), which gives the effect of tonal density without compromising harmonic stability. Béla Bartók used a similar technique in *his Concerto for Orchestra*. In the *Giucoco delle coppie* section, the varied intervals between pairs of instruments generate a melodically coherent and at the same time multi-coloured harmonic structure.

In the discussed fragment of *the Piaśnicka Symphony*, this construction leads to the creation of a harmonically saturated layer, functioning as a background, which, however, remains directly related to the initial theme of the third movement. The background is not

a neutral element here: its colour and interval organisation results directly from the thematic material, reinforcing its presence and intensifying the climactic dimension of the entire section.

The development of this section reaches its climax in bar 117, when *the choral cry 'Haec dicit Dominus Deus'* appears. From a dramatic perspective, this is the point of greatest concentration of both textural and meaning.

The closure of the polyphonic fragment at this point serves as a clear anticipation of the return of *the actual Communicatum Divinum*, i.e. the reappearance of the voice of God later in the piece. This climax is thus connected with the process of the structure 'breathing' – after the intensity of the polyphonic section, there is a transition to a more sonorous and sparse sphere.

‘Come, Spirit, from the four winds...’: preparation for the act of revival (bar 119)

The biblical text quoted here – *‘A quattuor ventis veni, spiritus, et insuffla super interfectos istos, et vivant’* – introduces a qualitatively new semantic space. Its theme is related to the spirit, breath and movement of air, which is directly reflected in the orchestral layer.

The sonoristic sound plan of the orchestra

The orchestra constructs a sonoristic acoustic landscape using:

- *air sounds*,
- *key clicks*,

This layer creates an acoustic metaphor for the life-giving breath, which in Ezekiel's text plays a decisive role in the process of revival. The means used place this fragment in the tradition of sonoristic techniques known from Penderecki's works (*De natura sonoris*), Lutosławski (controlled aleatoric music as 'vibrating matter') and spectral music practices, in which noise and air are elements of timbre formation.

Choral layer – whispering as a signal of 'movement'

The choir performs the text using the *sussurrando* technique, irregularly and with rhythmic variation. This approach gives the musical course the following characteristics:

- it enhances the impression of air waves and movement,
- creates the effect of *commotio* – the ‘stirring’ of matter,
- prepares the entrance of the next key dramatic segment.

In the context of religious music, whispering often serves as a threshold between the human voice and the supernatural voice; in this sense, it fits into the tradition of theophanic approaches in contemporary music.

Preparatory function – the entrance of the reciter

The whole leads directly to the entrance of the reciter, who utters the words of invocation. This entrance is prepared indirectly – not by contrast, but by a gradual ‘quietening’ of the musical material and the introduction of airy tones. This creates a kind of acoustic vacuum in which the reciter's voice can be exposed as *a sacrum medium*, playing the role of the prophet Ezekiel.

The result is a section in which the musical structure functions as a space of anticipation – a place suspended between the climax of the previous call and the further course of the work.

The phase of shaping the choral texture (bars 120-146)

After the divine call has sounded, the choir initiates a response, returning in a starkly outlined *unison*, still lacking full harmonisation. This way of conducting the voices brings to mind a state of 'unfinished' or 'unformed' sound, which corresponds to the stage of the process of revival, in which the characters evoked in the biblical text have not yet reached their full form.

In the following bars, the choral texture develops into four voices, which remains directly related to the content of the text, which mentions *a ‘very large army’*.

The expansion of the texture can be interpreted as the sonic equivalent of the gradual ordering and differentiation of the ‘revived’ voices – from a single common tone to a polyphonic structure capable of functioning independently.

Despite this expansion of sound, the choir has not yet achieved its full, affirmative form – it is not aware of the event that is about to take place. The texture still bears the characteristics of ‘hesitation’ and ‘initial constitution’, remaining in a transitional state between formlessness and the fullness of life, which will only come in the climactic part of the episode.

The phase of ‘shaping matter’ (bars 147–171)

The section between bars 147 and 171 initiates the next dramatic stage, in which the motivic, thematic and semantic elements revealed so far are brought together. This fragment opens with *the* formula ‘*Et dixit ad me*’, whose melodic outline refers directly to lines 3–4 of Part I (*Facta est super me*), where the dialogue between the prophet and God was first outlined. The return of this formula is an example of motivic continuity, consciously maintained throughout the entire cycle, and at the same time reveals the mechanism of internal narrative cyclicity.

The polyphonic structure in this fragment takes the form of *a stretto* based on the ‘theme’s theme’, which intensifies the course of the work and introduces a sense of growing determination. The *stretto* serves as a preparation for the entry of the solo violin layer, which presents the initial theme of the symphony – again referring to the material opening the first part. In this sense, ‘history comes full circle’: the motivic arrangement returns to its source, as if the entire process presented in the third movement demanded closure in the form of an act of ‘preparation for resurrection’.

Musical visualisation of the act of creation (bar 155)

A particularly significant moment occurs in bar 155: the process of creating the body is depicted in a pictorial manner, corresponding to the content of the eighth verse (Ezekiel 37:8). This text – containing the most complete description of physiological formation:

"and sinews appeared, and flesh grew, and skin covered them..." — seemed to have been omitted from the narrative so far. Its late placement is intentional: appears precisely when the musical narrative reaches a state appropriate for presenting the complex process of the organisation of matter.

The choir performs this fragment not directly, but in the form of permutations, inversions and recombinations of textual elements. This creates a syllabic layer which, at first glance, seems semantically incomprehensible, but which serves a sonoristic and gestural function, illustrating the process of the heterogeneous integration of bodily matter.

The textual layer of the choir is based on three types of transformations:

1. Inversion of the entire verse (letter permutation)

*tnabebah non mutirips te repused situc sie ni tse atnetxe te tnurednecsa senrac te ivren
ae repus ecce*

2. Operations on vowels (isolation and inversion)

vowels of verse 8:

ee ue ea ei e ae aeeu e eea e i ei ui eue e iuu o aea

inversion:

aea o uii e eue iu ie i e aee e ueea ea e ie ae eu ee

3. Operations on consonants (isolation and inversion)

consonants in verse 8:

cc spr nrv t crns scndrnt t xtnt st n s cts dspr t sprtm nn hbbnt

inversion:

tnbbh nn mtrps t rpsd stc s n ts tntx t tnrdncs snrc t vrn rps cc

The technique used to reorganise the text is not semantic in nature, but rather processual and structural:

- it reflects the complexity of the act of forming the body,
- illustrates the layering of elements,
- reveals the transitional, unfinished condition of matter,
- and it heightens the dramatic tension leading to full animation.

The section in question (bars 155-171) is accompanied by a wind instrument plan, which creates a background based on sound structures developed earlier in part III. The stable structure of the wind instruments layer supports the developing narrative and contributes to the aura of anticipation for the reappearance of the divine message.

In the final stage of this phase, the voice of God appears, realised by the reciter. At this point, the words are introduced:

"Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say..."

This is a moment of particular dramatic significance: the narrative stops at bar 171, because God quotes the voice of the people – he restores speech to those who until now have remained "silent", present only as dead matter.

The phase of eschatological anticipation (bars 172-190)

The choir, which in previous episodes functioned in a deformed, disintegrated form (in a layer based on permutations, inversions and recombinations of the phonemes of the eighth verse), now responds with a fully ordered chordal texture. For the first time, its statement takes on a harmonically stable form. The chords have a clear vertical arrangement and function as a vehicle for a clear semantic message.

The choir's response is expressed in the Kashubian language, which serves as the symbolic voice of the Piaśnica region – the land where the symphony's memory context unfolds. The choice of the local idiom reinforces the relationship between Ezekiel's biblical vision and the space of the region's real, historical trauma. The choir utters the words:

"Our bones are dry, our hope is gone, it is the end for us."

("Our bones are dry, our hope is gone, we are finished.")

This response is resigned, devoid of dynamism – it is the sonic equivalent of the complete lack of hope referred to in the text. The texture of the choir remains simple and static, as if it were just beginning to regain its shape after a period of dispersion and silence.

After this utterance, the narrative falls silent again, creating the impression of a temporary closure of the entire process. The pause has a rhetorical dimension – as if the vision were coming to an end and the fate of the 'bones' had been sealed. However, the silence is broken by the divine voice, which again addresses the prophet:

"Therefore, prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God:

Behold, I will open your graves (...)"

These words initiate another, fundamental dramatic phase, heralding the final act of resurrection and the opening of the graves – the climax of the entire vision from the Book of Ezekiel and, at the same time, the final part of *the Piaśnicka Symphony*.

It is worth noting that verse 12 is interrupted halfway through at this point, which has a clear rhetorical function. This interruption serves as a dramatic suspension, preparing the audience for *the opening of the triumphant finale*, in which the act of resurrection spoken by God in the words "*Behold, I open your graves...*" is fulfilled.

The incompleteness of the verse is incorporated into the musical structure as an anticipatory gesture, heralding the moment of the climactic revelation – both in the textual and sound layers.

II.3.4 Part IV. *Ecce ego aperiam*

The fourth part of *the Piaśnica Symphony*, *Ecce ego aperiam*, serves as the final link in the entire cycle, in which the previously announced act of opening the graves and restoring life (Ezekiel 37:12-14) is fulfilled. Its course is shaped in the form of successive dramatic phases – from the proclamatory introduction, through the slowing down of the narrative and the takeover of the text by the choir, to the elaborate phase of final consolidation and the triumphant coda. This part integrates key thematic ideas, Kashubian idioms and sound effects in a way that leads to the final act of affirmation, closing the Symphony with a symbolic gesture of the victory of life over death.

Introduction (bars 1-32).

The fourth movement opens with an immediate orchestral entry in *forte*, based on motifs taken from the Kashubian song *Kaszëbskô Królewò*. The homorhythmic, texturally homogeneous sound mass thus set in motion gives the fragment a proclamatory character, while establishing two important vectors of meaning:

1. **triumphalism** – resulting from the marching rhythmic profile and compact articulation,
2. **rootedness in the local cultural idiom** – through direct reference to the Kashubian musical tradition.

This is not a random choice: *Kaszëbskô Królewò*, which serves as an emblematic song in Kashubian culture, plays a role analogous to that of *Bogurodzica* in Polish musical and symbolic tradition. Its presence opens the section in a solemn and demonstrative manner, while at the same time, on a semantic level, it evokes the spirit and memory of the region to which the message of *the entire Piaśnicka Symphony* refers.



Example 13 . IV. *Ecce ego aperiam*, a comparison of the thematic beginning of the *Piaśnicka* Symphony with the motif of the song *Kaszëbskô Królewò*.

A clear pause on the first degree of the melodic progression serves to avoid a simple reference to the diatonic major scale. Instead of leading the line towards an obvious sequence, this solution allows for the introduction of thematic material with a more individual profile, consistent with the stylistic language of the entire Symphony and rooted in its specific sound idiom. At the same time, the evocative contour taken from the Kashubian song is preserved, thanks to which this motif, despite modifications, still carries a recognisable reference to the local idiom and its symbolic meaning.

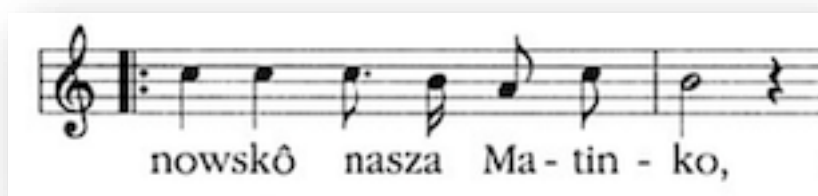
Exposition of the first segment of the song (bars 1-15)

The first bars outline the first song motif, maintained in a uniform rhythm and reinforced by a full tutti. The texture remains flat and vertically transparent, which enhances the character of the *exordium* with its great rhetorical power. The motif is then subjected to a brief development, involving both minor rhythmic transformations and a gradual thickening of the texture.

Continuation and second segment of the song (bars 15-23)

In bars 15-23, the coexistence of two different but complementary sources of melodic material, characteristic of the fourth movement, becomes apparent. This section provides a space in which the regional idiom (the song *Kaszëbskô Królewò*) and a motif belonging to the internal structure of *the Singing Symphony* (a descending fourth from Part I) enter into a dialogue with clear dramatic significance.

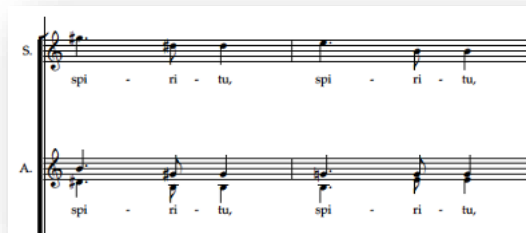
The first of these elements comprises a fragment of the song *Kaszëbskô Królewò*, introduced here in the form of the second segment of the melody ('*Swianoweskò nasza Matinko*'). This reference does not function as a quotation in the literal sense, but rather signals a cultural space through the use of an idiom recognisable as a triumphant sign of place, rooting the entire Part IV in the topography of Piaśnica's memory.



Example 14 . Comparison of the second segment of the song *Kaszëbskô Królewò* with its corresponding adaptation in Part IV. *Ecce ego aperiam* (horn part, bars 19-20).

The second element, highlighted in Example 14 (*horn parts, bars 23–27*), is a descending fourth motif, the original pattern of which comes from Part I (bars 77–78). In that context, it was associated with the declamation of the word *spiritu*, functioning as a rhetorical sign of ‘breath’. Its reintroduction, in a slightly transformed, variant form, not only binds the two parts of the cycle with an internal thematic memory, but also carries

a semantic reference to the Spirit evoked in Part IV, which is the causative factor in the opening of the graves and the revival of Israel.



Example 15 . IV. *Ecce ego aperi*am, bars 23-27 (brass section). Comparison of the varied quartal motif with its original model from Part I, bars 77-78 (soprano and alto parts).

As a result, both motifs – the folk segment of the Kashubian song and the rhetorical function of the fourth interval – function here not as competing elements, but as two parallel vectors of meaning that are part of the process of gradual movement and energetic build-up of the section. The song material, with its distinctive syllabic rhythm and gentle contour, is intersected by the fourth motif, giving the passage a rhetorical and symbolic dimension. Both sources of material enter into a kind of motivic discourse in which local identity (song) meets the internal logic of the symphony (the ‘spiritu’ motif).

The whole leads to a gradual intensification of movement: the rhythmic values become denser, the number of synchronised accents increases, and the strings transition into more motoric figures. The section ends with a clear fade-out in bar 30:

- the dynamics decrease,
- the previous rhythmic accumulations disappear,
- the instrumental voices thin out and spread over longer values.

The process of 'energy decline' serves as a transition to the next dramatic unit of Part IV, in which a more complex imitative course will replace the triumphant proclamation.

To conclude the presentation of the main features of the introduction (bars 1–32), it should be noted that it acts as an opening signal – simultaneously rooting the finale in the real context of the place (Kashubia) and preparing the space for the development of the idea of ‘opening the graves’, which dominates the rest of the work.

The phase of slowing down the momentum and the choir taking over the narrative (bars 33–59)

The section beginning in bar 33 marks a clear phase of slowing down the orchestral momentum that dominated the previous segments. The instrumental energy gives way to the choir, which has significant semantic meaning: the divine message is now spoken by those who are to be revived. This reversal of roles – in which the voice of God resounds through the mouths of the choir – reinforces the dramatic dimension of the process of ‘coming to life’. The choral recitation is initially conducted on two different levels:

- The male voices perform the text in clear, syllabic declamation.
- The female voices remain in *parlando*, creating a soft, rhythmic supporting layer.

This is accompanied by a subtle continuation of the motoric nature of the introduction in the percussion layer, which maintains the internal tension of the passage. The wind instruments perform a counterpoint function, building a highly expressive background, which is enhanced by the dense rhythm of the motifs and the frequent use of *frullato*.

As the section progresses, the texture of the choir becomes more integrated: the female voices join the choir *in unison*, which reinforces the narrative meaning of the text. In bar 45, there is another stage of gradation – the choir develops the statement in full four-part harmony, achieving much greater vertical density and textural dynamics.

The way in which the drama of the word *tumulos* ('graves') is shaped is particularly important. This word does not appear in the narrative until the climax in bar 58. The deliberate delay in its introduction is a highly effective rhetorical device: the absence of this word in the previous phases reinforces its meaning at the moment of climax, making it the carrier of the main semantic phrase of the entire section. Its repetition in bar 59 further emphasises its importance and prepares the transition to the next phase of the course. The choir part ends here with a characteristic *glissando*, which introduces a blunt directional impulse – as if the sound were 'falling', initiating the next stage of the formative process.

Also noteworthy are the sonoristic means used in the wind instruments, including flageolet *glissandos* (flutes) and an effect in the bass clarinet part described in the score legend as *distortion (harmonics)*. This technique, which involves temporarily disrupting the stability of the blowing by gently touching the reed with the teeth, generates murmuring and unstable sounds, which are the acoustic equivalent of the 'cracking' or 'unsealing' of matter. These effects reinforce the dramatic expression of the section, signalling the approach of the point at which the graves are opened.

The image displays two musical score excerpts. The top excerpt is for the Bass Clarinet in B-flat (B. Cl. in Bb), starting at bar 41. It features a series of eighth notes with a wavy line above them, indicating a glissando effect. The bottom excerpt is for the Flute 1 and 2 (Fl. 1 2), starting at bar 53. It shows a full forte (ff) dynamic with a series of notes, and a diagonal line above the staff indicating a glissando effect.

Example 16 . IV. *Ecce ego aperiam*, bass clarinet part, bar 41, and flute part, bar 53.

Example of the use of sonoristic sound effects

The final consolidation phase (bars 60-119)

The section beginning in bar 60 opens the final consolidation phase, in which the transition from the earlier processes of revival to the full affirmation of the newly created ‘people’ is revealed. In this section, the three previously parallel narrative sources are merged: the motifs of the introduction, the choir and the mezzo-soprano.

The entrance of the mezzo-soprano – the return of the bearer of the divine message

After a long absence, the mezzo-soprano part returns, acting as the bearer of God's word. Its entry fits into the motivic patterns presented in the introduction, restoring the clear linearity and directionality of the message. In the dramatic context, the return of the solo voice confirms that the climactic phase of the prophecy is approaching fulfilment.

The choir as a homogeneous community

At the same time, the choir performs a rhythmic figure chanted in triplets (bars 62-70). This layer has an almost ‘military’ function – not in the sense of aggression, but of an organised community in which the earlier inconsistency (particularly noticeable in Part II) is overcome in favour of rhythmic unity and harmonic stability. The consistent triplet pulse emphasises the semantics of the word *populus*: the choir becomes a collective body of sound, representing the ‘people’ as a unified, fully integrated entity.

The trumpet signal as a preview of the final theme (bar 71)

In bar 71, the trumpet signals the theme that will become the basic building block of the final section. The motif does not yet appear here in its full form – rather, it appears as an echo of future material, a preview with a clear anticipatory function. The role of the trumpet, with its distinctly ‘fanfare-like’ character, is to warn the listener that the final act of the prophecy is about to be fulfilled.

Mezzo-soprano taking over the kinetics of the motif

In the following bars, the mezzo-soprano takes over the kinetic impulse initiated by the trumpet, developing it in the vocal line. She utters the key words: '*and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you forth out of your graves, O my people*'.

In bars 81-82, the vocal line rises to the upper register, especially on the words *sepulchra vestra*. This technique reinforces the rhetorical power of the image of the 'grave', opened not in darkness but towards the light – upwards. At the same time, the gradually increasing layer of the choir is gradually smoothed out, leading to five bars of gradual quietening, giving the space a meditative dimension.

It is in this process of quietening that the decisive phase of the entire movement begins.

Initiation of multi-layered imitation (bar 83)

In bar 83, the string quintet layer reaches a thematic climax: both motifs derived from the song *Kaszëbskô Królewò* are presented simultaneously. Their juxtaposition at this point signals the beginning of the final imitation process, which will dominate until the end of the section.

The image shows a musical score for a string quintet, specifically bar 83. It consists of four staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The Violin I and II parts are marked with a forte 'f' dynamic and the instruction 'tutti'. The Viola and Violoncello parts are also marked with a forte 'f' dynamic and the instruction 'tutti'. The music features a 'Stretto' section, indicated by the caption. The Violin I part has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Violin II part has a similar melodic line. The Viola part has a more rhythmic, eighth-note pattern. The Violoncello part has a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Example17 . IV. *Ecce ego aperiam*, string quintet part, bar 83. *Stretto*.

The theme in the cello part is played in long notes, serving as a *quasi cantus firmus* – a harmonic and structural foundation. The other voices of the quintet develop the motif in various contrapuntal transformations, creating a multi-layered texture with a clear polyphonic tendency.

Mezzo-soprano as the leading voice (bar 89)

In bar 89, the mezzo-soprano joins the imitative run, creating the cello a two-part structural axis. The other voices function as counterpoint, gradually creating a denser texture that leads to a climax in the text.

The mezzo-soprano again leads the line towards the high register, reaching its apogee at the moment when the words are spoken:

‘and I will bring you out of your graves, my people’

The narrative emphasis on the word *populus meus* prepares the choir's final response.

The choir's final gesture and the beginning of the finale (bars 97-98)

In bar 97, the choir performs the last fragment of the text, emphasising the words *populus meus* with an ascending *glissando*. This technique serves as a symbolic image – the final resurrection from the dead. After this moment, the choir withdraws from the main verbal narrative and only *festive* shouts and interventions remain, accompanying the growing energy of the orchestral *tutti*. The whole begins to take on a celebratory, almost liturgical-processional dimension, heralding the final opening of the gates of the ‘tomb’, which completes Ezekiel’s vision.

The return of the initial theme as a sign of the cycle's closure (bars 99-108)

In bars 99–108, a thematic layer is introduced, the beginning of which directly refers to the initial theme of the entire Symphony. This reference has the status of a special

formal gesture – it serves as a compositional bracket, opening up the prospect of a comprehensive conclusion to the narrative. The juxtaposition with the initial material signals to the listener that the process of revival has reached its final stage and Ezekiel's vision is about to be fulfilled.



Example 18 . IV. *Ecce ego aperiam*, cello and double bass part, bar 99, juxtaposed with the initial theme of the *Piaśnicka Symphony*.

It is worth noting that only this one thematic layer appears in the section from bars 99 to 108. This exclusivity gives it a special formative weight: nothing competes with the theme, nothing obscures it – the passage acts as a kind of ‘final march’, against which the choir joins in with triumphant cries.

The drama of this section is reinforced by the fact that the key final words, previously spoken by the reciter or soloists, are here shouted out for the first time by the choir (from bar 104). This is a gesture of exceptional symbolic power: it is not God who speaks to the people, but the people – fully revived – who speak the words of God. It is the ultimate sign of resurrection, of the full return of voice and identity. The choir shouts:

*«I will give you my spirit so that you may live,
and I will bring you back to your own land,
and you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it," says the Lord God.*

Final climax (bars 109-119)

In bar 109, there is a clear signal of the beginning of the final phase: the wind instruments – in strict unison – present the return of the initial theme of Part IV, based on motifs from the song *Kaszëbskô Królewò*. This return has a closing power: the local idiom, which is a sign of place, is now incorporated into *the* full *tutti* as a triumphant foundation for the final affirmation of life.

At the same time, a motif based on a descending fourth appears in the trumpet part, directly recalling the motif from Part I (*spiritu*). At this point, however, it takes on a new dimension: not only does it bring to mind the original sign of revival, but it is also subjected to a strong rhythmic intensification, which gives it the character of an energetic impulse, clearly driving further development.

In bar 112, another layer of reminiscence appears, this time entrusted to the bassoons, trombones and double basses, which present the thematic material in extended rhythmic values. This is an analogous formal device consisting in revisiting the material introduced in the earlier phases of Part IV and placing it in a new textural context. This layer creates a monumental, static harmonic foundation.

At the same time, the flutes and cellos take over the motif from the second segment of *Kaszëbskô Królewò* (the refrain theme), which leads to a polyphonic layering of two separate but semantically related lines.

At the same time, from bar 109, the motoric percussion returns, reminiscent of the material from bars 41-59. The intensity of the rhythm and its continuity lead to a feeling of growing, unstoppable dynamics.

In bar 115, the trumpet comes to the fore again, counterpointing the structure with material from *Kaszëbskô Królewò*, this time in a much more affirmative and expressive way than in the earlier signal in bar 71. This is another anticipatory gesture, but now realised with full force – against the backdrop of *an* intensely developing *stretto*.

The whole creates an impression of full integration of materials: the Kashubian idiom, the *spiritu* motif, percussive motorics and polyphonic techniques. At this point, the Symphony reaches the greatest energy density of the entire cycle.

Triumphal coda (bars 120-126)

The final section of Part IV (bars 120-126) is a triumphal coda – appropriately stronger and more luminous than the earlier climaxes. The narrative is decisively suspended here; the musical material is held in a short, rhythmically concentrated formula with a fanfare-like profile, which emphatically underlines the victory achieved.

In bar 123, there is a reminiscence of the initial theme of the entire Symphony, which binds the four parts into a single formal and symbolic continuum. The last stroke of the orchestra is preceded by *an* ascending *glissando*, leading the line upwards – towards light, transcendence and spiritual fulfilment.

The final finale of Part IV carries a message deeply rooted in both in the text and in the music: death is not the last word, but life is. The sublime character of the codified climax, interwoven with local idiom and biblical rhetoric, expresses this with a power that transcends the purely musical dimension. The symphony ends not in the darkness of the grave, but in a sonic image of the triumph of existence.

Conclusion

The Piaśnica Symphony was born out of a need to commemorate – out of an inner compulsion to preserve the memory of the Victims of Piaśnica in a world that is increasingly uncertain, unstable and prone to forgetting. At a time when fundamental values are being destabilised and cultural and social reality is undergoing rapid change, the question of what remains permanent takes on particular significance. The creative impulse came from the awareness that we live in an era of acceleration, in which memory — both collective and local — requires active protection.

In such conditions, the act of composing is not merely an aesthetic gesture: it becomes a form of resistance to the erosion of memory and, at the same time, a tool for countering the indifference and fragmentation of contemporary experience. *The Piaśnica Symphony* thus stems from the conviction that one of the duties of an artist is to constantly remind us of what cannot be forgotten — especially when the traditional pillars of historical narrative are subject to the pressures of relativisation, simplification and omissions.

In this context, the issue of the broader artistic environment, which does not always favour gestures of a memorial or spiritual nature, also comes to the fore. In the field of contemporary music, established aesthetic hierarchies and the pressure to conform to certain trends continue to have a strong influence — above all those that equate artistic value almost exclusively with radical technological innovation or laboratory sound experiments. The paradox of the present day is that aesthetic conservatism manifests itself not through attachment to tradition, but through adherence to a single model of modernity, which has become a dogma in itself.

This situation creates tension: artists who wish to develop their own semantically oriented language of expression often have to resist the tendency to reduce music to an accumulation of formal innovations. *The Piaśnica Symphony* was therefore also a response to this reality – an aesthetic choice that assumes the equality of compositional techniques, freedom in using the achievements of past eras, and the primacy of emotional and spiritual communication over experimentation treated as an end in itself.

This approach is not a rejection of modernity, but an attempt to restore its essence — the ability to create meaning, construct significance and participating in the space of memory. In this sense, *the Piaśnica Symphony* is an aesthetically justified gesture of searching for one's own artistic *credo* in a world in which forms of expression are often dominated by the pressure of 'novelty', understood as an intrinsic value.

The analyses carried out allow us to conclude that *the Piaśnica Symphony* is an artistically and cognitively justified realisation of the idea of music of memory, combining contemporary compositional means with the function of commemoration.

At this point, however, what is most important naturally returns: the victims of German murders in Piaśnica and Piaśnica itself as a place of remembrance. It is their presence – permanent, though silent – that determines the horizon of meaning of the entire composition. Piaśnica is not only a geographical point, but a landscape that carries the weight of history and, at the same time, the obligation to pass it on. The artist cannot remain indifferent to this space: art here becomes a form of vigilance, an attempt to preserve what is fragile and at the same time fundamental to the identity of the region and the community.

That is why *the Piaśnica Symphony* wants to become part of this chain of memory – not as a commentary, but as a voice that accompanies other voices: those that have been interrupted, those that have been silenced, those that could be forgotten. Music, in its non-verbal nature, becomes a space in which the Victims can be given a lasting presence, one that is not subject to relativisation or changes in historical narratives.

The analyses carried out allow us to conclude that *the Piaśnica Symphony* is an artistically and cognitively justified realisation of the idea of music of remembrance, combining contemporary compositional means with the function of commemoration.

The words of Janina Andrzejewska, recorded in her diary and displayed on one of the plaques at the Piaśnica Museum in Wejherowo, remain remarkably relevant in this context – they are not only a testimony, but also a commitment:

*"Piaśnica, as the common grave
of thousands of unknown martyrs,
has become a symbol of the suffering
and silent heroism of the people of Pomerania.
It has become a testimony to the fortitude
and courage of a nation that did not bow down."*

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