

THE STANISŁAW MONIUSZKO ACADEMY OF MUSIC IN GDANSK

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz, M.A.

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

prepared as part of the procedure for the award of a doctoral degree

in the field of *arts*, in the artistic discipline:

musical arts

Supervisor:

Dr hab. Krzysztof Komendarek-Tymendorf
Associate Professor at the Academy of Music

Gdańsk 2026

ARTISTIC WORK

PROGRAMME OF COMPOSITIONS BY KAROL BORSUK

1. *Kolding* (1:17)
2. *Odessa* (2:40)
3. *Scherz I* (1:16)
4. *Scherz II* (2:13)
5. *Fantasia* in D minor (1:59)
6. *Piccola Fantasia* (6:03)
7. *Kazimierz* (2:42)
8. *Volke 7* (1:44)
9. *Erinnerung* (1:51)
10. *April* (2:15)
11. *Preludium a Canzona* (4:37)
12. *Mosaik* (3:33)
13. *Pastorello* (3:09)
14. *Goethe auf Tegel* (1:38)
15. *Ave Maria* (1:48)
16. *Three Miniatures*
 - 16.1. (0:54)
 - 16.2. (0:50)
 - 16.3. (0:54)
17. *Three Aquarelles*
 - 17.1. (0:45)
 - 17.2. (1:22)
 - 17.3. (0:29)
18. *Bilder* (4:35)
19. *Andante* (2:45)
20. *Souvenir de Kazimierz* (3:18)
21. *Fantasy for Viola, Choir and Orchestra* (7:56)

Running time: 63 minutes 31 seconds.

Performers:

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz: viola

Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca: flute

Jacek Piotr Kujawski: conductor

Sylwia Fabiańczyk-Makuch: conductor

Stanisław Moniuszko Koszalin Philharmonic

Choir of the Szczecin Maritime University

Recording engineers: Grzegorz Stec, Jacek Sokołowski

Album title: Sounds of Expression – The Music of Karol Borsuk

Label: Requiem Records

Catalogue number: OPUS 116 | 2025

Recording dates: March 2024

Recording location: Koszalin, Berlin

Official release date: 10 June 2025

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE ARTISTIC WORK

Karol Borsuk's Compositions for Viola as a Contribution to 21st-Century Polish Viola Literature

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Introduction

Contemporary music of the 21st century is a field of intense and multifaceted exploration in terms of aesthetics, form, and performance. A defining characteristic of this music is the absence of a single dominant stylistic paradigm that would organize creative phenomena according to clearly defined criteria. In contrast to earlier eras, in which one could identify leading trends, compositional techniques, or shared aesthetic principles, the contemporary era is characterized by a pluralism of creative attitudes and strategies. Composers draw both on solutions rooted in tradition and on means of expression resulting from individual explorations, often transcending the boundaries of styles, genres, and conventions.

The coexistence of many aesthetic trends leads to a situation in which contemporary music does not present a uniform picture, but rather a mosaic of diverse musical languages. This phenomenon applies to both the compositional and performance spheres, where the interpretation of a work becomes an essential element of its final form. In this context, the individuality of the artist and their personal artistic journey shaped by life experiences, cultural environment, and performance practice take on particular significance. Contemporary music increasingly functions as a space for dialogue between the past and the present, between tradition and new forms of expression.

In this multidimensional landscape, composers who do not unambiguously identify with the institutional mainstream but consistently develop their own artistic vision play a special role (Karol Szymanowski¹). Their work often emerges outside the decision-making centers of musical life, yet possesses significant artistic and performance value. Such activity requires not only aesthetic awareness but also courage in making artistic decisions and a willingness to engage in dialogue with performers and audiences.

Karol Borsuk is such an artist – he is a composer, violinist, conductor, and educator whose artistic career has been linked to Berlin for many decades, while maintaining strong ties to Polish musical culture (“Music is an art; it is therefore a manifestation of human artistic activity...”²). His artistic path developed at the

¹ Bogusław Schaeffer, “Szymanowski, Karol,” in *Leksykon kompozytorów XX wieku*, vol. M–Z (Kraków: PWM, 1965), 241.

² Zofia Lissa, *Zarys nauki o muzyce* (Kraków: PWM, 1966), 9.

intersection of two cultural spaces: Polish and German, which had a significant influence on the formation of his musical language. Operating between various aesthetic traditions and educational systems allowed the composer to develop an individual style that defies easy classification.

The composer's artistic work developed in parallel with his activities as a performer, conductor, and educator. Many years of stage experience and work with musicians and ensembles shaped his way of thinking about music as a dynamic phenomenon expressed in a specific performance. This experience is directly reflected in his compositions, which are characterized by attention to instrumental idiom, clarity of notation, and the communicative power of the musical statement. Borsuk's musical language is characterized by a balance between clarity of form and freedom of expression, between structure and musical narrative.

An essential aspect of his work is its grounding in performance experience. As a violinist and conductor, he possesses a deep awareness of the capabilities and limitations of instruments, which informs how he constructs solo and ensemble parts. His music is not an abstract formal construct, but stems from a practical approach to sound, articulation, and phrasing. Thanks to this, these compositions maintain a balance between technical demands and expressive potential, which makes them attractive to performers.

Despite Karol Borsuk's rich and diverse artistic output, encompassing numerous solo, chamber, and vocal-instrumental compositions, his work remains relatively under-explored in scholarly literature. There is a lack of comprehensive analyses devoted to his musical language, aesthetics, and the place he occupies in the context of contemporary Polish and European music. Previous references to this artist's work are mostly fragmentary and limited to biographical notes, concert programmes, or press reviews.

This lack of research is particularly evident in the case of Karol Borsuk's works for the viola. Although the viola remains in the shadow of the violin and cello, it has been gaining in importance over recent decades. Contemporary composers are expanding its technical and sonic possibilities, whilst at the same time presenting performers with new interpretative challenges. This also applies to Borsuk's viola works, which offer pieces of varied formal and expressive character. Despite this, his work has yet to receive substantial scholarly analysis.

The lack of in-depth studies on this part of the composer's oeuvre means that his work functions mainly within the performance sphere, without a broader analytical and interpretative framework. This state of affairs hinders the inclusion of these works in the pedagogical repertoire and limits their presence in concert programmes. This doctoral thesis was written in response to this under-researched area and constitutes an attempt at a systematic study of Karol Borsuk's work with particular emphasis on its viola dimension.

The aim of this research is not only to analyse the musical score, but also to present the artist's work in the context of performance practice and the dialogue between composer and performer. This approach allows for a fuller understanding of his musical language and for situating the analysed works within a real artistic context. This work aims to shed light on the artistic work of the composer in question as a significant, though hitherto insufficiently recognised, element of contemporary musical culture.

Aim of the Thesis and Scope of Research

The primary aim of this thesis is to introduce Karol Borsuk and his work to a wider audience, in particular performers, teachers, researchers and listeners interested in contemporary music. The thesis attempts to present his body of work not merely as a collection of autonomous compositions, but as a coherent artistic world, arising from a specific creative approach, performance experiences and a consistently developed musical language. A key aim of the author is to combine artistic reflection with scholarly analysis in such a way that both these perspectives complement one another and lead to a deeper understanding of the material under analysis.

This objective is achieved through the creation and documentation of an artistic work in the form of a phonographic recording, as well as through a detailed analysis of selected works by the composer. The album³ *Sounds of Expression – The Music of Karol Borsuk* is not only a phonographic documentation but also the result of a multi-stage research process, encompassing the analysis of musical notation, interpretative work and dialogue with the composer. This recording serves a practical and cognitive function, enabling the presentation of the artist's work in a form accessible to a wide audience.

The solo works for viola analysed in the thesis include: *Kolding*, *Odessa*, *Scherz I*, *Scherz II*, *Fantasy in D minor*, *Piccola Fantasia*, *Kazimierz*, *Wolke 7*, *Erinnerung*, *April* and *Prelude a canzona*. This set comprises compositions of varied formal and expressive character, ranging from short miniature forms to works with a more elaborate structure. An analysis of these works reveals the manner in which Karol Borsuk manipulates musical material, builds formal tension and shapes the sonic narrative using limited instrumental resources.

Each of the analysed solo works represents a different type of musical narrative. In the miniature works, the concentration of expression and precise

³ Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz, *Sounds of Expression (album)*, WSM Serpent, https://wsm.serpent.pl/sklep/eng/albumik.php?alb_id=79645, accessed 23 March 2026.

handling of musical time play a significant role, whereas in the more elaborate compositions there is a tendency to develop motifs and to contrast formal sections. The analysis of these works takes into account both their formal structure and performance aspects, such as articulation, phrasing, dynamics and agogics, which are of key importance to the final shape of the interpretation.

Chamber works for flute and viola duet also form a significant part of the research scope. These include the pieces *Mosaik*, *Pastorello*, *Goethe auf Tegel*, *Ave Maria*, as well as the cycles *Three Miniatures* and *Three Aquarelles*, and the compositions *Bilder*, *Andante* and *Souvenir de Kazimierz*. These works reveal the composer's particular interest in instrumental dialogue and the tonal relationship between instruments of differing sonic character. The discussion of the duets focuses on the way the voices are led, the balance between the parts, and the role of texture in shaping the form.

Karol Borsuk's chamber music allows us to observe his tendency to shape musical narrative based on subtle changes in dynamics, articulation and register. In the miniature cycles, the tendency to condense material and to employ contrast within short time spans is particularly evident. An examination of these works enables us to highlight the specificity of the composer's musical language in the context of the collaboration between two equal instruments.

A special place in this exploration is occupied by *Fantasie for Viola, Choir and Orchestra*, which represents the monumental strand of the composer's output. This work allows us to examine his musical language within the context of a large-scale vocal-instrumental form, in which the viola assumes the role of a soloist of both dramatic and symbolic significance. The discussion of this composition covers the relationship between the solo part and the ensemble, the way the drama is shaped, and the function of the choral layer within the work's structure.

The inclusion of a work for viola, choir and orchestra in the scope of this research makes it possible to demonstrate the breadth of Karol Borsuk's oeuvre and his consistent approach to treating the viola as a solo instrument, capable of playing a central role even in large-scale works. This work serves as an important point of reference for reflecting on the place of the viola in contemporary music and on the possibilities for its use in a symphonic context.

The scope of the research encompasses both an analysis of the musical score and reflections on performance practice and the interpretative process. The author

incorporates her own experience, drawn from preparations and recording sessions, into the thesis, enabling a view of these works from the performer's perspective. In this way, the research material combines theory with artistic practice.

In summary, the aim and scope of this thesis is an in-depth analysis of the artist's oeuvre, using specific instruments and performance practice as examples. The thesis seeks to present this oeuvre as a valuable and inspiring area of contemporary music, which deserves wider attention within both the artistic and academic communities.

The Origins of the Topic and the Author's Rationale

The choice of subject for this thesis does not stem from abstract theoretical interests or from a need to explore a topic already established in academic discourse, but is a direct result of the author's long-standing, consistently developed artistic collaboration with Karol Borsuk. This collaboration, which began in 2010, was multifaceted and encompassed both concert performances and work on new compositions, transcriptions and the production of recordings. Over the years, this relationship evolved into an artistic dialogue in which performance practice became an impetus for deeper reflection on the composer's work.

Direct contact with the composer made it possible to understand his music not only through the musical score, but also through the process of its creation and shaping in performance practice. Participation in world premieres and work on the interpretation of new works allowed for the observation of the relationship between the composer's intention and its sonic realisation. This experience had a significant impact on the perception of the performer's role as a co-initiator of a musical work, as well as on the understanding of the connections and interdependencies between form, sound and expression.

Many years of creative artistic collaboration also enabled a gradual exploration of Karol Borsuk's musical language in its various guises. The author had the opportunity to observe how the composer develops his ideas, how he responds to performance suggestions, and how he shapes the final version of a piece in dialogue with the musician. This kind of experience, unavailable in the analysis of historical works, represents significant cognitive value and became one of the key motivations for choosing the thesis topic.

Another significant factor motivating the choice of topic was the observation that Karol Borsuk's works are rarely found in the viola repertoire in Poland. Despite numerous concert performances and recordings, his compositions remain little known to a wider audience and within the teaching community. This phenomenon seems particularly pronounced in the context of the viola, an instrument that for a long time remained on the margins of the solo repertoire and has only recently gained new artistic significance.

As an actively performing violist and teacher, the author recognises the need to expand the viola repertoire with contemporary works that make conscious and idiomatic use of the instrument's capabilities. Karol Borsuk's oeuvre fits into this trend, offering pieces of varying degrees of technical and expressive difficulty, whilst maintaining clarity of form and musical narrative. The inclusion of these compositions in performance and teaching practice may contribute to enriching the repertoire and changing the perception of the viola as a solo instrument.

The motivation for undertaking this topic was also the need to document a body of work that emerged at the intersection of various cultural traditions. The artist's career, which developed over many years in Berlin, serves as an example of émigré creativity operating outside the mainstream institutional sphere in Poland. The author recognises the significance of these works for contemporary musical culture, both in the Polish and European contexts, and the need for their systematic study.

The origins of the topic are also linked to the author's personal artistic experience, as she has repeatedly encountered difficulties in selecting contemporary repertoire throughout her professional career. The lack of available studies, analyses and recordings has prevented the inclusion of new works in concert and teaching programmes. This thesis attempts to address these needs by creating a comprehensive study combining analysis, interpretation and phonographic documentation.

Another key aspect of the author's motivation was the desire to reflect on the role of the performer in the contemporary creative process. Collaboration with Karol Borsuk allowed her to observe how the dialogue between composer and performer shapes the work. This experience became the starting point for reflections on the contemporary model of creative collaboration, in which the boundaries between composition, interpretation and performance are becoming blurred.

The origins of the thesis topic also have a practical dimension. The production of the album *Sounds of Expression – The Music of Karol Borsuk* was a natural extension of earlier artistic endeavours and, at the same time, an inspiration for a more in-depth academic reflection on them. The work on the recording, the selection of the repertoire and interpretative decisions became elements of the research process, which is reflected in this thesis.

In summary, the origins of the topic and the author's motivations stem from a combination of many years of artistic experience, the need to document and popularise Borsuk's work, and a desire to contribute to the development of contemporary viola literature. This thesis represents an attempt to combine academic analysis with performance practice in a manner befitting a doctoral degree in the arts and the author's individual artistic journey.

The Artistic and Scholarly Mission of this Dissertation

This work is of an artistic and academic nature, which means that research reflection and creative activity do not function within it as two separate spheres, but rather intertwine and complement one another. The starting point for this approach is the conviction that a musical work does not exist solely as a musical score, but only acquires its full meaning in the act of performance. Consequently, artistic practice has been treated as an equal cognitive tool, rather than merely an illustration of theoretical conclusions.

An integral part of the thesis is the artistic work in the form of the album *Sounds of Expression – The Music of Karol Borsuk*, released by Requiem Records (OPUS 116) on 10 June 2025, produced by Grzegorz Stec and Jacek Sokołowski and recorded in March 2024 in Koszalin and Berlin. This album does not serve a purely documentary function, but is the result of a multi-stage research process, encompassing the analysis of the musical score, interpretative work, dialogue with the composer, and the production of the phonographic recording. Each of these stages influenced the final form of the work and, at the same time, provided material for scholarly reflection.

The interpretative process, encompassing decisions regarding articulation, tempo, dynamics, agogics and phrasing, is treated in this thesis as a conscious research activity. Performance choices do not stem solely from artistic intuition, but are the result of an analysis of the work's structure, form, texture and instrumental idiom. Reflection on these decisions allows for a deeper understanding of the composer's musical language and his way of thinking about the relationship between composer and performer.

The artistic mission of this work also lies in promoting the artist's oeuvre through its professional phonographic documentation. The album *Sounds of Expression – The Music of Karol Borsuk* is the first such comprehensive release dedicated to his music, with particular emphasis on works for the viola. This recording aims not only to preserve the works but also to make them accessible to a wider audience: performers, teachers, researchers and listeners interested in contemporary music.

Another key aspect of this work's artistic mission is to highlight the viola's potential as a solo and chamber instrument in 21st-century music. Karol Borsuk's work presents the viola as a vehicle for rich expression, capable of realising both miniature forms, and elaborate musical narratives. Through the analysis and performance of these works, this thesis contributes to the expansion of the viola repertoire and to strengthening the instrument's position in performance practice.

This academic mission involves incorporating the work of the composer in question into the field of research on contemporary music. This thesis attempts a systematic study of his output in the field of works for the viola, addressing the noticeable lack of comprehensive analyses of this body of work in the relevant literature. The analysis of the works, their compositional context and musical language enables the composer's oeuvre to be situated within a broader aesthetic and cultural context.

Of particular significance is the presentation of Karol Borsuk's work as an artist operating between two cultural spheres: the Polish and the German. His long-standing artistic activity in Berlin contributed to the popularisation of Polish music and to the building of relations between the musical communities of both countries. The thesis reflects on the significance of this type of activity for contemporary musical culture and on the role of the artist-emigrant as a mediator between different traditions and countries.

The research methodology also encompasses documentation of the social and cultural context in which the analysed works were created. Conversations with the composer, analysis of archival materials and reflection on the circumstances of the works' creation allow them to be presented as responses to specific experiences, places and events. This approach to the body of work enables a fuller understanding of its extra-musical and symbolic meanings.

This dissertation also has an educational dimension. The works analysed, due to their formal and technical diversity, can serve as valuable teaching material for students of the viola and chamber music. Highlighting their educational potential and the possibilities for their use in the process of artistic education constitutes one of the practical aims of this work.

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The artistic and academic objectives of the thesis are realised through a desire to bring contemporary music closer to the audience. Drawing on her own concert experiences, the author emphasises the role of the performer as a mediator between the composer and the listener. Conscious shaping of interpretation, contextualisation of the works, and reflection on their message can help the audience to open up to contemporary music.

In summary, the aim of the doctoral thesis is to combine artistic activity with academic reflection in a manner appropriate to the specific nature of a doctoral thesis in the field of art. The thesis aims not only to analyse and document Karol Borsuk's work, but also to disseminate it, interpret it and situate it within a broader cultural context. As a result, the thesis constitutes both a contribution to research on contemporary music and a tangible impetus for the continued presence of this work in performance practice.

Research Methodology

The methodology employed in this study was selected to reflect the specific nature of artistic research, in which scholarly reflection is closely linked to performance practice. The starting point for the research methods adopted is the assumption that a musical work does not function solely as a musical score, but as a sound structure realised in a specific performance. For this reason, the methodology of this study is based on a combination of analytical tools, source research and the author's artistic experience, treated as an essential element of the cognitive process.

The primary research tool is musical analysis⁴, conducted with several complementary perspectives in mind. The aim of formal analysis is to describe the structure of each piece, the organisation of the musical material, and the relationships between the parts of the work. Particular emphasis has been placed on miniature forms, characteristic of a certain phase of Borsuk's output, as well as on the most elaborate formal structures, in which musical narrative and motivic development come to the fore.

Harmonic analysis focuses on methods of building harmonic tension and release, the relationships between chords, and the role of harmony in shaping the dramatic structure of a work. In the case of the composer's work under consideration, this analysis takes into account both elements rooted in traditional harmonic thinking and more free-form solutions resulting from the composer's individual sensibility. Textural analysis, on the other hand, allows us to determine the relationships between the voices, the manner in which the melodic lines are conducted, and the role of individual sound layers in shaping the overall sound.

An important aspect of stylistic analysis is the attempt to capture the characteristic features of the artist's musical language, such as phrasing, the use of contrast, the role of rhythm and articulation, and the relationship between simplicity and complexity of means of expression. Stylistic analysis does not aim to categorise Borsuk's work unequivocally within a specific aesthetic movement, but rather to highlight its individual character and its place within the context of contemporary music.

⁴ Bogusław Schaeffer, *Mały informator muzyki XX wieku* (Kraków: PWM, 1975), 22–23.

Particular attention has been paid to the idioms of the viola and the relationship between the musical score and performance practice. This analysis takes into account the specific characteristics of the instrument, its tonal, register and technical capabilities, as well as the way in which the composer utilises these features in his works. In this context, the author's performance experience is of significant importance, as it allows for a comparison of the musical notation with the instrument's actual interpretative possibilities. This reflection covers issues of articulation, phrasing, dynamics, agogics and the choice of technical means.

The second key element of the methodology is source research. This involves the analysis of the composer's scores, manuscripts and archival materials relating to Karol Borsuk's work. This research enables us to trace the process of the creation of individual works, the changes made during the composition stage, and the relationship between the original concept and the final form of the work. Conversations and interviews conducted by the author with the composer are also an important source of information.

These interviews are treated as primary sources, enabling the reconstruction of the circumstances surrounding the creation of the works, non-musical inspirations and creative intentions. The composer's statements allow for a better understanding of his way of thinking about music, his relationship with performers and the significance he attaches to individual elements of the work. The use of this research method is of particular significance in the context of research into contemporary music, where access to the composer and the opportunity for direct dialogue constitute significant cognitive value.

An integral part of the methodology is the artistic process, encompassing the preparation, performance and recording of the work. In this thesis, performance practice is treated not as an illustrative element, but as an equal research tool. Work on the interpretation of pieces, decisions regarding tempo, dynamics, articulation and phrasing constitute a significant element of analytical reflection. The phonographic recording serves a documentary function, but at the same time allows for repeated return to the audio material and its analysis.

The methodology employed enables a multifaceted examination of Karol Borsuk's work, combining analytical, performance and source-based perspectives. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the analysed material and for presenting it in a manner appropriate to the specific nature of an artistic

doctorate, in which scholarly reflection and creative activity intertwine and complement one another.

The dissertation has been structured as a coherent whole, in which the individual sections follow on logically from one another and guide the reader from general issues to detailed analyses of the artistic work. The work comprises four main chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and an extensive documentary appendix. This structure allows for a gradual introduction to the research topic, whilst clearly distinguishing between biographical, analytical and methodological reflections.

The first chapter is devoted to the figure of Karol Borsuk and serves as a starting point for further discussion. Its aim is not merely to present biographical facts, but to trace the composer's artistic journey within the broader context of his performing, teaching and conducting activities. The chapter outlines the key stages in Borsuk's life, the environment in which his musical fascinations took shape, and the professional experience he gained in Poland and Germany. Particular emphasis is placed on his artistic activity in Germany (which spanned many years), as well as the impact of leaving his homeland on his work. The conclusion drawing this section to a close is the conviction that the diversity of his musical experiences forms the basis for his compositional language and his approach to form and sound.

The second chapter focuses on the composer's work and seeks to identify its place within the landscape of contemporary music. Its aim is to highlight not only strictly musical inspirations but also those not strictly related to music, namely literature, the visual arts, history and personal life experiences. Here, too, issues concerning the composer's aesthetics, his relationship with tradition, and his use of the latest means of expression are analysed. The chapter also addresses the issue of the communicative nature of music and its reception by the audience, drawing attention to the role of the performer as an intermediary between the composer and the listener. The conclusions drawn from this section point to Borsuk's work as a conscious dialogue with the past, carried out in an individual and consistent manner.

The third chapter forms the core of the thesis and is devoted to a description of the artist's work and a detailed analysis of selected compositions. The aim of this section is to present Borsuk's musical language from the author's perspective, who bases her interpretation on her own performance experience. The chapter contains analyses of solo works for the viola, chamber compositions for flute and viola duet,

and a solo work accompanied by a small choir and orchestra. The following aspects were analysed: the context in which each piece was composed, its form, texture, instrumental idiom, and the relationship between the musical score and performance practice. This chapter concludes that Karol Borsuk's viola works possess significant artistic, repertoire and pedagogical value, whilst also representing an important voice in contemporary instrumental literature.

The fourth chapter of the thesis focuses on methodological issues and serves to organise the research framework employed. It includes a discussion of methods of musical analysis and source research, and highlights the importance of performance practice as a key element of the research process. Particular attention is paid to the role of the artistic work, understood both as the result of interpretative preparation and as a phonographic realisation, which, within the framework of an artistic doctorate, form an integral part of the research. The adopted perspective highlights the distinctive nature of this thesis, in which creative activity and scholarly reflection are closely intertwined, enabling a multifaceted understanding of the musical material under analysis.

The thesis concludes with a summary of the findings drawn from the analyses carried out and the artistic work produced. Bringing these two areas together allows us to highlight their interrelationships and confirm the validity of the methodological assumptions adopted. The conclusion also highlights the significance of Karol Borsuk's work in the context of contemporary musical practice, as well as the potential of his compositions for further performance and educational use.

An integral part of the thesis is an extensive documentary appendix. It contains source materials, musical and phonographic documentation, as well as statements and opinions from eminent musicians and educators. This appendix serves an archival and documentary function, whilst also providing a point of reference for future research into the work of Karol Borsuk.

Contemporary music is a field that is constantly evolving, seeking new forms of expression, techniques and artistic means. Against the backdrop of these changes, the work of this Polish composer, originally from Łuków, stands out as one of the most intriguing phenomena on the contemporary music scene. Borsuk, who has lived in Berlin since 1981, combines the deeply rooted tradition of Polish

music with innovative and avant-garde compositional techniques in his works, creating a unique, fascinating and inspiring sound.

The artist was born in Łuków, a small town in south-eastern Poland, whose rich history and culture had a significant influence on his artistic development. From an early age, the artist was enchanted by music. He took his first steps in choirs and vocal ensembles, and his traditional musical education laid the foundations for the development of an extraordinary musical sensitivity to a variety of musical styles.

He emigrated to Berlin in 1981, where he initially continued his studies before later embarking on a professional career as a composer. Berlin, a city renowned for its rich artistic and cultural tradition, served as a constant source of invaluable inspiration for him. It was here that he encountered a variety of musical influences, ranging from the avant-garde to electronic music, which had a profound impact on him.

Karol Borsuk's work is deeply rooted in the tradition of Polish music, yet at the same time open to new trends and directions in contemporary music. In his compositions, he frequently draws on the heritage of Polish folk music, which serves as an inexhaustible source of motifs and inspiration for him. However, folk melodies and rhythms are transformed and adapted in such a way that they take on a new, unique form.

The aim of this doctoral dissertation is to present his body of work, which is particularly noteworthy in the context of contemporary music for the viola. *The Artistic Work* contains pieces originally composed for solo viola and in duets with the violin and the flute, as well as transcriptions of works written for the violin, carried out by the author of this thesis with the composer's assistance. *The Description of the Artistic Work* provides an overview of the composer and his oeuvre, highlighting his inspirations, creative philosophy and place in contemporary music. It describes the compositional process, his collaboration with other artists, and the impact of his works on audiences. All information regarding Borsuk's biography and work, as well as the ideas behind his work and life, is drawn from the author's personal conversations with the composer. In this work, she has taken into account the emotional and social resonance of his works, highlighting their significance in culture. Borsuk's works are a creative response to contemporary challenges, combining art with enduring values. The brief

biographical note is supplemented by an appendix containing opinions from eminent authorities on his compositions. In-depth analyses of the pieces recorded on the album present Borsuk's musical language from multiple perspectives. The work discusses issues of compositional technique, the means of expression employed, and elements of significance from the performer's perspective. Personal contact with the composer has enabled the inclusion of information regarding the circumstances surrounding the creation of the works. Complex harmonic and rhythmic structures, along with innovative techniques and forms, render Borsuk's music exceptionally dynamic and diverse. The compositions for viola demonstrate an understanding of the instrument's specific characteristics and showcase its unique timbre.

The author's interest in Karol Borsuk's work stems from her acquaintance with the composer, which has lasted since 2010. Initially, this was limited to joint participation in chamber concerts; over time, Borsuk began composing with the author in mind as a performer. Regular performances of his works and work on transcriptions have confirmed the author's belief that Karol Borsuk's viola works are, in every respect, worthy of being presented to the Polish music community. This doctoral thesis should facilitate an understanding of his music and an appreciation of this composer's contribution to contemporary music, and may perhaps inspire potential performers to explore his compositional output further.

Chapter 1

Biographical Profile of Karol Borsuk: Violinist, Pedagogue, Composer, and Conductor

Karol Borsuk was born on 6 November 1949 in Łuków⁵. The earliest years of his life, from birth until the age of seven, unfolded in a warm and close-knit family environment. His father worked as a safety technician in the local Consumers' Cooperative, and in his spare time devoted himself to writing poetry and recollections of his own childhood. His mother and aunt managed the household, while his uncle – an alumnus of the organ school in Siedlce and an organist in the nearby village of Gręzówka – also provided private accordion lessons at home. At that time, the accordion enjoyed considerably greater popularity than it does today.



Stefan Szyller – uncle, organist, and private music teacher specializing in the accordion.
The composer's archive.

Evenings, after a demanding day of work, the family would gather around the table, where Karol's aunt or uncle would light a lamp and read aloud to everyone. These shared moments of listening became an important part of the household's daily rhythm. Among the many books introduced to him in this way,

⁵ Anna Kaczmarek, *Edukacja muzyczna w Polsce: historia i współczesność* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2020), 75–80.

Karol Borsuk recalls with particular vividness the deeply moving story *Heart* by Edmondo De Amicis. The fate of the families and children portrayed in the novel left a profound emotional imprint on him, one that has remained present in his memory to this day⁶.



Stefan Szyller – musician, organist, and choir conductor in Łuków, 1950s.
The composer's archive.



Karol Borsuk. The composer's archive.

⁶ Kaczmarek, *Edukacja muzyczna w Polsce*, 21–32.

After the death of his uncle, young Karol inherited his salon instrument – a harmonium dating from around 1870. The instrument, now housed in his Berlin residence, remains in active use and serves as a tangible link to his earliest musical experiences. The family home also accommodated the director of the local music school, Henryk Wiśniewski⁷. The sound of violin practice, filtering through the wall from the adjacent room where Wiśniewski prepared for recitals or for recordings at the radio stations in Lublin and Warsaw, became a constant auditory backdrop to Karol's childhood. His mother sang in a choir, his father played the banjo, and his aunt likewise participated in choral singing. Together, they created a rich and stimulating musical environment that shaped the boy's earliest sensibilities.

The most significant event in the artist's early life was his admission to the music school, which at that time functioned as the cultural centre of the town⁸. During his initial period of study, he was placed in the class of Andrzej Gościłło⁹. Before his formal enrolment, however, an unusual incident occurred – one that would decisively influence the direction of his musical education. While out for a walk with his uncle, the young boy encountered a man who stopped his bicycle, carrying an instrument case. The man turned out to be the violinist Jan Miszczak. After a brief conversation, Miszczak asked Karol which instrument interested him, and, observing the natural movement of the boy's hand, concluded that the violin would be the most suitable choice. Karol was invited to take the entrance examination at the music school, where his enthusiasm and aptitude convinced the teacher, leading to his official acceptance into the violin class.

Another episode related to musical education unfolded within the Borsuk family. Karol's older sister, Barbara, initially studied the harmonium but eventually continued her training in the piano class under the guidance of Wanda Studzińska.

Although Barbara initially began her musical education on the harmonium, it soon became evident – after merely a month – that the instrument was not well suited to her. Thanks to the support of Professor Lech Miklaszewski, who organised special lessons for selected students from Łuków, she was able to develop her pianistic abilities with notable success. Despite residing in Warsaw, Miklaszewski

⁷ Mieczysław Mazurek, "Znaczenie rodzinnych tradycji muzycznych w kształtowaniu talentów: studium przypadku," *Muzyka Polska* 4 (2018): 112–120.

⁸ Kaczmarek, *Edukacja muzyczna w Polsce*, 60–71.

⁹ Jakub Wydra, "Historia Szkoły Muzycznej im. Mieczysława Karłowicza w Łukowie," *Przegląd Muzyczny* 3 (2018): 45–55; Kaczmarek, *Edukacja muzyczna w Polsce*, 72–80.

travelled to Łuków once a week to provide Barbara with individual instruction, thereby playing a decisive role in shaping her musical development.

The students of the Łuków music school regularly earned recognition at various competitions. The school also maintained an orchestra that achieved notable success, while its teachers secured leading positions in national contests – including, among others, the prestigious accordion competition in Wrocław¹⁰.

Alongside their studies at the music school, the siblings attended the local primary school, where they received their general education. An important element of their daily life were their visits to the library, where they met with Maria Kiernicka, the wife of Dr Leon Kiernicki, and took part in library gatherings. Despite various difficulties, Karol Borsuk's childhood was therefore filled with experiences that nurtured both his education and his passion for music. His recollections from this period reveal a rich network of musical relationships and influences. The musical gatherings held in the Kiernicki household formed a significant part of the artist's early years. These occasions were not only opportunities to present musical skills but also moments of inspiration that fostered a warm and supportive atmosphere among the participants. Such intimate performances played an important role in shaping the cultural life of the local community. Post-concert suppers added a sense of warmth to these encounters and strengthened the bonds between those involved. These meetings functioned not only as an informal course in musical performance but also as a time for cultivating a close teacher–student relationship.

It is worth emphasising that such events had a profound impact on the formation of the young artist's musical identity and passion, as well as on the development of other participants. The composer's memories of playing the violin or the accordion, or of attempting to learn the steps of the czardas¹¹, paint a vivid picture of how music became an inseparable part of his everyday life.

¹⁰ Kaczmarek, *Edukacja muzyczna w Polsce*, 81–88.

¹¹ Arthur David Jacobs, "Czardasz," in *Słownik muzyczny*, translated by H. Martenka and C. Nelkowski (Bydgoszcz: Delta, 1993), 74.



Karol Borsuk. The composer's archive.

After Andrzej Gościłło left for the United States, Karol Borsuk continued his violin studies under Henryk “Rick” Wiśniewski¹², who was himself a composer, violinist, and conductor¹³.



Karol, Barbara, and Marek Borsuk, 1958–1959.
The composer's archive.

Around 1963, Karol Borsuk began his education at the Tadeusz Kościuszko Secondary School in Łuków. The young musician did not sever his ties with the music school or with his peers, many of whom were admitted to the same institution. Together they formed a musical ensemble called *Żaki*. The group consisted of two guitars (lead and bass), percussion, saxophone, vocals, and piano. Karol Borsuk performed either as a vocalist or as a bass guitarist, learning to play

¹² “Wiśniewski, Henryk,” in *Słownik muzyków polskich*, ed. Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, vol. 2, M–Z (Kraków: PWM, 1967), 286–287.

¹³ Henryk Wiśniewski, “Wspomnienia z nauczania muzyki: jak rozwijać młode talenty,” *Czasopismo Edukacja Muzyczna* 2 (2019): 67–74.

the instrument as he went. The ensemble performed hits by Czerwone Gitary, Niebiesko-Czarni¹⁴, and Czerwono-Czarni¹⁵, songs by Stan Borys¹⁶, as well as works by many other artists. At the same time, he continued to participate successfully in concerts organised by the music school, performing on the violin or on a brass instrument – the alto¹⁷.



Choral Festival in Llangollen, Wales, 1975 The composer's archive.

Concerts featuring youth-music repertoire, organised by the ensemble *Żaki*, were held regularly and typically lasted around an hour.

Karol Borsuk's interest in art history emerged during the seventh or eighth year of primary school. His family maintained contact with various individuals who were both teachers and parents of children attending private instrumental lessons given by Karol's uncle. These acquaintances often met in private homes, and during one such gathering a teacher, Professor Karwowska, addressed him with the words: "Karolku, I have something for you here – a very interesting book¹⁸. Try to read it." The book was *Sztuka cenniejsza niż złoto* by Jan Białostocki, a survey of European art history from antiquity to the mid-twentieth century. Professor Karwowska handed him both volumes at once, and reading them became a significant moment in the emergence of a new intellectual fascination in the young musician's life.

¹⁴ "Niebiesko-Czarni", *Wikipedia. Die freie Enzyklopädie*, <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niebiesko-Czarni>, accessed 23 March 2026

¹⁵ "Czerwono-Czarni", *Wikipedia. Die freie Enzyklopädie*, <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czerwono-Czarni>, accessed 23 March 2026

¹⁶ "Stan Borys", *Wikipedia. Die freie Enzyklopädie*, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stan_Borys, accessed 23 March 2026

¹⁷ Kaczmarek, *Edukacja muzyczna w Polsce*, 89–100; Kazimierz Sikorski, *Instrumentoznawstwo* (Kraków: PWM, 1975), 183–185.

¹⁸ Kaczmarek, *Edukacja muzyczna w Polsce*, 101–110.

Borsuk's fascination with art was also nurtured by *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*¹⁹, a periodical that was present in his family home. It was there that he first encountered black-and-white photographs taken in Venice in 1924, images that captivated him deeply. His interest in art²⁰ has remained with him to this day. He continues to explore it independently, attending various exhibitions, symposia, vernissages, concerts, lectures, and other related events. This artistic engagement constitutes a significant current in his life – one as important as music itself.

After completing secondary school in Łuków in 1968, Karol Borsuk continued his education at the Tadeusz Szeligowski Secondary School of Music in Lublin and simultaneously enrolled at the Second Teacher Training College in Lublin. At the music school he pursued advanced violin studies under Professor Stanisław Włodarski, the first concertmaster of the Lublin Philharmonic. He supported various musical projects, performing in different ensembles – including folk groups – and worked as a musician at the Centre for Adult Vocational Development. For several years he performed as both violinist and singer in folk-dance ensembles in Lublin, taking part in numerous concerts and festivals, among them performances with the *GaiK* Folk Dance Ensemble in Cieszyn and with the UMCS Folk Dance Ensemble in Wrocław during the Student Culture Festival (around 1973). Over time, his fascination with folklore and musical diversity evolved into participation in further artistic projects connected with folk dance²¹.

Karol Borsuk's long-standing fascination with folklore²² and musical heterogeneity found expression in projects such as *Taniec Ludowy*. His exploration of new musical territories, his ability to adapt to diverse stylistic contexts, and his involvement in educational initiatives together created an eclectic portrait of his musical passions.

¹⁹ "Tygodnik Ilustrowany", *Wikipedia. Die freie Enzyklopädie*, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tygodnik_Ilustrowany, accessed 23 March 2026

²⁰ Wendy Beckett, *Die Geschichte der Malerei: 8 Jahrhunderte in 455 Meisterwerken [History of Painting: Eight Centuries in 455 Masterpieces]*, art. consult. Patricia Wright (Köln: DuMont Buchverlag, 1995).

²¹ Kaczmarek, *Edukacja muzyczna w Polsce*, 111–120.

²² Bogusław Schaeffer, *Nowa muzyka: Problemy współczesnej techniki kompozytorskiej* (Kraków: PWM, 1969), 46.



Karol Borsuk – performing on the violin in a folk ensemble, Second Teacher Training College in Lublin, 1968–1969. The composer's archive.

The richly varied musical experiences of Karol Borsuk combined elements of formal study, collaboration with fellow musicians, a deep interest in folk culture, and active engagement in music education. His openness to a wide range of artistic expressions played a formative role in shaping his future musical identity.



Karol Borsuk – at the Second Teacher Training College, 1969. The composer's archive.

In 1971 he began his studies at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, in the Institute of Artistic Education – later renamed the Institute of Art. There he had the opportunity to study with Professor Adam Nataneć, director of the Lublin Philharmonic, who accepted him into his conducting class²³. His composition studies were carried out under the composer Mieczysław Mazurek. In

²³ *Historia Instytutu Sztuki na Uniwersytecie Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2021), 40–45.*

the meantime, Borsuk²⁴ organised various concerts, performing in them himself as both instrumentalist and singer, primarily within the big-beat idiom. He also worked at the Student Radio Station, which he co-founded with a colleague²⁵. His work and training at this station opened the door to Polish Radio in Lublin, where he initially served as an intern and was later accepted into the music editorial team. He reviewed concerts, conducted interviews with a range of artists, and hosted his own music programmes.

It was also there, in the choir, that he met Teresa Ewa Kwiatkowska from Elk, who was likewise studying at the Institute of Artistic Education. The couple married in 1976 and have since formed a close and mutually supportive partnership – a significant new chapter in the artist's life.

During his first year of academic study, Borsuk joined the Academic Choir led by Kazimierz Górski, a specialist in early music.

For two years Borsuk did not sing in the choir but instead played in the Chamber Orchestra conducted by Mieczysław Pomorski. He soon returned, however, to the Academic Choir, which had been taken over by Jadwiga Czerwińska²⁶, a pupil of Professor Bok in Warsaw. Borsuk believes that his involvement in music – both in the choir, where he met his future wife, and in the orchestra – made him even more musically active.

Within the Academic Choir he had the opportunity to encounter major works and a wide range of musical literature. He performed under the baton of Adam Natanek²⁷, director of the Lublin Philharmonic²⁸, as well as under the baton of the assistant conductor, Ryszard Komorowski. Professor Natanek was also a frequent guest with the choir²⁹. Due to the incurable illness and subsequent passing of the choir's conductor, Jadwiga Czerwińska, Karol Borsuk was asked to take over her duties³⁰. He received an official letter from the university appointing him artistic

²⁴ Marek Dudek, *Adam Natanek. Człowiek – artysta – pedagog* (Lublin, 2017), 151, 245–246.

²⁵ Kaczmarek, *Edukacja muzyczna w Polsce*, 130–142.

²⁶ *Adam Natanek – portret artysty*, interview by T. Księżka-Falger and M. Dudek, 14. *Towarzystwo Muzyczne im. H. Wieniawskiego* (Lublin, 2013), 6.

²⁷ Dudek, *Adam Natanek*, 245–246.

²⁸ *Filharmonia Lubelska – official website*, <https://filharmonialubelska.pl>, accessed 23 March 2026.

²⁹ Dudek, *Adam Natanek*, 245–246.

³⁰ Dudek, *Adam Natanek*, 151.

director and conductor of the Academic Choir, signed by the then rector, Wiesław Skrzydło³¹.

Karol Borsuk was actively involved in musical life not only as a performer but also as a journalist gathering material for radio reports on various concerts. He prepared radio coverage of performances, which gave him the opportunity to meet outstanding musicians – an experience that proved deeply inspiring. He also ran the student club *Remiza* on Zana Street, where he organised concerts and other musical events. Together with friends he founded a jazz ensemble, in which he performed as an instrumentalist, playing the alto saxhorn. He took part in numerous festivals, both local and national, including the Lublin Jazz Festival, which also featured cabaret performances by *Kabaret Loża 44*, founded by Ireneusz Szymański. Borsuk had the pleasure of performing in this group as a violinist, while Szymański wrote excellent texts and composed the accompanying music. Their collaboration also extended to student cabaret festivals in Kraków.

Following successful concerts in Berlin in 1980 and excellent reviews in the Berlin press, the choir under Karol Borsuk's direction was invited to return for further performances. These took place a year later, in December 1981 – the final concert was held on 12 December, the eve of the introduction of martial law in Poland. At that moment Karol Borsuk, together with part of the choir, decided to remain in West Berlin.



Professor Stefan Stuligrosz and Karol Borsuk. The composer's archive.

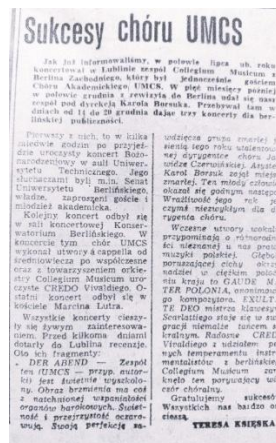


The first ensemble formed by members of the Academic Choir. The composer's archive.

³¹ Dudek, *Adam Natanek*, 151.



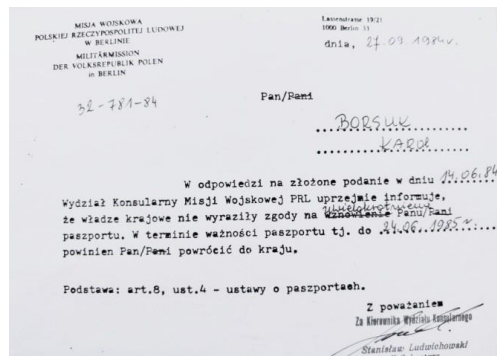
„Sztandar Ludu”, Lublin, 28 January 1981. The composer’s archive.



„Kurier Lubelski”, Lublin, 28 January 1981. The composer’s archive.



Review of the Academic Choir’s performance, Der Abend, December 1980 – The composer’s archive.



Refusal to issue a passport by the Consular Department of the Military Mission of the People’s Republic of Poland in West Berlin – The composer’s archive.

In 1982 the artist was referred by Professor Ernst Senff to study solo singing with Michael Gottschalk. These private vocal studies lasted five years.

Already in December 1981 Borsuk re-established contact with his friend from Lublin, the violinist Edward Zbigniew Zienkowski³²³³ – a member of the Berlin Philharmonic, later concertmaster of WDR Cologne, and professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Thanks to him, the young musician was able to take his first steps on Berlin stages and to establish valuable

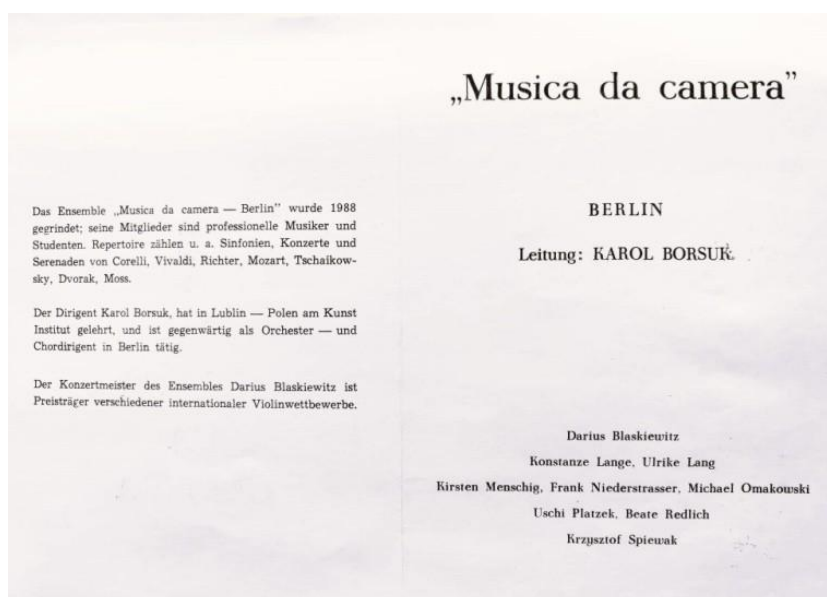
³² Zbigniew Edward Zienkowski – historia mówiona, Teatr NN, <https://teatrn.pl/historiamowiona/swiadcowie/zbigniew-edward-zienkowski/>, accessed 23 March 2026.

³³ Prof. Edward Zienkowski, Wybitny Polak, <https://wybitnypolak.pl/pl/edycja-regionalne/austria/prof-edward-zienkowski>, accessed 23 March 2026.

artistic connections with the Kammerchor Ernst Senff and the Berliner Vokal-Ensemble. He also gave private violin lessons.

His work with vocal ensembles continued until 1984, when Borsuk began teaching at the Musikschule in Neukölln and simultaneously became conductor of the Männer- und Gemischter Chor Lichterfelde. In 1985 he assumed the position of conductor of another ensemble – the Frauenchor Spandau. In 1986 he began working concurrently at the Musikschule Reinickendorf as a violin teacher and as the second conductor of the Symphonisches Ensemble Reinickendorf (SER). In 1987 he took over the post of deputy director of the Musikschule in Reinickendorf, which came with a full-time appointment and required him to resign from his violin-teaching duties at the Musikschule in Neukölln.

Borsuk's activity extended beyond the music school. He worked intensively with the violinist Dariusz Blaskiewicz, co-leading the ensemble *Musica da Camera*.



Frauenchor Spandau, Orchestra Musica da Camera (Berlin),
dyr. Karol Borsuk, Åland's Organ Festival, Jomala Church, 26 June 2005
The composer's archive.

He was also engaged in artistic work and conducted the Polish choir *Auxilium*, founded at the Polish Catholic Mission. With this ensemble he prepared programmes devoted, among other things, to early Polish music, collaborating with groups such as Camerata Nova from Szczecin and the Koszalin Philharmonic, as well as with distinguished artists from Poland: Grażyna Flicińska-Panfil and Marek

Perepeczko. With Perepeczko he realised, among other projects, musical settings of Karol Wojtyła's poetry and *The Crimean Sonnets* by Adam Mickiewicz³⁴.

From the second half of the 1980s onwards, Karol Borsuk became an active participant in Berlin's musical life³⁵, undertaking major projects with the Berlin Choral Association, of which he was a member of the music council. In 1988 he conceived the idea for a large open-air concert, *Musik einer Sommernacht*, held in front of the Kongresshalle and featuring the carillon. The music for this programme was composed by Piotr Moss³⁶.

His intensive work within Berlin's musical community led, in 1994, to his first major concert at the Konzerthaus in Berlin. The programme included a performance of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*³⁷, presented with the Symphony Orchestra from Gdańsk and Polish soloists.



Karol Borsuk – biographical profile of the composer, Steglitzer Anzeiger, West Berlin, 1984 – The composer's archive.

³⁴ Maria Dernałowicz, *Adam Mickiewicz* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1972), 51–52.

³⁵ Elke Kimmel, *West-Berlin: Biografie einer Halbstadt* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2018), 141–199.

³⁶ Dudek, *Adam Natanek. Człowiek – artysta – pedagog*, 151, 245–246.

³⁷ Arthur David Jacobs, “Orff, Carl,” in *Słownik muzyczny*, 247.



Programme for the *Carmina Burana* concert, Berlin, 3 Sept. 1994. The composer's archive.



The Symphony Orchestra from Gdańsk under the Direction of Karol Borsuk, Konzerthaus Berlin, 1995. The composer's archive.

In the following year, 1995, a concert of Russian music was performed at the Konzerthaus, featuring, among other works, *Alexander Nevsky* and Sergei Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*³⁸.

In 1996 a concert devoted to Italian music was planned and realised, presenting Antonio Vivaldi's³⁹ *Gloria* and Gioachino Rossini's *Stabat Mater*⁴⁰.

In the years that followed, further concerts were performed with great success – all initiated and realised in various configurations with the participation of Karol Borsuk himself. It is worth noting that he consistently relied on outstanding Polish musicians. At the same time, the artist discussed in this study actively promoted new music and the work of contemporary composers, not only Polish ones such as Piotr Moss, but also European figures including Pierre Csillag, a Hungarian composer residing permanently in France.

In the 1990s the musician taught on international masterclasses, where he led orchestral and chamber-music sessions. Karol Borsuk had not originally planned to pursue his own compositional work. However, in 2001 he wrote his first composition – *Andante* – created on the occasion of his daughter's wedding.

From the early 1990s onwards, the composer spent extended periods in Międzyzdroje. He established contact with the local parish priest, Dr Marian

³⁸ Arthur David Jacobs, "Prokofiev, Sergiusz," in *Słownik muzyczny*, 276.

³⁹ Maria Hanuszewska, "Vivaldi, Antonio," in *1000 kompozytorów: Mały leksykon* (Cracow: PWM, 1961), 118.

⁴⁰ Hanuszewska, "Vivaldi, Antonio," 95.

Wittlib, who invited him to closer collaboration. The result was his first work for soprano, organ and orchestra – *Requiem Międzyzdrojskie*. His next composition, *Credo*, became part of the *Międzyzdroje Mass*, which was recorded and broadcast on Telewizja Szczecin in early 2000. The premiere of *Gloria* took place during a jubilee concert on 8 June 2024. This is the composer's most recent work, written for two sopranos, women's choir, mixed choir and orchestra.

Through his long-standing artistic activity, Karol Borsuk has become an important figure in the musical life of Berlin⁴¹, promoting both Polish music and contemporary European sound worlds.



Quo Vadis Karola Borsuka

Karol Borsuk jest wybitnym dyrygentem. Mieszka i tworzy w Berlinie. Kieruje dwoma chórami, występuje z orkiestrami Konzerthaus oraz Filharmonii Berlińskiej. Od jedenastu lat sam komponuje, inspirując się literaturą. Poza utworami skomponowanymi m.in. do wierszy Anny Achmatowej i Krzysztofa Aignera niedawno napisał kantatę w oparciu o słynną powieść Henryka Sienkiewicza „Quo Vadis”. Jak przyznaje, słowa wypowiedziane przez apostoła Piotra: „Quo Vadis, Domine” poruszyły go do tego stopnia, że stały się motywem przewodnim utworu. Z Sienkiewiczem łączy go ponadto miejsce urodzenia. Pisarz urodził się w Woli Okrzejskiej, znajdującej się na Ziemi Łukowskiej, tymczasem kompozytor pochodzi z samego Łukowa. Decyzja o napisaniu kantaty nie była przypadkowa. I choć dzieło ostatecznie zostało nazwane kantatą, sam autor przyznaje, że do końca nią nie jest i pozostaje pewną formą jego fantazji.

Oprócz niej Karol Borsuk stworzył także Mszę Międzyzdrojską oraz Requiem Międzyzdrojskie ku pamięci Władysława Ślusarskiego i Tadeusza Komara.

Dyrygent od ponad trzydziestu lat na stałe mieszka w Berlinie, ale jak mówi na antenie Funkhaus Europa, do Łukowa wraca z sentymentem. We wspomnieniach pozostały mu obrazy z dzieciństwa, nierozdzielnie związane z muzyką. Berlin traktuje jako swoją drugą ojczyznę i czuje się tu jak u siebie, choć ma wyłącznie polskie obywatelstwo. Przyznaje, że miasto stwarza mu wiele możliwości do działania. Poza tym mieszka tu część jego znajomych oraz rodzina, co sprawia, że do stolicy Niemiec wraca zawsze jak do siebie.

Rozmowa z muzykiem oraz inne elementy audycji do odsłuchania w wersji audio na naszej stronie www.funkhauseuropa.de, w zakładce „polski”.

Interview with Karol Borsuk, *Kontakty*, June 2012.
The composer's archive

⁴¹ Silke Kilimann, Ralf Knoller, Christian Nowak, *Berlin. Sehenswürdigkeiten, Kultur, Szene, Ausflüge, Tipps* [Berlin: Sights, Culture, Scene, Excursions, Tips] (Berlin: Trescher Verlag, 2014), 70–83..



Poster for the concert *Quo vadis, Domine?* – Karol Borsuk’s concert cantata for solo soprano, choir, and orchestra, inspired by Henryk Sienkiewicz’s novel, performed on 9 June 2012 at the Konzerthaus in Berlin under the musical direction of the composer. The composer’s archive.

Chapter 2

Music of Karol Borsuk: the Search for Inspiration, Its Influence and Its Role in the Contemporary World

Karol Borsuk, whether writing poetry or working in other, not necessarily poetic, forms of expression, devotes his full attention to the creative act. Various impulses, ideas, or fleeting thoughts may arise, and he records them meticulously whenever they appear. These notes often take the form of aphorisms⁴², sentences⁴³, or brief reflections so compelling that he later develops them into more elaborate artistic statements. Some of these ideas emerge spontaneously while he is driving, and in such moments he tries to capture the sounds or melodic contours in his mind. “The most important part of the creative process is seizing the idea,” he says. “It can become the point of departure for developing a composition or any artistic work⁴⁴.”

Composing is a complex and multifaceted process. An artist may create certain passages with ease, especially when working with a verbal text – regardless of whether it is written in Polish, German, or Latin. A good example is a fragment of a work by Tadeusz Różewicz⁴⁵. Some sections of a composition emerge quickly, while others – even when they begin with a clear musical idea – may prove difficult to develop. The composer often spends entire days elaborating on motifs or attempting to expand musical phrases.

There are times when the work comes to him with difficulty. Some pieces are written quickly and effortlessly, such as the *Fantasia in D minor* for violin or viola⁴⁶. Yet there are also moments when deeper reflection is needed, and when

⁴² Lew Tołstoj, *Aforyzmy*, selected, translated, and introduced by M. Biernacka and A. Rażny (Warsaw: PIW, 1978), 51.

⁴³ Adam Mickiewicz, *Myśli, zdania i uwagi*, selected, edited, and introduced by K. Leżeńska (Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 2000), 37.

⁴⁴ Statement by Karol Borsuk, given to Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz during an author interview in Berlin in 2024.

⁴⁵ Reference to Tadeusz Różewicz’s poem “Rawennę dziś widziałem,” published in *Teksty Drugie* in 2000.

⁴⁶ Witold Kandulski, *O formach muzycznych* (Warsaw: Centralna Poradnia Amatorskiego Ruchu Artystycznego, 1970), 152–153.

developing or expanding a musical idea requires sustained effort. At times, during breaks between his duties, the composer would pick up the violin “just to relax” – and in this way he wrote several substantial passages. These fragments then became the basis for further motifs and, eventually, for the entire solo work.

In the case of certain texts – such as those by Hermann Hesse⁴⁷, Cyprian Kamil Norwid, or Tadeusz Różewicz – musical ideas appear immediately after reading. Yet there are also moments when something begins to take shape, only to reach a point of suspension, and the composer must consider how to carry the piece forward. It is a process that may require time, analysis, and reflection on how to continue the composition or develop the next melodic line.

Memories and reflections on his long-standing collaboration with his friend, the composer Piotr Moss, form an important part of Karol Borsuk’s artistic inspiration. Piotr Moss is an outstanding composer who studied with Piotr Perkowski⁴⁸, and Krzysztof Penderecki⁴⁹, and later continued his musical education with Nadia Boulanger in Paris⁵⁰. His friendship with Karol Borsuk began with a meeting in Berlin and has continued ever since. Moss⁵¹ has written numerous works for Borsuk in various instrumental configurations, including larger pieces such as the *Overture for Vibraslap* (a percussion instrument). Their collaboration has always yielded satisfying results, and Moss’s orchestration skills and compositional mastery have consistently impressed Karol Borsuk.

⁴⁷ W. Beutin et al., *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart [History of German Literature: From Its Beginnings to the Present]* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1989), 364.

⁴⁸ Bogusław Schaeffer, “Perkowski Piotr,” in *Leksykon kompozytorów XX wieku*, vol. 2, M–Z (Cracow: PWM, 1965), 103.

⁴⁹ Ewa Solińska, *W salonie muzycznym: Wywiady* (Bydgoszcz: Pomorze, 1986), 37.

⁵⁰ Grzegorz Michalski, Ewa Obniska, Tadeusz Ochlewski, Henryk Swolkień, Jerzy Waldorff, *Dzieje muzyki polskiej w zarysie* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1965), 135–136, 138.

⁵¹ Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska, Małgorzata Gamrat, Magdalena Nowicka-Ciecierska, Marlena Wieczorek, eds., *Sto lat muzycznej emigracji: kompozytorzy polscy za granicą (1918–2018)*, concept by Marlena Wieczorek (Warsaw: Beginning Creative Collaboration Agency, 2019).



"Kurier Polonica," issue from December 2000. The composer's archive.



Duet for Two Violins by Piotr Moss – 1994, dedicated to Karol Borsuk. The composer's archive.



Karol Borsuk, Piotr Moss and Tomasz Tomaszewski, Berlin Philharmonic – Chorspiegel Chorspiegel, 2020. The composer's archive.

Karol Borsuk's first composition was written during a car journey in 2001. It was a short *Andante*, which he dedicated to his daughter on the occasion of her

wedding⁵². In its original form, the piece was scored for two violins with piano or organ accompaniment. At that time, the artist had not yet considered embarking on a compositional career.

The continuation of his composing process came in Międzyzdroje, where the first motifs of the refrain of the *Międzyzdroje Requiem* were conceived. During a Mass dedicated to the memory of the Polish Olympians who died tragically – Tadeusz Ślusarski and Władysław Komorowski – the composer heard sounds that became the germ of the piece. The piece, approximately nine minutes in duration, is scored for solo soprano, string orchestra, organ, piano and flute.

Subsequent works followed: the *Międzyzdroje Mass*, *Credo* – a piece of approximately twenty minutes – and *Gloria*, all of which were introduced into the liturgy of the local church, but were also performed many times as independent compositions.

In this way, composing became a natural extension of Karol Borsuk's musical activity, arising from inspiration and from the desire to express himself through creative work.

For Karol Borsuk, music is a release of emotions and thoughts. Yet music is not the only important element in the artist's life. Equally significant is art – especially the study of its history. A constant engagement with artworks in museums and exhibitions, as well as an interest in other fields, particularly architecture, plays an important role in the composer's life. This passion developed after he read Professor Jan Białostocki's book *Art More Precious Than Gold*⁵³, which he encountered at the age of thirteen or fourteen. The book drew him into the world of art and became an inspiration for further exploration. Another influential work was Julian Klaczko's *Florentine Evenings*.

Music is of great importance to Karol Borsuk. He cannot imagine a day without touching the violin, even if only to check a passage of a piece. It brings him joy and forms an integral part of his life.

Beyond music, Karol Borsuk's interests have evolved over the years. He has been fascinated by various periods in the history of art, such as the Renaissance and

⁵² The *Andante* has been recorded in the artistic component of this doctoral dissertation in its version for flute and viola.

⁵³ Anna Kozak and Antoni Ziemia, eds., *Tkanina cenniejsza niż złoto: Obrazy, rysunki i ryciny dawnych mistrzów europejskich ze zbiorów polskich*. Wystawa poświęcona pamięci Jana Białostockiego (Warsaw: National Museum in Warsaw, March–May 1999).

Expressionism. His interests have also included the works of the jeweller Peter Carl Fabergé – the creator of unique masterpieces – which have become another source of inspiration in his compositions. An example of this is the piece *Fabergé*. Its melodic foundation is built on the letters of the renowned goldsmith's surname: F A B E R e G É. The artist moves through different phases of interest, and literature plays a particularly important role in them: the works of Hermann Hesse and the family literature of Heinrich and Thomas Mann shaped his artistic understanding of art well into the present day. In sacred music, he draws on the texts of the Latin Mass, psalms and religious thought, incorporating liturgical fragments. In secular music, he turns to the writings of distinguished poets, thinkers and philosophers, such as CyprianKamil Norwid, Tadeusz Różewicz, Henryk Bereska, Hermann Hesse⁵⁴, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche⁵⁵, Aleksander von Humboldt, Johann von Goethe, Socrates⁵⁶, or Seneca.

Certain fields of art continue to fascinate him, even when they are niche. This interest in different aspects of art is very important to the artist⁵⁷.

His compositions can be classified within the genre of contemporary music, which draws on the achievements of past eras – his works are more classical than modern. The composer strives to construct motifs and phrases with the listener in mind. He does not write music solely for himself; he believes it should reach the audience, otherwise it loses its purpose.

His compositions are based on classical structural models, both in terms of the overall form and in their melodic and harmonic elements. He also seeks to use sonorities that allow the music to sound as it should in the twenty-first century, while avoiding the loss of its classical character.

One of his favourite forms of artistic expression is the exploration of sound – writing for piano and organ. Although he is not a pianist himself, playing the piano brings him great joy. Collaboration with various instrumentalists, violinists and violists also gives his composing an additional dimension.

⁵⁴ Hermann Hesse, in Wolfgang Beutin et al., *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* [*A History of German Literature: From the Beginnings to the Present*] (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1989), 531.

⁵⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, in Richard David Precht, *Erkenne die Welt: Eine Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 1, *Antike und Mittelalter* [*Know the World: A History of Philosophy, Vol. 1 – Antiquity and the Middle Ages*] (München: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 2015), 14, 18–19.

⁵⁶ “Sokrates,” in Edmund Jacoby, *50 Klassiker Philosophen: Denker von der Antike bis heute* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 2003), 22.

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He collaborates with various performers in order to learn about their preferences and to understand what sounds best in their interpretation. Ultimately, however, the composer's works remain an expression of his own point of view and personal fascinations. His friendship and collaboration with Piotr Moss⁵⁸ have undoubtedly influenced Karol Borsuk's artistic output. The two composers continually exchange observations on artistic matters. Piotr Moss is not only Borsuk's friend, but also a source of inspiration, whose echoes can be found in Borsuk's compositions. Their joint projects – such as *Musik einer Sommernacht*, composed and performed in 1988 in the Tiergarten in Berlin, as well as many other works commissioned and realised together – form a vivid narrative of their artistic collaboration. This relationship continues to inspire Borsuk in his creative pursuits. Piotr Moss's *Spandau Mass* and his *Duets for Two Violins* (written in Paris and dedicated to Karol Borsuk) are a distinctive tribute to their long-standing connection.

The above works are often performed by the composer together with his students during classes and concerts. In their joint concerts and recordings, the two composers continue to exchange ideas and creative experiences. Their mutual support and professionalism have a significant impact on their artistic output. The energy they share leads to increasingly diverse and inspiring compositions.

⁵⁸ "Piotr Moss," PWM, https://pwm.com.pl/en/kompozytorzy_i_autorzy/5095/piotr-moss/index.html, accessed 23 March 2026.

Borsuk's aim is not fame or a prominent position in the artistic world, but rather that his music be understood by its listeners. He also hopes to enrich the Polish musical landscape and to serve as an inspiration for other artists. Karol Borsuk values every opportunity to collaborate and to share his passion with others.

Contemporary music is sometimes pushed to the margins of public interest, yet the composer looks to the future with hope. Every listener has the right to make their own choices, and for Borsuk it is important "to respect diversity in the musical world".

Karol Borsuk has been interested in contemporary music for many years. He is not a music critic and does not judge whether something is good or bad. He chooses what inspires him and seeks to understand contemporary music by attending concerts and discovering new works. In this way, he strives to gain new experiences and to grasp the diversity of the genre. What may be difficult to understand for one person may be a fascinating challenge for another. Every creator has their own aim and message, and the composer respects the diversity and richness of contemporary musical art. His approach is grounded in openness and a willingness to explore new sounds, even if he does not always have to understand or like everything. Everyone has their own world of sound to which they devote themselves, and the composer appreciates this diversity.

He is convinced that juxtaposing contemporary music with classical repertoire can yield interesting results. Whether the audience becomes engaged often depends on how the programme is presented and communicated. Well-designed concerts can attract a diverse audience, even when they include highly modern works. It is also important to introduce listeners gradually to new sounds and styles in order to reduce potential resistance or reluctance.

According to Borsuk, it is worthwhile to experiment and to construct concert programmes in a way that allows the audience to discover different aspects of music, combining tradition with modernity. This may help increase interest in contemporary music and demonstrate that it is a vibrant and evolving field of art.

As for the future, the composer hopes that, with time and with growing interest in contemporary music, audiences will become more open to innovative sonorities and creative approaches. It is important for composers to continue exploring different musical forms and to seek an understanding of how contemporary music can be inspiring and exciting for various groups of listeners.

Music should affect each listener individually – this is one of its most distinctive qualities. Songs, popular hits and classical compositions alike have the potential to influence those who are willing to accept them as something personal or connected to their own experiences.

What Karol Borsuk creates may resonate with an individual listener. Although he cannot transform society as a whole, his approach to music is rooted in the desire to reach each person on a personal level. At times he explains certain aspects of a piece before a performance in order to help the audience understand and appreciate new sonorities. He believes that music has the power to reach the heart even without words – and this is what matters most to him. Explaining the context of a composition allows listeners to better understand the creative intentions, inspirations and challenges faced by the artists when shaping new works. During concerts, Karol Borsuk strives not only to present the music but also to interpret it and share anecdotes related to the piece. This enables listeners to view the work from different perspectives and may encourage reflection. Contemporary music is often full of innovative ideas and sonic experiments, and understanding their context can make it more accessible and fascinating to the audience.

Although not everyone will immediately be captivated by contemporary musical experiments, the composer is convinced that gradual familiarisation with this world – through explanation, conversation and open communication with the audience – can contribute to greater interest in and understanding of contemporary music. This naturally requires time, but in Borsuk's view, opening oneself to new sounds can not only educate the listener but also inspire them and offer deep satisfaction.

When working on a piece, various ideas emerge – sometimes quite accidental – which the composer remembers and writes down. The structure and intervals that reveal themselves during the process help him build the foundations of the work. Landscapes or events often serve as inspiration, as Borsuk associates them with specific sounds.

When composing, he sometimes uses the piano, which helps him better understand harmonies and chords. Emerging motifs, at times inspired by memories or life situations, shape the structure of the piece. These elements may also lead him to explore different instruments or musical techniques.

As for the audience's reception, the composer believes that music operates within different spheres of influence. He cannot always predict which group of listeners will appreciate a particular work more. Each piece has its own distinctive and original character, speaking to different listeners in different ways and often leaving interpretation to them.

Through illustrative elements, the composer also transports listeners into new realms. He combines musical and narrative aspects, making the work more accessible and engaging for various groups of listeners.

In summary – composing for the artist is a mixture of inspiration, creative impulse and experimentation, and the reception of a work depends to a significant extent on the individual predispositions of the listener.

Contemporary music of the twenty-first century holds great significance for all of us, both culturally and personally. It reflects current trends, social challenges and lived experiences, allowing us to understand and situate ourselves within today's world. For this reason, promoting such music – especially by artists who perform works by composers like Karol Borsuk – is a value in itself.

Chapter 3

Analysis of the Artwork

3.1. Solo Pieces for Viola

A number of the solo pieces included in the artistic component of this doctoral dissertation were originally written for the violin⁵⁹. These include *Scherz I*, *Scherz II*, *Fantasia in D minor*, *Kazimierz*, *Wolke 7 / Cloud 7*, *Erinnerung / Rememberance* and *April*. The author of this dissertation prepared the viola transcriptions of these works in collaboration with the composer. The pieces composed by Karol Borsuk specifically for the viola were written with the author in mind as the performer: *Kolding* and *Odessa* were composed first, followed by the *Fantasia for Viola, Choir and Orchestra* – dedicated to the author. *Piccola Fantasia* and *Preludium a canzona* were likewise conceived originally for the viola.

The chamber works *Mosaik*, *Bilder / Pictures*, *Goethe auf Tegel*, *Pastorello*, *Ave Maria*, *Andante* and *Souvenir de Kazimierz* were written for violin and viola duo. Their transcription⁶⁰ for flute and viola was undertaken at the author's initiative, in collaboration with Karol Borsuk. The works originally intended for flute and viola – *Three Miniatures* and *Three Aquarelles* – were composed for the Duo de Soleil ensemble, whose members are violist Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz and flautist Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca.

⁵⁹ Wolfram Goertz and Reiner Luyken, *Yehudi Menuhin. Leben und Musik* [*Yehudi Menuhin. Life and Music*], *Die ZEIT Klassik-Edition*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Zeitverlag Gerd Bucerius GmbH & Co. KG, 2006), 11, 17–19.

⁶⁰ “Transkrypcja,” in *Mała encyklopedia muzyki*, edited by Stefan Śledziński (Warsaw: PWN, 1968), 1047.

3.1.1. *Kolding* (2016)

The work was composed following the composer's visit to the third-largest Danish city bearing this name – a royal city and, at the same time, an important university centre. The trip to Kolding was connected with the *FABERGÉ* exhibition⁶¹, held at the Royal Castle, where objects from the Danish royal treasury were displayed. As an admirer of the jewellery art of Carl Fabergé – the jeweller of the Russian tsars – Karol Borsuk always makes an effort to visit exhibitions devoted to his creations. *Kolding* was composed after the composer's return from Denmark, inspired by the impressions left by this masterful jewellery art, of which Maria Feodorovna, mother of Tsar Nicholas II, wrote: "Carl Fabergé is the greatest genius of our time."

The miniature is built in an ABA1 structure, in which the outer, more expansive *Allegro* sections are separated by a short *Andante* passage. Section A is filled with short motifs in which semiquaver sequences alternate with longer rhythmic values:



K. Borsuk, *Kolding*, bars 1.–5.

The articulation recommended by the composer in the semiquaver groups – two notes *legato* followed by two *staccato* – contributes to the witty, quasi-virtuosic character of the passage. The sudden suspension of motion at the end of the first bar is unexpected not only in terms of rhythmic design: the dotted crotchet and quaver in the low register abruptly alter the colour of the motif, while the use of a

⁶¹ Adam Szymański, *Fabergé: historia i arcydzieła* [*Fabergé: History and Masterpieces*] (Opole: Metropolisart, 2014) [in Polish].

minor-second interval introduces a sense of harmonic tension. The resulting impression of a dominant finds its resolution in the following bar. The sequence of twelve semiquavers, performed *legato* and with a *crescendo*, forms a virtuosic lead-in to the harmonic goal of the entire preceding passage, thereby creating a self-contained musical idea: the final quavers and crotchets arrest the previously energetic motion within the key of C major. Bar 3 presents semiquaver sequences in two groups of four notes, traversing the instrument's registers – as in bar 1 – but this time descending and articulated *legato*. The first group of short note values introduces a line that, in the second group, moves smoothly through the pitches of the applied dominant leading to the C-major harmony that appears later in the bar. The Eb–E *appoggiatura*, coinciding with the halted crotchet motion, highlights the harmonic closure of the bar, which simultaneously marks the end of the first musical idea within the structure of section A. The subsequent bars employ analogous rhythmic and articulatory patterns. The group of four semiquavers in bar 4 mirrors the articulation found in the opening sequence of the work; this time, however, it appears in the opposite, descending direction. The following crotchets, suggesting another brief tonicisation of C major, lead into an unexpected pause — a caesura – after which the composer introduces a “bright” G major, functioning as the climax of the entire A section. The semiquaver triplets preceding the final chord of this passage, as in bar 2, serve to build toward a clearly defined harmonic goal. In this case, however, the absence of *legato* articulation combined with the *crescendo* produces a markedly more intense approach to the final pitch. The conclusion of section A forms an open, almost suspended climax. The ensuing *Andante* introduces contrasting material:

:



K. Borsuk, *Kolding*, bars 6.–8.

The very first bar of section B introduces a significant harmonic shift – after the previously reiterated C major, C minor now appears, its melancholic character emphasised by the markedly slower tempo and reduced dynamics. The rhythmic

structure of the subsequent motifs shows analogies to section A, yet the considerably higher number of dissonances creates an impression of intensified emotional density, underscoring the contrast between the middle section and the outer parts of the work. The semiquaver sequences, compared with their counterparts in section A, are – as a result of the slower tempo – noticeably heavier in character and more cantabile. The crotchets concluding section B likewise suspend the musical motion through the composer’s use of fermatas and a caesura.

The ensuing A1 section is analogous in its material to the opening passage, although certain subtle modifications are evident.

The musical score for Violin (Vla.) from Kolding, bars 9–16, is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 9–11) begins with the tempo marking 'Allegro' and the dynamic 'mf'. It features semiquaver motifs and a pizzicato section. The second system (bars 12–14) continues with the dynamic 'mp' and includes a fermata. The third system (bars 15–16) features triplets and a forte 'f' dynamic, ending with a 'mf' dynamic and the instruction 'auf der Geige klopfen'.

K. Borsuk, *Kolding*, bars 9.–16.

The structure of bar 9 reproduces the articulation pattern from bar 1, while introducing an alternative treatment of the instrument’s registers. Moreover, the final three pitches, approached by the semiquaver motifs, create a quasi-suspension in bar 10 – the appearance of pizzicato for the first time, or more precisely its resonance, provides a moment of breath between successive musical ideas. The harmonic layer differs markedly from the opening material: instead of the clear dominant pull, the composer now settles on the fifth E–B at the end of bar 9. The pizzicato likewise forms a fifth – D–A. These two intervals, lacking a defined major–minor colouring, allow the performer to abandon the intensity characteristic of section A in shaping subsequent local climaxes.

The next two bars present a musical idea constructed similarly to its counterpart in section A – bar 2. The reproduced group of twelve semiquavers and the two subsequent note values, instead of reinforcing C major, introduce a more intense harmonic progression: the raising of C to C $\sharp$ places the passage in A major, which then moves towards a D-dominant-seventh harmony, articulated in the final dyad of bar 12 – a tritone that leaves no doubt as to its harmonic direction. As a result of these procedures, the C minor appearing in bar 13 loses its status as tonic, becoming instead the minor subdominant within the firmly established target key of G major, which simultaneously forms the miniature's final climax⁶².

The closing sounds of the work release the accumulated tension through pizzicato and a percussive strike on the instrument's resonant body, creating the impression of the music dissolving into nothingness.

Despite the use of changing metres⁶³ in the successive bars – 5/4, 6/4, 5/4, 3/4, 4/4, etc. – the metrorhythmic layout does not disrupt the sense of logical continuity between the successive musical ideas. The central element of the harmonic layer consists of relationships within the major–minor system, coloured by more or less dissonant sequences. These relationships significantly determine numerous aspects, such as the character of a given passage, the mutual dependencies between individual phrases, or the timbral qualities employed at a particular moment. The internal tensions within section A, arising precisely from these harmonic structures, establish the construction of this passage according to a predecessor–successor model. Section B contrasts with the outer sections primarily due to its harmonic language. Another important element is the articulation, which the composer has marked with great precision. Each change constitutes a significant expressive factor when combined with the contour of a given motif – ascending or descending – as well as with the dynamics and harmonic underpinning, thereby enhancing the rhetorical weight of each sequence.

The composition is exceptionally refined in technical terms and requires precise **articulation** as well as skilful control of dynamic expression. The work not only showcases the performer's instrumental technique, but also demands a subtle

⁶² Józef Chomiński and Krystyna Wilkowska-Chomińska, *Teoria formy. Małe formy instrumentalne* (Cracow: PWM, 1983), 345–367.

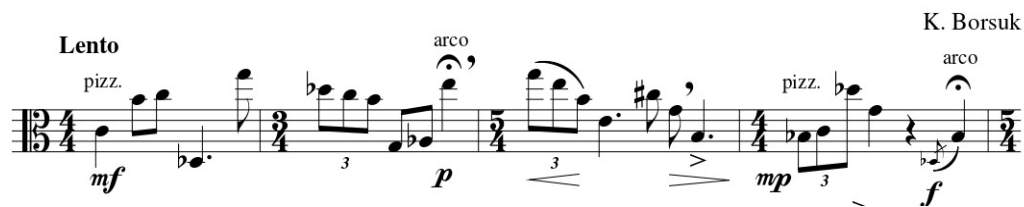
⁶³ Bogusław Schaeffer, "Polimetria," in *Mały informator muzyki XX wieku* (Kraków: PWM, 1975), 191.

sense of musical narrative, which means that its interpretation may take many different forms. Nevertheless, in performance practice, the most important point of reference should invariably be the composer's most detailed indications – even the smallest markings carry interpretative weight and must guide the performer's decisions.

3.1.2. *Odessa* (2016)

The piece was composed after Karol Borsuk's visit to Odessa in Ukraine. The composer travelled there following the traces of his father, Piotr, who in 1915 had been forced to leave for Odessa with his family. At that time, the city lay within the borders of Russia. This compulsory stay lasted until 1923. The family history and the exceptional beauty of the city found their reflection in the composer's work – the consequence of these inspirations is a miniature comprising merely twenty-eight bars. The structure of the piece may be compared to a free musical utterance, characterised by naturally occurring rhetorical turns, at times resembling an inner monologue. Strongly perceptible are recurring melodic patterns that serve as anchor points for the work's narrative. The varied tempi, in turn, provide important guidance for the performer. The first four bars form a musical idea functioning as a self-contained phrase:

Odessa



K. Borsuk, *Odessa*, bars 1–4.

The first motif, consisting of the pitches C–B–C–D $\flat$, is broken into wide intervallic leaps, which should not obscure its perception as a melodic structure – one that will reappear several times later in the piece. The metre changes in every bar – 4/4, 3/4, 5/4 and then 4/4 – naturally shaping the musical utterance. The caesuras marked by the composer allow for the introduction of an additional rhetorical affect. A particularly important element is the alternation between *pizzicato* and *arco*: the dialogue between these two modes of articulation introduces additional emotional qualities into the melodic structure. The initial instruction to perform the *pizzicato* in *mezzoforte* shifts, with the arrival of the *arco*, to *piano*, highlighting the natural softness of the viola's timbre. The unsettled ending of the first phrase results from the return of *pizzicato* and the unexpected increase in

dynamics in the subsequent *arco*: the pitch B with its grace note functions simultaneously as a suspended conclusion to the first musical idea and as an anacrusis to the next one.



K. Borsuk, *Odessa*, bars 5–8.

The second four-bar unit begins with the same motif that appeared in bar 1. This time, however, the composer slightly alters its shape: the stepwise, second-based intervallic motion renders the melody more compact and more clearly defined, while the *arco* articulation in *mezzoforte* further highlights the melodic element that simultaneously initiates the build-up toward the climax in bar 8. This entire passage is to be performed *arco* – this articulation is a crucial factor in shaping the target point at the end of the four-bar span. The process of intensifying tension is divided into two two-bar phases – the first beginning in *mezzoforte*, the second in *forte*, after a *crescendo*, and ending with two chords that abruptly interrupt the musical thought. The intensity of the final bar is further emphasised by accented quavers. This four-bar segment likewise forms a coherent musical idea, signalling the continuation to come. The changing metres – 5/4, 2/2, and in the final two bars 5/4 – facilitate the performer's navigation through the rhythmic structures. The climax in bar 8, suspended in a caesura, introduces the next four-bar unit, which, like the preceding ones, begins with the same motif:



K. Borsuk, *Odessa*, bars 9–12.

In bar 9, the composer once again marks the dynamic *mezzoforte*, yet the basic motif – this time presented in a more compact intervallic form – is slightly transformed rhythmically: the introduction of a dotted rhythm instead of two

quavers renders it lighter and more energetic. The purpose of this device becomes evident in the subsequent bars, where the melodic line becomes considerably more active both rhythmically and texturally. The dotted rhythms in bars 10 and 12 create an impression of pronounced impetuosity, while the increased number of double stops compared with the earlier passage broadens the instrument's sonority and enriches it timbrally and harmonically. All these elements contribute to the third phrase of the piece significantly intensifying the intimately begun narrative, which is momentarily halted by the *pizzicato* at the end of bar 12. In the following bars, the composer introduces a new sequence that disrupts the regularity of the preceding narrative:



K. Borsuk, *Odessa*, bars 13–15.

The four-note semiquaver sequences display intervallic analogies to the motif that opens the piece, yet this association is overshadowed by a new element – the vertical four- and three-note structures, which introduce a substantial increase in musical tension. The additional acceleration of tempo – from the initial *Lento* to *Moderato* and *Andante* – combined with the aforementioned textural details, implies a significant shift in the character of the music, resulting from the previously observed gradual intensification of the narrative. However, the tension thus generated is quickly released in the returning monophonic texture and *pizzicato*. The direct continuation of this sudden turn is a longer, seven-bar passage that may be characterised as an emotionally charged musical statement.



K. Borsuk, *Odessa*, bars 16–22.

The *pizzicato* motif that opens bar 16 is a variational treatment of the motif that begins the piece. Owing to the introduction of a new rhythmic structure – the repetition of the second pitch – the character of this passage shifts toward one based more strongly on motion, which also affects the successive one-bar melodic sequences, each of which introduces a new level of intensity. The composer explores the instrument’s range through sharply ascending or descending lines, while the emerging vertical structures highlight individual melodic tones. In bars 20 and 21, the opening motif returns once again, this time cast in shorter rhythmic values that show clear analogies to the variant introduced in bar 16. In the final bar of this passage, the line reiterates part of the basic melodic element, and the musical momentum comes to rest on a fermata in the upper register. The final section of the piece, in *Allegro* tempo, is a culminating compilation of the earlier variants of the opening motif – a synthesis that brings the miniature to its energetic close.

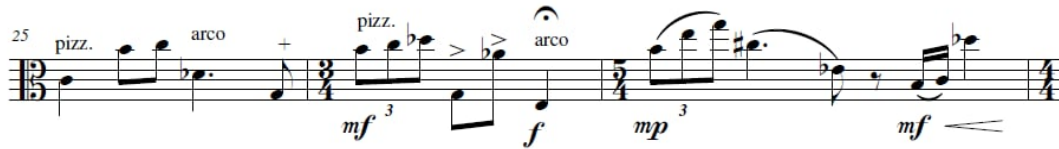


K. Borsuk, *Odessa*, bars 23–28.

Bar 23 is an exact repetition of bar 16, yet the subsequent development directs the narrative toward a reduction of the previously accumulated momentum. Bars 25 to 28 form the coda of the miniature, in which the composer recalls the material of the opening three bars, preserving the order of the appearing pitches while introducing changes in the instrument’s registers, articulation, motivic direction and dynamics. This closing passage functions as a concise synthesis of the work’s essential elements, bringing the musical discourse to a coherent conclusion.



K. Borsuk, *Odessa*, bars 1–3



K. Borsuk, *Odessa*, bars 25–27

The final note in bar 26 differs significantly from its counterpart in bar 2 – although both are marked *arco* and held with a *fermata*, the contrast in register and dynamics results in an entirely different emotional effect. The last bar of the piece functions as a quasi-musical joke, in which the composer introduces left-hand *pizzicato* immediately before the conclusion on a pure octave. Classifying this gesture as humorous stems from the evident contrast: the miniature as a whole carries emotions of varying density and, at times, even vehemence, while the ending introduces an unexpected lightness and a bright timbral quality in the final sounds. For the performer, the primary guide in shaping an interpretation should always be a thorough analysis of the musical text. In the case of *Odessa*, Karol Borsuk's consistency in employing specific structures and modifying them throughout the work largely provides a clear path through the apparent intricacies of dynamically shaped lines and the internal expressivity of successive sequences. This structural coherence offers the performer a reliable framework for navigating the piece's narrative and expressive trajectory.

3.1.3. *Scherz I* (2005) and *Scherz II* (2005)

The two miniatures – *Scherz I* and *Scherz II* – were composed almost simultaneously. The compositional concept centred on the idea of playing with the instrument, exploring its possibilities in a light, witty manner. The original versions were written for solo violin; however, it soon became apparent that they also sound excellent on the viola. The works belong to Karol Borsuk’s earlier creative period, around 2005. At that time, the composer served as deputy director of the State Music School in Reinickendorf, Berlin. His compositional activity functioned then as a musical-intellectual counterbalance to the demanding administrative and office work.

Scherz I is a miniature of modest proportions. It consists of eleven bars, although bar 11 is in fact an unmeasured space – lacking barlines – whose length is nearly equivalent to that of the preceding ten bars. Based on the tempo indications, two segments may be distinguished: *Andante* and *Allegro*. Despite the presence of bar divisions in part of the piece, the composer does not provide any metre indications, a decision that appears justified given the considerable variation in the length of successive bars. The absence of barlines in the section marked as bar 11 grants the performer – in accordance with the composer’s intention – greater interpretative freedom. The dynamics unfold within the range between *mezzoforte* and *forte* – a level of volume that suggests a certain degree of energy in the sound and supports the witty, even sarcastic character of the piece.

The first segment of the miniature comprises seven bars, to be performed in *Andante* tempo – a pace that establishes the work’s initial character and prepares the ground for the contrasting *Allegro* that follows.

:



K. Borsuk, *Scherz I*, bars 1–7.

The very opening already suggests the character of a musical joke – harmonics and *tremolo* precede a markedly serious melodic line built on wide intervallic leaps, evoking the impression of a firm, emphatic musical statement. The *mezzoforte* and *forte* dynamics support the creation of dramaturgy, while the short articulation in bar 5 highlights the climactic point of this passage. The *pizzicato* that concludes this musical idea functions as a sonic “full stop,” emphasising the close of the miniature’s first phrase. The subsequent *Allegro* indication should signal to the performer the need to generate considerably greater energy in the music.



K. Borsuk, *Scherz I*, bars 8–10.

The composer consistently employs wide intervallic structures; however, the change in musical character also entails a different approach to filling the space between distant pitches. The accents notated in bar 8 clearly suggest an articulation that should correspond to a more pointed, vertical energy in the sound, whereas in the earlier passage this energy had a more horizontal quality – the tension between pitches was to be actively shaped across the intervallic leaps. The final section of the miniature marks a return to a more lyrical, cantabile approach to phrasing, despite the continued *Allegro* tempo.



K. Borsuk, *Scherz I*, bar 11.

The melodic structures display a somewhat greater subdivision of rhythmic values – the use of semiquavers generates an internal “restlessness” within the phrases. The double stops and chords broaden the instrument’s sonic space, preventing any reduction of musical tension. The final notes summarise the witty

character of the piece, while the dissonance that closes the miniature evokes an association with a question mark.

In *Scherz I*, the composer consistently employs analogies in intervallic distances, creating an identifiable sonic profile for the work: sevenths, ninths and tritones predominate, appearing not only in vertical structures but also in horizontal ones. As a result, the listener perceives a high density of dissonances, each carrying a strongly rhetorical quality.

Scherz II differs from *Scherz I* in its structural design – from the overall dimensions of the piece to its melodic, rhythmic and, ultimately, harmonic components. It comprises only nine bars, yet its actual length exceeds that of the eleven-bar first part of the mini-cycle. The reason for this disproportion lies in an intriguing compositional device: each bar contains a fragment that is autonomous in terms of its internal tension profile, although throughout the piece one can clearly identify numerous rhythmic and melodic analogies that bind these segments into a coherent whole. Tempo changes occur more frequently here than in *Scherz I*: *Andante*, *Allegretto*, *Andante*, *Allegro*. These indications serve as interpretative suggestions rather than strict directives, as the composer places considerable emphasis on the performer's individual realisation of the musical text.

The notation of the miniature's first three bars – the section marked *Andante* – sufficiently determines the range of expressive means that Borsuk expects the performer to employ.

Scherz II

Andante ♩ = 60 Karol Borsuk

K. Borsuk, *Scherz II*, bars 1–3.

The dense alternation of articulations – the recurring shifts between *pizzicato* and *arco* – is accompanied by equally frequent dynamic changes,

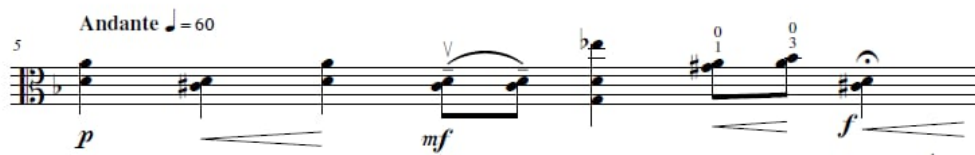
spanning a wide range of volume from *piano* to *forte*. The very short *pizzicato* articulations are contrasted with brief, repeated two-note *arco* motifs connected by *legato*. The endings of the musical ideas contribute to the piece's humorous character: the target point of the large intervallic leap in the first phrase (performed with *glissando* in the second) is a harmonic, which reduces the previously accumulated musical tension. The mood, however, changes quickly – in bar 3 a more lyrical musical idea appears. This lyricism is shaped through a more melodic character of the pitch structures, achieved primarily through the extended use of *arco*. The intervallic structure also shifts: stepwise, second-based sequences begin to play a more prominent role. The final note of this passage is once again – as in the opening two bars – a harmonic. The clear analogy between the endings of individual segments benefits the work's form: each phrase concludes with a similar kind of suspension, introducing a moment of reflection into the musical humour. The subsequent *Allegretto* introduces a new quality into the already established scheme – a shift that expands the expressive palette and invites the performer to reassess the balance between articulation, motion and rhetorical nuance within the miniature's compact structure.



K. Borsuk, *Scherz II*, bar 4.

The material in bar 4 shows clear kinship with the preceding bar owing to the prominent role of motifs based on stepwise motion. The semiquavers that appear are woven into the melodic element or function as quasi-ornamental figures. This passage may evoke associations with a slightly improvisatory manner of playing in the Baroque style. The final sonority in bar 4 is a strongly dissonant, second-based double stop, during which the previously intense motion comes to rest in the space of a whole note prolonged by a fermata. The subsequent bars are marked *Andante*

by the composer, and a clear analogy with the opening passage is visible in the rhythmic design.



K. Borsuk, *Scherz II*, bar 5.

The use of double stops and the shaping of a stronger dynamic level allow the previously introduced structure to assume a different character – that of a quasi-refrain, separating the lyrical passages and fulfilling a significant form-building function. The dissonance that concludes this sequence – as in the previous one – momentarily arrests the musical tension, preparing the ground for the presentation of the next, longer section.



K. Borsuk, *Scherz II*, bars 6–7.

This section forms an analogy with the material of bar 3: a similar melodic pattern based on stepwise motion and shaped by a corresponding rhythmic profile (dotted rhythm) once again introduces a lyrical musical idea. This time, however, it is more intense due to the use of *forte* sustained over a much longer span than before. This enables the construction of the work's principal climax. The melodic line is enriched by semiquaver motion, which contributes to a greater sense of momentum in shaping the climax that occurs at the end of bar 8. The intensity of the high pitches is quickly broken by a *pizzicato* note, which, closing this passage, introduces the final sequence of the piece.



K. Borsuk, *Scherz II*, bars 8–9.

The final bars are connected through a relationship of antecedent and consequent. These two units differ in articulation: bar 8 features *pizzicato* on open strings, presented in rhythmic variants reminiscent of the opening of the piece, while bar 9 offers an expressive response built from stepwise *arco* motifs. In this space, the composer gathers all previously used patterns, shaping them into a highly regular, classically proportioned two-bar structure. The piece concludes with a return to its humorous character – after a phrase charged with musical tension, two *pizzicato* fifths bring the miniature to a close.

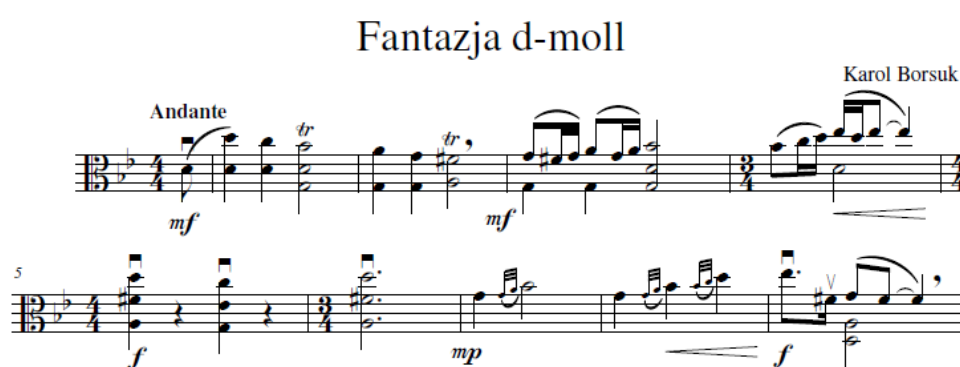
Despite the considerable number of dissonances in *Scherzo II*, one can clearly identify a difference in the treatment of sonority between the two miniatures. In *Scherz I*, the dissonances serve primarily a colouristic function; the absence of tonal gravitation is an integral part of the compositional concept. In the second miniature, however, within the more regular structure of its internal units, the numerous dissonances act as transitional points in the long-range shaping of tension. This technique creates the impression of an underlying harmonic progression anchoring the fluctuations of the musical material. Yet this is only an impression – the harmonic layer is fundamentally too elusive to warrant a separate analytical treatment.

3.1.5. *Fantasia in D minor* (2002)

Karol Borsuk composed the *Fantasia in D minor*⁶⁴ in 2002, during breaks between lessons with students at the State Music School in Reinickendorf, Berlin. The inspiration came from G.Ph. Telemann's *Twelve Fantasias for Solo Violin*. Borsuk's *Fantasia in D minor* represents an attempt to transpose Telemann's musical ideas into the world of twenty-first-century listeners – the work combines elements of the Baroque musical language with contemporary expressive means. Performed many times in Berlin and in Poland, the piece has been included in concert programmes by the composer himself, by violinist Anna Ciechanowski, and by Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz.

The *Fantasia* comprises 31 bars. The frequent tempo changes – *Andante*, *Moderato*, *Andante*, *Allegro Moderato*, *Andantino* – simultaneously mark differences in the character of the musical discourse, allowing the performer to shape individual rhetorical turns with greater flexibility.

The work opens with a broad anacrusis built on the interval of an octave. The sheer distance between the first two pitches already creates a sense of strong musical tension. This impression is intensified by the placement of the opening notes in the dominant key, which resolves into the principal key of D minor only on the third value of the first bar.



K. Borsuk, *Fantasia in D minor*, bars 1–9.

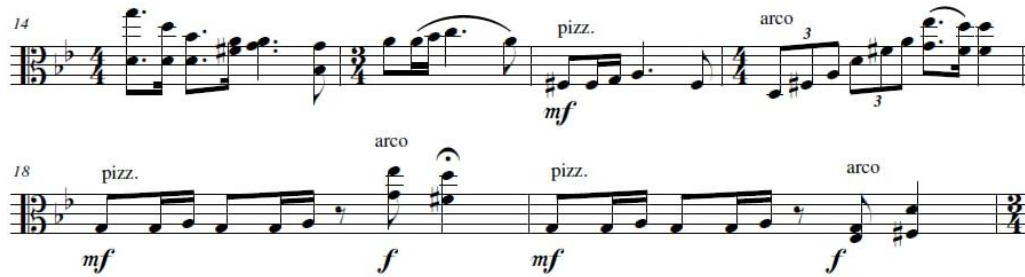
⁶⁴ The *Fantasia in D minor* is originally written for the violin and retains the key of D minor. In the viola version, however, it has been transposed down by a fifth, which naturally shifts the key to G minor. I have nevertheless chosen to retain the original title of the work in order to emphasise its initial character and the composer's violin-oriented conception, despite the applied transposition.

The rhythmic structure of the work is clear and logically conceived. With regard to emphasising certain turns of phrase – and bearing in mind the aesthetic of the original model – the performer may allow for a creative approach to notated time. In the first two bars, the composer adds ornamental elements to the half notes as well as a caesura, which may inspire the interpreter to grant these values a degree of additional space, enabling the trills to resonate fully and highlighting the rhetorical significance of both motifs. In the following two bars (3 and 4), a new melodic motif appears, consisting of a quaver followed by two semiquavers. This motif foreshadows the more animated melodic writing of the subsequent passage, which also incorporates structures showing kinship with the material of the opening two bars. Before introducing a compilation of these elements, the composer leads the performer through a quasi-cadential passage (bars 5–9), which functions as a bridge between the initial presentation of the material and its later elaborations. The *forte* dynamic in bar 9, the dominant chord and the caesura together form a climax that, through its harmonic pull, ushers in the subsequent *Moderato* section.



K. Borsuk, *Fantasia in D minor*, bars 10–13.

Borsuk combines within a single phrase motifs based on the quaver-plus-two-semiquavers pattern with a two-note sequence, further diversifying the narrative through changes of articulation: the alternation of *pizzicato* and *arco* double stops prevents the music from gaining excessive momentum due to the natural instability of their sonic intensity. The subsequent bars mark a return to the initial *Andante* tempo, while retaining the motion and rhythmic variability introduced in the *Moderato* section. The composer explores varied approaches to developing the previously employed motifs:



K. Borsuk, *Fantasia in D minor*, bars 14–19.

The alternation of *arco* and *pizzicato* provides additional internal timbral variety within motifs that are otherwise uniform in material. These shifts in articulation disrupt the linear shape of the narrative, rendering the musical discourse colourful and full of surprises. The subsequent tempo change to *Allegro Moderato* introduces a new variant of the previously used motifs:



K. Borsuk, *Fantasia in D minor*, bars 20–23.

Groups of four semiquavers constitute a new version of the motif built from a quaver and two semiquavers. The quavers, crotchets and minims, in turn, represent a variant of the material derived from the opening two bars of the piece. This time, all motifs are more closely interconnected than before: the longer note values arise directly from the sequences of shorter ones. The resulting motion, considerably more intense than earlier, dissolves unexpectedly into harmonics in the *Andantino* tempo.



K. Borsuk, *Fantasia in D minor*, bars 24–31.

In bar 24, the intensity of motion comes to rest in static harmonics. The strongly perceptible contrast is heightened by the change in timbral character: the earlier alternation of *arco* and *pizzicato* is replaced entirely by a new colour of sound. This four-bar sequence, whose second half mirrors the first in terms of motion and intervallic design, reintroduces the *arco-pizzicato* alternation. This passage alters the direction of the musical narrative – the earlier processes of building and releasing tension give way to a static flattening of the previously flexible discourse. The earlier mobility does not return. The composer abandons the intensity of motion altogether, clearly steering the narrative toward the conclusion of the miniature. In the final bars, he surprises once more by introducing a percussive effect – a *diminuendo* finger tap on the instrument’s resonating body.

Despite the Baroque inspiration⁶⁵, evident in the work’s details, Borsuk ultimately shapes the aesthetic through elements characteristic of his own style: the variability of articulation, fluctuations in musical narrative, an expanded view of the instrument’s timbral possibilities, and the use of diverse colours as an integral component of the work’s refined structural design.

⁶⁵ “Baroque” in *Mała encyklopedia muzyki*, edited by Stefan Śledziński (Warsaw: PWM, 1968), 88–90.

3.1.6. *Piccola Fantasia*⁶⁶ (2020)

Piccola Fantasia for solo viola is a work whose title contains a paradox – given Karol Borsuk’s frequent use of miniature forms, which often span only a dozen or so bars, *Piccola Fantasia* comprises as many as 86 bars. In the manuscript, the composer noted: “...in der Zeit des Coronavirus... 20.03.2020, Berlin.” The early months of the pandemic were difficult for many people for various reasons – fear, uncertainty and the necessity of isolation. It was precisely the lack of contact with others that became the impulse for Borsuk to compose a work whose essence lies in the diverse moods and ideas that, during this challenging period, had to remain confined to his private world. The composition emerged in fragments, each reflecting the extreme and contrasting psychological states experienced by the composer at different moments of that time.

Piccola Fantasia is constructed on the basis of a reprise form. The piece opens with *pizzicato* on open strings, imitating the sound of church bells – a passage inspired by the bells of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Haselhorst.

Piccola Fantasia

Karol Borsuk

Viola

Moderato ♩ = 90

pizz. arco

mf

6

Vla.

pizz. arco

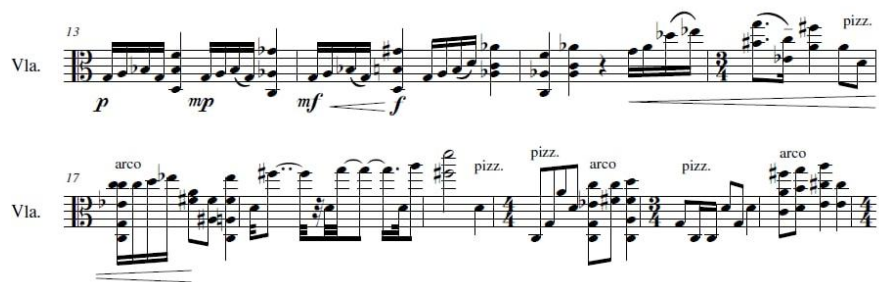
mf f mp 3 mf

K. Borsuk, *Piccola Fantasia*, bars 1–12.

The next sequence is a four-bar passage in which double stops play the principal role. Within them, one can distinguish an upper, melodic voice and a lower, drone-like voice. This fragment may be understood as an antecedent to the following section (bars 8–11), which is analogous in terms of its sonoristic structures. The two four-bar units are separated by a one-bar recollection of the

⁶⁶ Karol Borsuk, “*Piccola Fantasia*,” YouTube,, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-YEYIYa1P8>, accessed 2 April 2026.

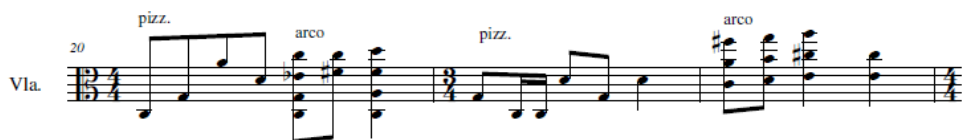
opening material, performed *pizzicato*. The imitation of church bells corresponds with the dark timbre of the double-stop passages. This impression is intensified by the sound of the double stops themselves – the two voices form a progression of intervals, and the more dissonant they are, the more strongly they evoke a sense of unease in the listener. The entire passage concludes with a sudden intensification of emotional tension: the unexpected appearance of A-major seventh chords, preceded by a triplet *quasi-anacrusis*, breaks the sombre mood and foreshadows the extreme emotions that will unfold later in the piece.



K. Borsuk, *Piccola Fantasia*, bars 13–19.

The considerable densification of the texture brings about an increase in musical tension. The groups of four semiquavers and the chords that follow them possess a distinctly melodic quality. The rise in volume suggested by the composer corresponds with the emotional charge contained in the musical material. The climactic moment of this passage is reached in the highest register – although the pre-climactic phase appears more intense due to the texture employed, it is the ascending single line that constitutes the true focal point. The suspension in D major corresponds to the analogous point in the work's initial eleven-bar sequence, which ends with a similar compositional device, suggesting a continuation full of further transformations.

In bar 20, the bell motif returns:



K. Borsuk, *Piccola Fantasia*, bars 20–22.

A short, four-note variant of the opening material passes directly into a chordal sequence that counteracts any loss of the previously generated momentum.

This pattern is repeated in the next two bars, with a slight expansion of its dimensions. In bar 21, the composer introduces a new rhythmic scheme: a *pizzicato* sequence built on the characteristic rhythm of a quaver followed by two semiquavers, which will become an important element shaping the musical narrative in the later course of the piece:



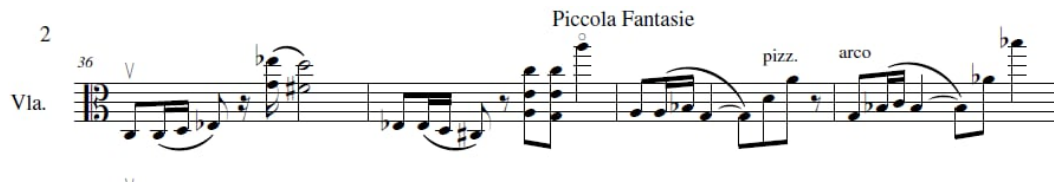
K. Borsuk, *Piccola Fantasia*, bars 23–29.

The composer once again employs a progression at this point (as in bars 13 and 14), providing a natural direction for the intensification of musical tension. *Glissandi* and the wide use of the instrument's registers enrich the line. In the final three bars of this passage, one can observe an analogy with the closing sounds of the work's first musical idea, though certain modifications are evident: the composer retains the triplet *quasi-anacrusis* and the chordal texture, combining them with material from the opening bars, which this time appears in the chord-filling pitches produced on the open strings. The phrase concludes with a suspension in B major, followed by the introduction of new melodic material.



K. Borsuk, *Piccola Fantasia*, bars 30–33.

The lyrical passage performed in the low register is warm in timbre and filled with nostalgia. It moves directly into a sharply articulated sequence that introduces a dramatic character. This pattern is repeated twice, after which it is reduced to recurring one-bar structures:



K. Borsuk, *Piccola Fantasia*, bars 36–39.

Four subsequent bars begin with the familiar rhythm of a quaver followed by two semiquavers. Each time, a “response” appears, varied in its internal structure. This passage builds the emotional climax of the work, shaped by the accumulation of melodic structures. The expression contained within them allows this section to be identified as the most emotionally charged in the entire piece.



K. Borsuk, *Piccola Fantasia*, bars 41–53.

The specific rhetoric of this passage results from an unusually long musical span within the context of the work. The densification of sound arises from the use of stepwise motion in quaver passages. The higher the register, the softer the dynamic – the composer instructs that the final bars be played *piano pianissimo*. After the last sound fades, the opening material returns, but the context in which it appears – immediately following a section of great emotional intensity – determines a new shape for the already familiar motifs.



K. Borsuk, *Piccola Fantasia*, bars 54–65.

The motifs in the opening bars evoke the image of a “ping-pong ball” bouncing back and forth – a motion that, in accordance with the composer’s intention, sarcastically reflects his emotional state during the pandemic. The music transitions seamlessly into the material from the beginning of the piece in bar 62. As the work progresses, the composer continues to transform previously used patterns, leading to an unexpected conclusion:



K. Borsuk, *Piccola Fantasia*, bars 84–86.

The first minim in the final bar forms the fifth G–D, which, due to its perceptible harmonic pull, could stabilise the ending of the piece. Borsuk, however, concludes the work with a long, resonant trill on the note A, conveying the idea of an unfinished story whose ending remains untold.

The harmonic layer may generally be regarded as a colouristic element, yet certain points identifiable through their tonal references serve as anchors for the musical narrative. Considering their mutual relationships is meaningful only on a small scale, within individual sequences. In the context of the entire work, however, one may observe that the narrative gravitates around the note G, which functions as the tonic of a mode that remains only partially defined. The internal diversity of compositional devices effectively conveys the composer’s extreme emotions and inspires the performer to seek personal, emotionally grounded interpretations.

3.1.7. *Kazimierz* (2022)

The piece was composed in 2022 during Karol Borsuk's stay in Kazimierz Dolny on the Vistula. The inspiration for this composition was the town itself and its history, described by Maria Kuncewiczowa in her book *Dwa księżycy*⁶⁷. This novel is one of the composer's favourite literary works, and he returns to it during each visit to Kazimierz Dolny. The portrayal of the town and its inhabitants in the period preceding the Second World War focuses on its twofold character: the Polish and Jewish communities, as well as visitors arriving from Warsaw. Borsuk had been visiting Kazimierz Dolny since childhood, and his observations of the town's local specificity, combined with the artistic impressions associated with both the novel and the place, inspired him to write this miniature.

The work was premiered by the composer himself at the Franciscan Monastery in Kazimierz Dolny in the year of its creation.

The form of the piece follows an ABA1 scheme, with the beginning of the central section marked by a tempo change, and the A1 section representing a partial return of the opening material, enriched with new elements. The melodic material of the work alludes to Jewish music.

The composer did not indicate a tempo marking at the beginning of the piece – this gives the performer the freedom to interpret the text creatively, to listen to their inner sense of timing, and to find a personal musical pace. The miniature opens with a sequence of alternating *pizzicato* and *arco tremolo*:

:

Viola

Vla.

Vla.

K. Borsuk, *Kazimierz*, bars 1–13.

⁶⁷ Maria Kuncewiczowa, *Dwa księżycy* (Warsaw: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Czytelnik, 1974).

The variable articulation, a hallmark of Borsuk's approach to sound production, shapes the opening bars and creates an atmosphere of mystery. This impression is intensified by the addition of a fermata to the tremolo minims in bars 1 and 2 – a device that helps achieve a specific kind of “suspension,” as if awaiting the further unfolding of the musical narrative. The subsequent bars introduce references to Jewish music through the use of characteristic melodic turns. In the first of these (bar 3), the composer places a lowered second scale degree, counted from the note A. A fuller picture emerges in the continuation up to bar 9, where the next five scale degrees appear: A–B–C♯–D–E. The composer employs various metres in alternation: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 and 6/4. This facilitates a fluid narrative by adjusting the length of the bars to the rhetoric of the numerous turns in the melodic line – the entire passage is built from a succession of quasi-chants that construct expression across nearly the full range of the instrument, beginning in the lowest register. These sequences grow progressively longer: the first spans one bar (bar 3), the second two bars (bars 4–5), the third three bars (bars 6–8), and the fourth also three bars (bars 9–11), though unlike the preceding tension-building sequences, its purpose is to quiet and calm the musical discourse. The final two bars (12–13) function as a link between sections A and B, halting the melodic intensity. The abandonment of expressive stepwise motion in favour of more neutral-sounding fifths prepares the listener for the arrival of new emotions.

The middle section of the piece differs from the preceding one in its melodic structures. In its first bar appears the only tempo indication in the entire work: from this point onward, the composer requests that the music be played *Allegro*.

K. Borsuk, *Kazimierz*, bars 14–26.

The character of the music becomes more animated through the use of dotted rhythms and longer semiquaver passages. Equally important is the change in the contour of the melodic line – frequent inflections anchored on the note A fully reveal the scale characteristic of Jewish music. Remaining within a single register shifts the task of shaping expression onto the movement of rhythmic values, which is directly linked to the numerous inflections of the plaintive melodic line. In bars 15 and 21, one can observe an interesting device: the introduction of an accompanying layer – *pizzicati* played with the left hand fill the space of the melodic minims. The middle section concludes with a musical idea analogous to earlier phrases, though this time it appears in the low register. The fermata over the final note clearly suggests a softening and calming of the musical narrative.

The following two-bar link between the main sections of the piece foreshadows the material of section A1 through the use of characteristic *pizzicati*. The composer also places a *glissando* here, leading to a suspension that dissolves into silence and contemplation. The returning A1 structures are slightly altered:



K. Borsuk, *Kazimierz*, bars 27–30.

The material from the first three bars of the piece now occupies four bars: a portion of bar 3 is repeated, and the melodic line is treated in a variational manner. This passage introduces the miniature's coda, in which an intense increase in musical tension becomes apparent:



K. Borsuk, *Kazimierz*, bars 31–36.

The longest semiquaver passage in the piece, leading into four quavers, introduces a sequence of unprecedented intensity. In bar 32, the composer heightens the melodic line by adding a second voice and emphasising its most important point with a four-note chord. The resulting tension is reduced in the following bars through the return to a single melodic line, carried in the high register and shaped by a *diminuendo*. The piece concludes with *pizzicati* on open strings.

The absence of dynamic indications allows the performer to rely on natural musicality and sensitivity to timbral nuances. Through the shaping of the melodic line, the composer leaves no doubt as to the intended interpretation of individual elements. The work was originally composed for solo violin, but the “soft and warm” sound of the viola conveys the emotional content of the piece with exceptional fidelity.

3.1.8. *Cloud 7 / Wolke 7* (2013)

Karol Borsuk composed *Wolke 7* while working as *Fachbereichsleiter* – head of the string department at the State Music School in Berlin-Reinickendorf. His office was located on the seventh floor. The room had panoramic windows, giving the composer a view of the entire city. The idea for the piece arose while observing the Berlin sky, hence the title, which evokes clouds seen from the seventh floor.

The miniature opens with a sequence of six bars, initially grouped in pairs due to the similarity of their melodic and harmonic structures. As the piece unfolds, these patterns are reduced to the span of a single bar. Harmony plays a crucial role in the work – harmonic tendencies constitute an essential component of its expressive language.

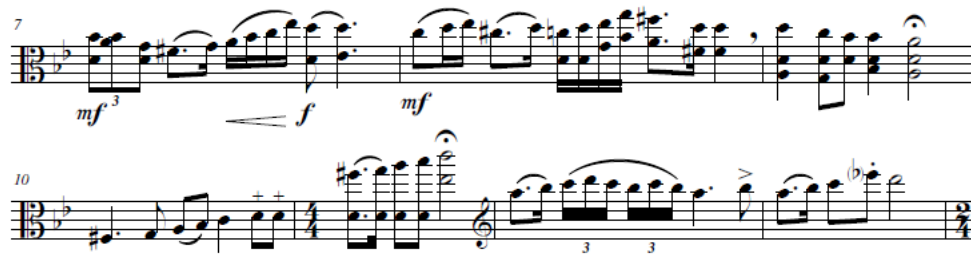


K. Borsuk, *Wolke 7*, bars 1–6.

Each of the first two two-bar units, as well as the subsequent sequences contained within single bars, ends with a kind of question mark on the dominant – D major. Bars 1 and 3 begin in the principal key, G minor. Bars 5 and 6 do as well, although the melodic element causes G minor to give way to the target key, which this time expands to include the added ninth, E $\flat$. The melodic line in the first two-bar unit presents a calm theme in double stops, which in the following bars undergoes a process of variation through the addition of semiquaver ornaments and an appoggiatura. The composer calls for differentiated dynamics – the opening passage is to be played *piano*, and the next *mezzo forte*.

Bars 5 and 6 continue the tendency introduced in bars 3 and 4: the line becomes even more subdivided, this time into semiquaver triplets, which additionally serve as the material for the climactic gestures at the ends of the bars.

The successive phrases shift the musical mood toward a more lyrical character, foregrounding the melodic element as the principal carrier of expression:



K. Borsuk, *Wolke 7*, bars 7–13.

The harmonic layer remains essentially unchanged. The melodic passages, at times enriched by the addition of a second, lower voice, slightly disrupt the earlier regularity. A recurring element in each musical idea is the constant pull toward the dominant. Each bar ends with a longer rhythmic value, allowing the music to resonate naturally. The composer clearly indicates in the score that the final note of each successive bar (from bars 7 to 9) should be held longer: in bar 7, one should linger on the dotted crotchet; in bar 8, on the crotchet, with the added caesura suggesting a deeper breath. Bar 9 ends with a minim and a fermata, signalling a suspension of the narrative. This pattern is repeated in the next two bars (10 and 11), though the composer now presents a different variant of the melodic line, which ascends through nearly the entire range of the instrument before fading into a fermata on the final double stop. The last repetition, in bars 12 and 13, stabilised in the high register, is the most lyrical in character. It nevertheless contains a hint of what is to follow, introduced through the articulation in the final bar: the short E $\flat$ breaks the lyrical atmosphere in favour of a new organisation of musical material, which unfolds in the subsequent bars of the piece:



K. Borsuk, *Wolke 7*, bars 14–23.

The short, lively articulation is further sharpened by the *forte* dynamic. Despite the almost complete change in musical character, the composer continues to maintain the pattern of harmonic oscillation between the tonic and the dominant. The rhythmic, at times virtuosic line forms a four-bar antecedent ending in D major. Its continuation, beginning in the same key, strives toward a resolution in G minor. The melodic material is richly varied through added ornaments and changes of articulation, alternating between *arco* and *pizzicato*. The rhythmic scheme of the musical idea remains identical in both parts of the phrase; however, in the fourth bar (no. 21) of the consequent, the composer surprises the listener by introducing the material from the first bar of the piece. This sudden turn in the narrative is made more striking by the regularity of the melodic-rhythmic structure in the preceding bars. That regularity leads one to expect a different conclusion to the passage, yet the introduction of material radically different in character dissolves the lively narrative and returns to the initial lyricism, which in this context becomes even more poignant. This device closes the miniature with a frame built from the material of the opening bar, which in its final variant resolves the dominant into the tonic – G minor – in the last two bars of the piece. The sixth B–G, followed by the final unison G enriched by its overtones, calms the narrative. The concluding two bars provide a moment of repose after the successive variants of the repeatedly deferred dominant.

3.1.9. *Remembrance / Erinnerung* (2013)

The piece is dedicated to the mother of Anna Ciechanowski – a Polish violinist and performer of many of Karol Borsuk’s works. The composition was written in 2010, and its premiere on the violin was given by Anna Ciechanowski.

The composer recommends performing the miniature at a *Moderato* tempo, while at the same time favouring a flexible approach to musical timing. The absence of a time signature and the minimal bar division indicate that the work’s narrative is shaped by musical ideas that resist strict regularity. Moreover, a detailed analysis of the notation shows that the composer introduces divisions only into quasi-sentences within the musical discourse, each contained within the space of individual systems. In a 2023 conversation with the author of this study, the composer confirmed that the notation is intentional, designed to leave the performer complete interpretative freedom.

The first musical idea of the piece is introduced with the full resonance of the instrument, in a dynamic ranging from *mezzo forte* to *forte*.



K. Borsuk, *Erinnerung*, system no. 1.

The *Moderato* tempo supports the performance of the semiquaver sequences in a way that highlights the lyrical quality of the melodic line. The crotchets separating the semiquaver passages provide balance between the motion of the smaller rhythmic values and their destination points. This phrase, by opening the sonic space, foreshadows the further course of the piece. An important detail, in the context of the entire miniature, is the dynamic palette: the most intense dynamic marking in the work is *forte*, which appears four times. In addition, the composer indicates *piano*, *mezzo piano*, *mezzo forte*, as well as precisely notated short *crescendi*. This demonstrates that while the composer grants the performer considerable creative freedom in shaping musical time, the matter of dynamics is

specified with a clarity that leaves no doubt as to the necessity of its meticulous realisation.

The next musical idea is more intimate in character:



K. Borsuk, *Erinnerung*, system no. 2.

The composer retains the groups of four semiquavers as an essential rhetorical element within the musical discourse. The semiquaver sequences melodically fill the spaces between register changes, and articulating them *legato* ensures the sentimental softness of the instrument's sound. The phrase concludes with minims and crotchets with appoggiaturas, rising into the high register with a *crescendo* from *piano* to *mezzo forte*. The fermata over the final note suggests a suspension of the musical narrative. The composer then notates two fifths played *pizzicato* on open strings – this double *pizzicato* recurs several times throughout the piece. Each time, it functions as an interjection between complete musical ideas performed *arco*, releasing the tension built in the preceding motifs and serving as a kind of objective commentary on the melancholic statements.



K. Borsuk, *Erinnerung*, system no. 3.

The frequency of double *pizzicati* increases significantly in the third system. The subsequent musical ideas performed *arco* are shorter than in the previous systems, while the *pizzicato* passages separate motifs of considerable intensity, marked *mezzo forte* and *forte*. Also noteworthy are the differences in the rhythmic values of the *pizzicato* sequences, which actively participate in shaping musical time: quaver *pizzicati* slightly disrupt the flow of the *arco* fragments, whereas crotchet or minim *pizzicati* bring musical time to a halt due to the absence of natural,

sustained resonance, creating a sense of listening into silence. The final sound of the third system is a dissonant chord with a fermata, summarising in *piano* the earlier intensity of the passage.

The composer does not employ harmonic progression in the sense of functional harmony. Instead, he alternates dissonances and consonances in longer rhythmic values, allowing the varied timbres of the individual sonorities to resonate fully. In the continuation, the element of semiquaver motion is replaced by dotted rhythms.



K. Borsuk, *Erinnerung*, system no. 4.

Short, sharply ascending phrases, separated by double *pizzicato* and caesuras, may tempt the performer to introduce a stormy expressivity; however, the dynamics indicated by the composer do not suggest the pursuit of extreme emotional qualities. The shorter note in the dotted rhythm should not create the impression of a sudden rhythmic accentuation – the semiquaver, at a *Moderato* tempo, should retain its cantabile character. After reaching the high register, the composer reduces the dynamic to *piano* and concludes this musical idea with quaver *pizzicati* in *ritenuto*. The final phrase displays an internal structural regularity:



K. Borsuk, *Erinnerung*, system no. 5.

The four successive motifs are notated using varied rhythmic values, reflecting the composer's concept of assigning distinct expressive qualities to each sequence. Their internal structure, however, remains similar – all consist of four melodic pitches followed by a target chord. Only the final motif ends with a single note, which directly leads to the release of musical momentum through a *pizzicato*.

The use of *col legno battuto*⁶⁸ at the end of the piece reduces the resonance of the actual pitch to a minimum, evoking a sense of transience.

The lyrical character of the work is crucial in terms of sound production – one must avoid excessive dynamics and overly sharp timbre, as these could significantly alter the proper, composer-intended expressive quality of the miniature.

⁶⁸ Kazimierz Sikorski, *Instrumentoznawstwo* (Cracow: PWM, 1975), 49.

3.1.10. *April* (2012–2013)

The piece, originally written for solo violin, was conceived as a keepsake after meeting – after many years – a close acquaintance, a former member of the *Frauenchor Spandau Berlin*, where Karol Borsuk has worked as conductor for thirty years⁶⁹. Following the delightful moments “over coffee,” during which memories of past times resurfaced, the idea and need arose to compose a work for this old friend – the writer Astrid Stähler, whose latest book *Suchbewegungen* was published by Scholastika in Stuttgart in 2023.

The composition is highly lyrical and nostalgic in character. The use of the instrument’s high register evokes the violinistic origins of the piece, while the passages set in the low register justify the purposefulness of the transcription for viola – its timbre conveys the emotional content of the music exceptionally well, offering the natural quality of overtone-rich low notes. The composer notated a consistent 4/4 metre, which indicates the stable regularity of successive musical ideas, each contained within a traditional bar structure.

The first two motifs, despite their *mezzo piano* dynamic and unobtrusive rhythmic motion, carry a notable emotional charge.



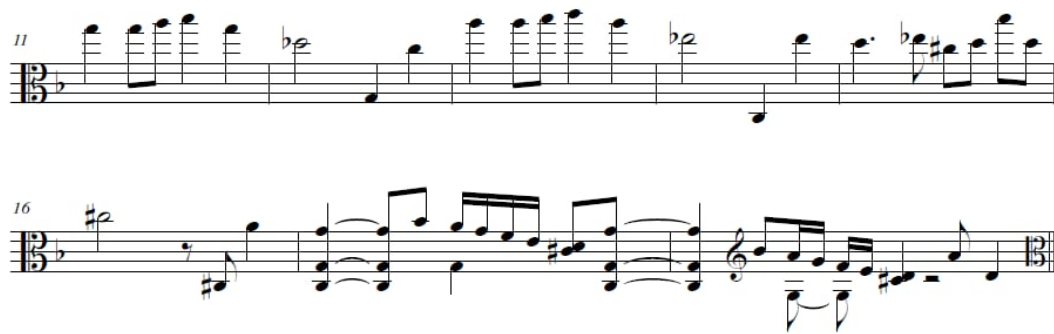
K. Borsuk, *April*, bars 1–10.

The lowering of the first pitch in bar 2, despite the absence of clear harmonic tendencies, creates a fleeting impression of modal change in relation to the analogous point in bar 1. This type of device serves to subtly shade the timbre, employing refined compositional means to achieve a slight fluctuation of mood.

⁶⁹ “Suchbewegungen,” *Scholastika Verlag*, <https://www.scholastika-verlag.com/index.php/buecher/suchbewegungen/>, accessed March 23, 2026.

The interval of a sixth in the melodic line of the first two bars naturally intensifies the musical expression – traversing such a wide span causes tension to rise within the space of the intervallic leap itself. The *mezzo forte* dynamic reached in the following bar (no. 3), despite the descending contour that closes the piece’s opening phrase, develops further into *forte*. The expressive force of the music is heightened by the repeated intervallic leaps that initiate each motif. The upward motion of successive bars within the instrument’s range supports the maintenance of the achieved emotional intensity, while the subdivision of rhythmic values introduces additional motion into the melodic line, reinforcing the energetic shaping of the phrasing.

In bar 8, a surprising turn in the narrative occurs: the use of C#–G# in the low register creates the impression of a brusque interruption of the melancholic mood. In the following bar, a delicate phrase returns, yet in the final double stop of bar 10 the composer halts the melody, producing a quasi-anticipatory effect regarding the further course of events. The next passage introduces a change in the fluidity of the musical narrative:



K. Borsuk, *April*, bars 11–18.

The melodic line, operating with smaller intervallic distances than in the opening bars of the piece, allows for greater fluidity in performance, enabling more horizontal, long-range phrasing. This is further supported by the monophonic texture of the passage, which lacks the points of tension that naturally arise from vertical structures of two or more pitches. The motif, repeated twice in bars 11 and 13, is interspersed with “responses” in the instrument’s low register. This device divides the musical discourse into two-bar segments, making it possible to plan a

gradual increase in tension with each recurrence of the structure. This passage leads to the main climax of the piece, built through the accumulation of sound in vertical structures that contrast sharply with the preceding monophonic line. Enriching the melody with a lower voice creates strongly dissonant sonorities that interrupt the calm melancholy with a sharper timbral quality. The repetition of the same idea within the climactic space reinforces its expressive message. The concluding pitches A and D close the climactic segment with a sudden brightening of timbre, achieved through the simplicity of two tones. The material from the first bar, introduced in the following measure, completes the work's structure in an ABA¹ design.



K. Borsuk, *April*, bars 19–29.

The change of dynamics from the initial *mezzo piano* to *piano* in bar 19 reflects the composer's intention that the return of the opening material should unfold in a slightly more intimate atmosphere. Yet already the second bar of this passage presents a treatment of the motif known from earlier in the piece in a way that significantly intensifies the musical tension. The subsequent narrative is filled with intervallic leaps, strong dissonances, and writing that spans the extreme registers of the instrument. Motifs analogous to those from the work's climax (bars 23 and 24) once again, near the end of the miniature, recall the instrument's "dark" timbre, which brightens in the repetition of this pattern in the high register.

The musical narrative concludes with *pizzicati* that create the impression of an immediate release of the previously accumulated tension. In bar 25, the composer instructs the performer to play *pizzicato* behind the bridge, producing a "muted" sound in contrast to the traditional *pizzicati* that follow in the next bar. The entire piece ends with a fading trill placed under a fermata.

April is a work full of radically contrasting emotional qualities, yet through the compositional means employed, these emotions are conveyed as if from a position of retrospection rather than direct experience. The piece offers the performer an opportunity to immerse themselves in their own introverted emotional landscape.

3.1.11. *Preludium a canzona* (2023)

The piece was composed in September 2023 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Karl Dedecius Foundation⁷⁰ at the Viadrina University in Frankfurt (Oder). The premiere, which took place on 15 November 2023 in Frankfurt (Oder), received a “bronze diploma” – the third prize in the *Muzyczne Orły* competition in the category of Premieres⁷². Konkurs odbył się we wrześniu w 2024 roku w Łódzkiej Filharmonii, a jego organizatorem była Fundacja Muzyka do Potęgi. The competition was held in September 2024 at the Łódź Philharmonic and was organised by the *Muzyka do Potęgi* Foundation.

The work is divided into two segments – the first is performed on the viola, while the second combines instrumental playing with singing and recitation⁷³. Already in the opening bars, the composer employs various methods of sound production



K. Borsuk, *Preludium a canzona*, bars 1–7.

In bars 1 and 2, *arco* tremolo coexists with *pizzicato*⁷⁴, played by the left hand on open strings. The ensuing virtuosic scale introduces a highly expressive melody shaped in double stops. Bar 5, in turn, exemplifies the intensification of tension through the use of a trill in the lower voice, employed to achieve a more

⁷⁰ Karl Dedecius, “Dlaczego Julian Tuwim skłonny do pesymizmu...,” in *Nasz 20. wiek / Unser 20. Jahrhundert* (Łódź–Stuttgart–Frankfurt nad Menem: Muzeum Miasta Łodzi, 2013), 36.

⁷¹ Karl Dedecius, *Sto wierszy polskich*, selected and translated by Karl Dedecius (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989), 147.

⁷² “Muzyczne Orły 2024 – Results,” *Muzyka do potęgi*, https://muzykadopotegi.org/upload/muzyczne_orly/2024/muzyczneorly2024_wyniki.pdf, accessed 23 March 2026.

⁷³ Schaeffer, *Mały informator muzyki*, 70–74.

⁷⁴ Kazimierz Sikorski, *Instrumentoznawstwo*, PWN, 48.

malleable *crescendo*. Throughout the 28 bars of the first segment of the work, the composer develops a musical idea that undergoes fluctuations of register, texture, dynamics, and articulation. This creates an emotionally saturated and internally varied musical discourse.

The initial 4/4 metre alternates later with 3/4, allowing for a more flexible shaping of the musical narrative. The entire first section of the piece – the *Prelude* – is filled with recitative-like elements, manifested in the shaping of musical time and in the rhetorical turns of the melodic line. The harmonic layer, not devoid of dissonances, establishes G minor as the principal key. The frequent use of the dominant (D major) contributes to the cohesion of the first segment, which consists of phrases separated by “breaths” – pauses or fermatas. The appearance of the dominant in the final pitches of the phrases naturally generates a harmonic pull toward its resolution in the opening notes of the subsequent musical idea.

The second part of the piece – the *canzona* – introduces alternative performance techniques. The composer incorporates into the musical fabric a text taken from Professor Jan Białostocki’s book *Sztuka cenniejsza niż złoto*⁷⁵: *ars auro gemmisque prior*⁷⁶, along with a literary translation of this sentence, which expands the book’s title: “art more precious than gold and stones.” This text forms an additional layer of the work – a sung one:

Ars auro gemmisque prior -
sztuka cenniejsza, niż złoto i kamienie

29
29 pizz.
33
33

Ars au - ro gem - mis - que pri - or
sztu - ka cen - niej - sza niż zło - to i ka - mie - nie

K. Borsuk, *Preludium a canzona*, bars 29–36.

⁷⁵ Jan Białostocki, *Sztuka cenniejsza niż złoto* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2022).

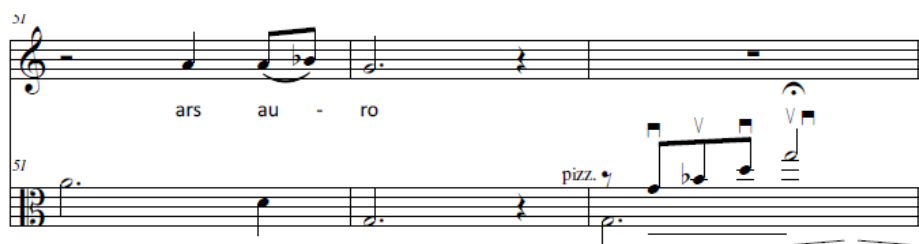
⁷⁶ *Ars auro gemmisque prior* (Lat.) – art precedes gold and precious stones.

The composer combines the vocally realised melodic line with a *pizzicato* accompaniment. Together, the two lines form a harmonically grounded two-voice texture. As the piece unfolds, Borsuk requires the performer to recite the Polish translation of the Latin sentence – with the final two words sung – again accompanied by *pizzicato*. The composer does not specify tempo or dynamics for this passage, granting the performer full freedom. From the interpreter’s perspective, it should be noted that playing the instrument while simultaneously singing poses a considerable challenge, as it demands an alternative engagement of muscle groups that are normally dedicated to instrumental performance. Producing a clean intonation of these few sung pitches requires work on breath control, diction, and the entire vocal apparatus. In the subsequent section, the expressive shaping is transferred to the viola part:



K. Borsuk, *Preludium a canzona*, bars 37–42.

The composer employs sequences analogous to those in the first section of the work, yet the emotional scale is now considerably greater. The dynamic markings require *fortissimo*, signalling the work’s principal climax. This passage contains markedly more dramatic intensity: the viola part features double-stop progressions, chords, tremolos, and glissandi. In the conclusion of the piece, the vocal layer returns, in which the composer recalls the opening words of the Latin sentence:



K. Borsuk, *Preludium a canzona*, bars 51–53.

The final bars bring a calming of the previously turbulent emotions. The composer summarises the harmonic progression of the work, allowing the G-minor tonality to resonate for an extended moment.

Preludium a canzona is a piece that explores performance areas unfamiliar to most instrumentalists. The introduction of a vocal element constitutes a challenge that aligns with the increasingly common use of new modes of musical expression among contemporary composers.

3.2. Duets for Flute and Viola

3.2.1. *Mosaik* (2015)

The premiere of the piece took place in Berlin-Reinickendorf, performed by the string duo consisting of Dariusz Blaskiewicz (violin) and Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz (viola)⁷⁷. The transcription of the violin part for flute does not pose significant difficulties for the performer: the natural fluidity and cantabile quality of the phrases, as well as the rests that may function as breathing caesuras, remain fully compatible with the nature of a wind instrument.

The work consists of 49 bars in changing metre, with the composer alternating between 3/4 and 4/4. An internal segmentation of the piece is clearly perceptible, shaped by changes of tempo, textural variety, and the dialogue between the instruments. The first four bars may be understood as a kind of introduction.

Score

Mosaik

Karol Borsuk

Adagio

Violin

Viola

Vln.

Vla.

K. Borsuk, *Mosaik*, bars 1–10.

In the part of the first instrument, which may be performed either on violin or flute, one can observe refined compositional devices that allow the performer to

⁷⁷ Mateusz Rybnicki, *Vademecum instrumentacji* (Warsaw: Centralny Ośrodek Metodyki Upowszechniania Kultury, 1987), 25.

expand beyond traditionally employed methods of sound production. The violin may execute this passage *col legno*, whereas the flute achieves the intended sonic effect through standard tone production while maintaining a *piano* dynamic. In the first three bars, the quasi-percussive effect possible on the violin is replaced, in the case of the flute, by the articulation of the pitch D; in bar 4, the violin tremolo is substituted with *frullato*. The melodic viola line shapes the narrative within the four-bar introduction and continues it in the subsequent course of the piece. The flute engages in dialogue with the viola, performing single notes with grace notes. Despite the considerable textural differentiation between the two parts, they form a coherent whole, initiating a shared narrative in bar 8 through the audible two-voice harmony.

In bar 11, the composer changes the tempo marking from the initial *Adagio* to *Andante*. A duet-like dialogue begins, in which both instrumental parts explore nearly identical musical material.

The image displays a musical score for Violin (Vln.) and Viola (Vla.) parts, spanning bars 11 to 17. The tempo is marked *Andante*. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (bars 11-13) shows the Violin part with a *mf* dynamic and the Viola part with a *pizz. arco* marking. The second system (bars 14-15) features a *f* dynamic for both parts. The third system (bars 16-17) includes a *rit.* marking and a *f* dynamic for the Viola part. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

K. Borsuk, *Mosaik*, bars 11–17.

The alternating semiquaver groups and quarter notes in bar 11 become synchronised in the following bar, no. 12, thereby intensifying the musical tension, which is momentarily reduced through single *pizzicato* and *arco* notes in the viola part. In the next two bars (13 and 14), the composer reverses the order of events: this time both instruments perform synchronised quaver triplets and quarter notes, only to exchange motifs of the same structure shortly thereafter. This procedure builds the approaching climax by introducing more vigorous motion through the desynchronisation of the two parts. The *forte* in bar 15 marks the highest dynamic level thus far, which in the next bar is reduced to *mezzo forte* in order to prepare the next – and final – climax that concludes the *Andante* section. The last bar of this passage brings the preceding increase in motion to a close, emphasising each pitch through a significant reduction of tempo. In the flute part, the double stops present in the violin version are omitted; however, in bar 17, to highlight the intensity of key points, the performer adds the lower voice as a grace note to the upper pitch.

The next tempo change – *Moderato* – marks the beginning of the longest section of the piece, constructed as a sequence of segments differentiated in texture, melodic material, articulation, and expression. The composer dispenses with dynamic markings, which poses a challenge to the performers' creativity; the very logical internal structure provides guidance, and all musical elements⁷⁸ clearly suggest the appropriate dynamic scale. Initially, short motifs engage in an alternating dialogue.



K. Borsuk, *Mosaik*, bars 18–20.

An element shaping the structure of this passage is the cantabile, sustained notes in both instrumental parts, which acquire lightness through the addition of

⁷⁸ Roman Ingarden, *Wybór pism estetycznych* (Cracow: Universitas, 2005), 67.

grace notes. The next segment appears to be constructed according to an analogous principle:



K. Borsuk, *Mosaik*, bars 25–27.

However, the composer replaces the grace notes with semiquavers, suggesting that the performer modify the timbre of these short note values so as to endow them with melodic significance as an equal component of the line. Both fragments conclude with short linking gestures:



K. Borsuk, *Mosaik*, bar 24.



K. Borsuk, *Mosaik*, bars 28–29.

These brief sections guide the musical narrative through textural changes. As the piece progresses, the composer abandons these linking figures, juxtaposing subsequent mosaic-like elements directly.



K. Borsuk, *Mosaik*, bars 30–32.

The viola leads the melodic line with an intriguing contour, combining stepwise motion with wide intervallic leaps, thereby gaining expressive depth in the musical thought. The flute, by contrast, performs pitches that in the original violin version were produced on open strings. This juxtaposition creates a sense of distance between the two instruments, suggesting that the viola should counterbalance the flute's objective, uncoloured tone with a more saturated timbre. This proportion is reversed in the subsequent bars:



K. Borsuk, *Mosaik*, bars 34–36.

The melodic motifs in the flute part are realised against the backdrop of the viola accompaniment, which supports the harmonic layer and fills the space created by the longer note values in the leading line. The increasingly intense dialogue becomes evident in the following bars:



K. Borsuk, *Mosaik*, bars 37–40.

The composer once again employs the concept of open strings, this time making it an active participant in the instrumental exchange. Initially, the flute accompanies the viola in this manner, while the viola performs pitches separated by wide intervals and enriched with grace notes. Subsequently, the viola takes over the open-string motif, and the flute introduces a pattern similar to that found in the viola part in the preceding two bars; however, the addition of semiquavers and dotted rhythms instead of grace notes gives this phrase a distinctly melodic quality. In the following bars, both instruments continue to develop the established expressive scale, leading up to the final statement of the piece:



K. Borsuk, *Mosaik*, bars 46–49.

Bars 46 and 47 constitute the climax toward which the entire preceding section has been leading since the tempo change to *Moderato*. Each pitch here carries substantial expressive weight; every note contains a powerful emotional charge. The shared musical utterance moves toward the conclusion of the piece – the final two bars, in which the composer releases all accumulated tension by means of a dialogue built from short motifs ascending through the instruments' registers. The final pitches of both instruments stabilise the entire, harmonically complex course on the note G, functioning as an indeterminate tonic of the work.

The piece offers performers the opportunity to immerse themselves in an intensely communicative form of chamber dialogue. In the original version, the composer draws on the characteristic features of each instrument, while the transcription opens new timbral possibilities that remain fully consistent with the original conception.

3.2.2 *Pastorello* (2016)

The piece was composed in 2012, inspired by the Advent season – the period of anticipation preceding Christmas. Its premiere took place in December 2012 in Berlin-Reinickendorf, performed by violinist Dariusz Blaszkiewicz and violist Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz.

The title *Pastorello* derives from Italian and is a diminutive of *pastore* – “shepherd”; it may thus be translated literally as “little shepherd.” Pastoral motifs – evoking the idyllic character of rural life – can be found in the works of many Baroque composers. Transposing this aesthetic idiom into the realm of a modern musical language results in an expression that is contemporary in character while simultaneously evoking imagery analogous to its historical models.

The piece comprises 33 bars and displays a clear division into three sequentially arranged segments. Its internal differentiation concerns texture, metre, and rhythm. These contrasts, however, do not perceptibly alter the overall mood – rather, they produce greater or lesser fluctuations in the flow of tension within individual motifs. G minor serves as the tonal centre of the work, remaining stable despite the composer’s intensive use of dissonance.

The first segment is written in 12/8 metre. This notational choice is significant from the performer’s perspective. Instead of using 4/4 with quaver triplets filling each beat, Borsuk opts for a metre that suggests a more horizontal shaping of the musical narrative – a quarter-note subdivision could encourage excessive verticalisation of individual points, which would contradict the composer’s intention. By choosing this aesthetic reference, he likely had in mind the calm interweaving of two lines, without sudden intensifications of tension

Pastorello

K. Borsuk

The musical score for 'Pastorello' by K. Borsuk, bars 1-10, is presented for Violin and Viola. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/8. The Violin part (top) and Viola part (bottom) are written in a balanced manner. The score shows the first ten bars of the piece. The Violin part starts with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes and quarter notes. The Viola part starts with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes and quarter notes. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and accidentals.

K. Borsuk, *Pastorello*, bars 1–10.

The parts of both instruments are written in an equal, balanced manner. The difference in registers – resulting from the specific nature of the flute / violin and the viola – enabled the composer to shape musical ideas far more broadly than would have been possible with two identical instruments. Moreover, the contrast in timbre allows for a wider palette of colour, making the musical dialogue considerably more engaging. In the first six bars, both instrumental parts move within nearly identical rhythmic structures: quaver triplets, the quarter-note–quaver pattern and its inversion, only occasionally settling on dotted quarter notes. This rhythmic homogeneity also translates into the melodic dimension. The simultaneous presence of different rhythmic variants – as in bar 3 – supports a horizontal shaping of the phrase across a longer span.

A natural interpretation of the music requires the presence of breath – in this case, the structure of the melodic line allows performers to incorporate this element by using additional time in the spaces between individual motifs. This is facilitated by the internal division of the first segment of the piece – initially into three two-bar units, followed by a concluding four-bar passage that significantly enriches the texture through the introduction of semiquaver runs and more frequent dissonances.

Bar 10 closes the first segment – the motion of short note values comes to a halt, and after numerous dissonant turns the harmonic layer stabilises in G minor. A characteristic feature is the addition of grace notes to longer note values – a pattern the composer consistently repeats later in the piece. As the music progresses, the texture becomes denser through semiquaver motion.

K. Borsuk, *Pastorello*, bars 11–18.

The middle segment of the piece is written in 12/8 metre, with the exception of two bars – 14 and 18 – where the metre shifts to 9/8. These changes align with the motion of the melodic lines and pass essentially unnoticed by the listener. Both instrumental parts employ identical melodic structures derived from the material of the first segment, though this time they are significantly enriched by semiquaver passages. Despite the introduction of these innovations, the character of the piece remains unchanged. The increased density of rhythmic values creates the impression of heightened narrative intensity, yet the expressive scale of the music remains stable – the semiquaver runs do not coincide with changes in dynamic volume or the introduction of additional melodic goals. Rather, they serve an ornamental function, treating earlier melodic sequences in a quasi-variational manner.

As in the first segment, the final bar of this section brings an abrupt halt to the motion – semiquavers give way to quarter notes and quavers. In the conclusion, the composer consistently adds characteristic grace notes and returns to the key of G minor.

The third and longest segment of the piece is also the most diverse in terms of compositional devices. To the familiar structures based on quaver triplets and semiquaver runs, the composer adds dotted rhythms, which highlight the quasi-dance-like character of the music.



K. Borsuk, *Pastorello*, bars 19–21.

The opening of this segment is saturated with a far greater number of dissonances than anywhere earlier in the piece – dissonances that exhibit strong harmonic gravitation toward the principal key. Both instrumental parts consistently shape equally weighted melodic lines whose motion often proceeds in opposite directions, directly influencing the perception of fluctuating bandwidth in the overall sonority. The metre – as in the middle segment – is variable: at the ends of individual phrases the composer introduces 9/8, followed by 6/8. In bars 24–27, the initial material returns:



K. Borsuk, *Pastorello*, bars 24–30.

A variational treatment of the motifs is clearly perceptible, while the overall directional shaping of the musical narrative remains intact. The recall of the opening fragment does not carry structural significance – it does not establish a reprise form.

Rather, it functions as a loose reminiscence of the melody, which naturally transitions into denser subsequent motifs featuring semiquaver runs and dotted rhythms.

In the final bars of the piece, the composer introduces longer note values, allowing them to resonate naturally while the musical partner continues to lead the melodic line:



K. Borsuk, *Pastorello*, bars 31–33.

The dotted half note in the viola part in bar 31, the dotted quarter note and rest in the violin / flute part, and subsequently in the viola line, reduce the intensity of the musical expression. This procedure creates the impression of a gradual fading of the shared dialogue. In the final bar, the composer reiterates the previously used structure – longer rhythmic values, grace notes, and a conclusion in G minor.

The principal performance challenge lies in the necessity of horizontal, long-range phrasing. The dialogue between the instrumental parts is demanding due to the frequent movement of both voices within the same register, their mutual interweaving, and the use of identical expressive devices despite their contrasting timbral colours.

3.2.3. *Goethe auf Tegel* (2021)

The idea for this short piece emerged while Karol Borsuk was reading Otto Pniower's *Goethe in Berlin und Potsdam*⁷⁹, published in 1925 and printed in a Gothic typeface. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe – the German poet – stayed in Berlin with Karl August, Duke of Weimar, from 15 to 23 May 1778. It was an official journey during which discussions were held concerning relations between the Duchy of Weimar and the Kingdom of Prussia. During this time, Goethe kept a diary that includes brief notes about the eight-day stay, whose programme encompassed not only political meetings but also visits to the opera, concerts, a porcelain factory, and numerous encounters, including with the renowned royal painter and draughtsman Daniel Chodowiecki.

In the poet's diary entry from the sixth day of the journey, the following note appears: "...at Chodowiecki's with the Prince. From Berlin at 10, through Hohenschonhausen to Tegel. Lunch. Through Charlottenburg to Zehlendorf. At night at 11 in Potsdam...". For the first time, Goethe mentions the name of this Berlin suburb, which was also the seat of the Humboldt family. It remains unknown whether Goethe visited the Humboldts, yet the name Tegel would later be immortalised in the *Walpurgisnacht* scene of *Faust*. In Berlin-Tegel stands the Humboldt Palace, now home to a museum dedicated to the family, and the miniature *Goethe auf Tegel* was composed by Karol Borsuk in October 2020 with the intention of being performed at an outdoor concert on the estate. The composer thus alluded to an episode from the life of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The premiere took place on 1 November 2020, performed by Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz – viola, and Karol Borsuk – violin.

The composition consists of 21 bars. Its internal segmentation arises from textural differences and from the relationships between the instrumental parts. The opening of the piece features *pizzicato* in the viola part, suggesting approaching footsteps and a moment of "pause" articulated through double stops:

⁷⁹ Henryk Swolkien, "Fryderyk Chopin," in *Dzieje muzyki polskiej w zarysie*, edited by Tadeusz Ochlewski (Warsaw: Interpress, 2013), 86. Henryk Swolkien, "Moniuszko – twórca narodowej opery polskiej," in *Dzieje muzyki polskiej w zarysie*, edited by Tadeusz Ochlewski (Warsaw: Interpress, 2013), 93. Henryk Swolkien, "Wirtuozi polscy XIX i początków XX wieku," in *Dzieje muzyki polskiej w zarysie*, edited by Tadeusz Ochlewski (Warsaw: Interpress, 2013), 130. Grzegorz Michalski, "Lata 1965–1975," in *Dzieje muzyki polskiej w zarysie*, edited by Tadeusz Ochlewski (Warszawa: Interpress, 2013), 175.

Goethe auf Tegel

Karol Borsuk

Violin

Viola

mp

mf

pizz.

arco

mf

arco

mf

mp

Vln.

Vla.

mf

3

3

K. Borsuk, *Goethe auf Tegel*, bars 1–9.

The dotted half-note sixth in bar 3 creates space for the flute to take over the thematic idea. In the following bars, the two instruments engage in dialogue using motifs of varying length. Both parts are of equal importance, though whenever one becomes more active, the other assumes an accompanying role. The tremolo written in the original violin part is performed by the flautist as *frullato*. The calming of the melodic lines and the fermatas in bars 8 and 9 mark the boundary of the first segment of the piece. The next segment – only two bars long – is the sole moment in the work where the flute and viola simultaneously carry musically significant material:

Vln.

Vla.

10

K. Borsuk, *Goethe auf Tegel*, bars 10–11.

This is a small passage compared with the outer sections, yet it contains a fundamentally different mode of coexistence between the two instrumental parts. Their equal activity in shaping expression and the considerable mobility of the intervals employed create the impression of an almost argumentative exchange through sound. It is abrupt and brief, and the composer isolates it from the

subsequent musical flow with a double barline. In bar 12, the sonorous pattern already familiar from the closing bars of the first segment returns:



K. Borsu, *Goethe auf Tegel*, bars 12–16.

This time the passage is considerably more developed and dominated by the element of dialogue between the instruments. A significant challenge lies in unifying the sound of the viola's tremolo and the flute's *frullato* – the length of the section in which both instruments must meet this demand spans as many as five bars, during which the melodic lines traverse a substantial range within their respective instruments. Appropriate mutual adjustment of dynamics produces an exceptional sonic effect in this fragment. The piece concludes with a coda that draws on structures from the first segment of the work:



K. Borsuk, *Goethe auf Tegel*, bars 17–21.

Pizzicato reappears, as does the alternating shaping of leading motifs. The piece ends in D minor, stabilised in the final two bars. The inspiration drawn from historical facts and the composer's fascination with this exceptional place are combined with his artistic vision.

Such an intense source of creative impulse in *Goethe auf Tegel* may be perceived by both performer and listener as an invitation to explore the programmatic foundations of the work.

3.2.4. *Ave Maria* (2013)

The piece is dedicated to Father Tadeusz Niewęłowski. The composition was written in 2013 as a duet for two solo voices to the Latin text of the prayer *Ave Maria*⁸⁰. Works set to these words can be found in the output of J.S. Bach, Ch. Gounod, F. Schubert, G. Donizetti, C. Saint-Saëns, J. Nowakowski, A. Kątski, J. Maklakiewicz, M. Sawa, and many others. The angelic salutation inspired not only composers but also painters, sculptors, and poets – making this motif, in effect, a supra-religious element of the world's cultural heritage. In the artistic component of this doctoral dissertation, Karol Borsuk's piece is presented in a transcription for flute and viola. The performers used the original version of the score intended for two vocal parts – a fact of importance due to the accompanying verbal layer, which provides essential guidance when considering interpretative issues.

The composer uses barlines but does not include a time signature. The use of barlines is significant because of the textual layer – the bars delineate the boundaries of individual lines of the prayer. The composer also omitted tempo and dynamic markings, leaving the performers space to project their own sensitivity. The melodic line is very clear, and Borsuk evidently draws on early – medieval and Renaissance – models of sacred music. According to the composer's note, the piece may be performed monodically, that is, by a single performer – either a singer or an instrumentalist. Naturally, such a performance is possible only when the upper voice is realised, as it carries an autonomous melodic line throughout the entire piece. The lower voice plays a supplementary melodic and harmonic role by generating two-part textures that at times significantly expand the otherwise narrow harmonic framework.

The work can be divided internally into two sections, owing both to its texture and to the verbal layer, which serves as a key to interpretation.

The first section is based on the invocation addressed to the Virgin Mary: *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.*

⁸⁰ *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus. Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.*

A - ve Ma - ri - a gra - ci - a ple - na A - ve
A - ve Ma - ri - a gra - ci - a ple - na A - ve
Do - mi - nus te - cum be - ne - dic - ta - tu
Do - mi - nus be - ne - dic - ta - tu
et be - ne - dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris tu - i Je - su Chris - te
et dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris tu - i Chris - te

K. Borsuk, *Ave Maria*, bars 1–7.

When analysing the textual layer, one can observe that the composer omits the phrase *in mulieribus*⁸¹, and adds the word *Christe* at the end. This modification facilitates the introduction of an internal rhythmic flow within the music. Despite the fact that both voices move almost within the same register, the subordinate role of the second voice in relation to the first is clearly evident. It is easy to notice that in the first five bars of this passage, the viola – carrying the second voice – adds a few notes to each motif in the flute part; this occurs during the resonance of the longer note values that conclude successive motifs in the upper voice. Only in bar 6 do the two parts form a complete two-voice texture, though melodically the upper voice remains dominant. Bar 7 repeats the pattern of motivic leading in the flute and supplementary additions in the viola. This section ends in D minor.

The next four bars constitute the second segment of the piece, in which one can observe greater mobility and more intense mutual interpenetration of the two voices.

⁸¹ *In mulieribus* (Lat.) – among women.

K. Borsuk, *Ave Maria*, bars 8–11.

In this section, the composer employs the second part of the Latin text: *Sancta Maria, mater Dei, Sancta Maria ora pro nobis et in hora mortis nostrae, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen*. Once again, the composer’s treatment of the verbal layer is noteworthy: he removes the words *peccatoribus*⁸² and *nunc*⁸³, while repeating the invocation *Sancta Maria*, and concluding with four iterations of *Amen*. This passage has a supplicatory character, which lends the music a more solemn and elevated tone. The two instrumental parts coexist more intensively here: the viola no longer supplements the flute’s motifs but instead shapes a second voice that actively accompanies the first. The impression of equality between the musical ideas in bars 10 and 11 arises from both parts operating within the same register. The piece concludes in D minor, which resolves the preceding dominant – A major.

The alterations in the verbal text function to the advantage of the work’s structure, particularly in shaping the proportions between successive phrases. This textual layer, on which the composer bases the musical design, naturally determines the interpretative concept – the text here is the primary value, defining the character of the music, which in this case aptly conveys transcendence, supplication, hesitation, and trust.

⁸² *Peccatoribus* (Lat.) – “sinners,” here: “the sinful.”

⁸³ *Nunc* (Lat.) – “now.”

3.2.5. *Three Miniatures* (2022)

The cycle was composed in 2022 for the ensemble *Duo de Soleil*, formed by the author of this doctoral dissertation together with flautist Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca. The artists gave the world premiere of the miniatures in November 2022 in Berlin, at the Konzerthaus “Es ist ein Treiben in mir,” during a concert devoted to the music of Karol Borsuk. This performance was awarded the bronze medal at the 2023 International Music Competition *Muzyczne Orły* in the category *World Premiere*.

The cycle consists of three short miniatures, each contained within the span of a dozen or so bars. The composer explores a full palette of musical moods through a variety of technical means.

I *Andante lyrico*

The first movement of the cycle comprises 16 bars. An internal segmentation of the piece is clearly perceptible, resulting from the change of tempo: the opening *Andante lyrico* is replaced by *Moderato* in bar 9. The composer employs changing metres – 4/4, 2/4, and 3/4 – and marks all dynamic and articulation indications with great precision. The first segment of the miniature consists of eight bars.

The musical score for the first movement of 'Three Miniatures' by Karol Borsuk, bars 1-8, is presented for Flute and Viola. The Flute part begins with an 'Andante' tempo marking and a 'mf' dynamic. The Viola part begins with a 'f' dynamic. The score shows a change in tempo and meter from 4/4 to 2/4 and 3/4. The Flute part has a 'V' marking above it. The Viola part has a 'mf' and 'f' marking. The score ends with a double bar line.

K. Borsuk, *Three Miniatures*, bars 1–8.

The composer employs the bright timbre of the flute's upper register and the warm-sounding middle register of the viola. Both instrumental parts are of equal importance, shaping motifs that highlight the characteristic qualities of each instrument. What binds the two voices together is the interweaving of analogous rhythmic patterns – eighth-note triplets, groups of four sixteenth notes, and dotted rhythms.

The second section of the piece introduces a change not only through the new tempo marking, *Moderato*, but also through the use of new sound-production techniques.

The musical score for K. Borsuk's *Three Miniatures*, bars 9–16, is presented for Flute (Fl.) and Viola (Vla.) in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked *Moderato*. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The flute part begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic, followed by a glissando and a frullato (mf) section. The viola part begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The score ends with a forte (*f*) dynamic for both instruments.

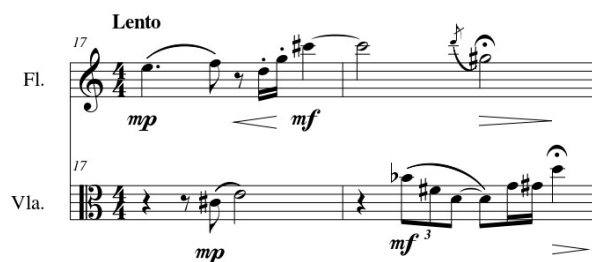
K. Borsuk, *Three Miniatures*, bars 9–16.

The composer enriches the flute part by introducing *glissando*⁸⁴ and *frullato* in bars 2 and 3 of this section. As the passage unfolds, the flute's playful articulation is contrasted with the viola's lyrical motifs, highlighting the natural timbral qualities of both instruments. The character of this fragment is cheerful, even slightly sarcastic, owing to the flute's buoyant articulation. The ending of the miniature is somewhat surprising: the viola suddenly ascends into its high register, and both instrumental parts come to rest in fermatas.

II *Lento – Allegro*

The second miniature opens in a *Lento* tempo.

⁸⁴ Kazimierz Sikorski, *Instrumentoznawstwo* (Cracow: PWM, 1975), 46.



K. Borsuk, *Three Miniatures*, bars 17–18.

The dissonant passages in both instrumental parts move in opposite directions, frequently employing the interval of a tritone. After a brief suspension of the musical narrative in a fermata, the section marked *Allegro* begins.

K. Borsuk, *Three Miniatures*, bars 19–28.

The two voices engage in an intense dialogue, exchanging short motifs of varied construction. The flute part operates in the high register, alternating between groups of sixteenth notes and longer rhythmic values. The viola line is considerably more lyrical and employs a wide range of articulations – from *pizzicato*, through groups of four sixteenth notes and plaintive *legato* motifs, to *glissando*. The instrumental dialogue is full of quasi-questions and mutual completion of individual motifs. The metre in the miniature oscillates between 3/4 and 4/4. The two parts also interweave their registers – a device that brings the extremely different timbres of the instruments closer together in pitch, paradoxically highlighting their natural colouristic contrast even more strongly.

III

The composer omits a tempo subtitle in this miniature. However, the tempo indications themselves are supplemented with precise metronomic values, which clarify the composer's conception of temporal shaping within the piece. The first five bars, in 4/4 metre, are marked *Moderato*, with the quarter note = 84.

Moderato (♩ = 84)

K. Borsuk, *Three Miniatures*, bars 29–33.

The flute presents a motif of four sixteenth notes, repeated three times and separated by longer note values – immediately introducing an intense energy into the music. The viola initially accompanies with *pizzicati*, and shortly thereafter takes over the sixteenth-note motifs; the two voices engage in an energetic dialogue until they arrive at a dotted half note performed together, followed by a *ritenuto* that closes the first segment of the miniature. The *Andantino* tempo introduced in bar 6 begins a brief, two-bar passage that functions as an interlude between the opening and concluding *Moderato* episodes of the piece.

Andantino (♩ = 69)

K. Borsuk, *Three Miniatures*, bars 34–35.

The lyrical phrase in the viola part flows seamlessly into the motifs in the flute line. In bar 35, the composer introduces an additional element: the violist whispers “*psst*” in *piano*, creating the impression of “shushing” the flautist. This is a distinctive expressive device with a humorous colouring. The returning *Moderato* tempo later in the piece is slightly faster than at the beginning: quarter note = 88.

Moderato (♩ = 88)

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (bars 36-37) shows the Flute (Fl.) and Viola (Vla.) parts. The Flute part begins with a melodic phrase in 4/4 time, marked *p*. The Viola part begins with a similar phrase, also marked *p*. The second system (bars 38-40) shows the continuation of the pieces. The Flute part shifts to sixteenth notes, marked *mf* and *rit.*. The Viola part begins a sixteenth-note passage, marked *f* and *mf*.

K. Borsuk, *Three Miniatures*, bars 36–40.

The flute part, initially lyrical, shifts in bar 38 to sixteenth notes performed *staccato*. After its opening cantabile motif, the viola begins a sixteenth-note passage in the low register, which gradually ascends while simultaneously lengthening its rhythmic values. The miniature ends on the interval of a minor sixth, producing a surprising effect when juxtaposed with the otherwise entirely dissonant material of the piece.

The composer marks dynamics, articulation, and tempo with great precision. The character of this miniature may be described as cheerful, even playful. The introduction of a spoken element is a particularly striking device, fitting seamlessly into the overall musical image of the three miniatures.

3.2.6. *Three Aquarelles* (2023)

The three miniatures that form the cycle *Aquarelles* were composed in 2023 for the ensemble *Duo de Soleil*, consisting of violist Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz and flautist Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca. The first and third movements of the cycle are very short pieces. The central point of the set is the middle *Aquarelle*, which is more extensive both in scale and in the musical material it contains.

Aquarelle I

The miniature consists of two sections that differ in tempo, metre, and motivic material. The first segment of the piece is in 3/8 metre and marked *Allegretto*. Only in this part of the cycle does the composer choose to include additional annotations specifying the tempo, adding a metronomic indication.

Score

Aquarelle
I

Karol Borsuk

Violin (Flute)

Viola

Allegretto ♩ = 104

frullato
ohne Tonhöhe

mf

f

K. Borsuk, *Aquarelle I*, bars 1–6.

The first four bars of this passage have a dance-like character, suggesting an analogy with the Polish dance *oberek*. This material is presented in the viola part; the flute joins only in bar 5, performing *frullato* as an ornamental effect – the composer writes *frullato ohne Tonhöhe*⁸⁵, which suggests producing more of a noise-like sound than a pitched tone. The first segment of the miniature concludes with two *pizzicato* eighth notes in the viola part and a caesura. This small added pause gives both performers and listeners the opportunity to adjust more fully to the specific character of what follows.

⁸⁵ Frullato ohne Tonhöhe (Ger.) – *frullato* without a specified pitch.

K. Borsuk, *Aquarelle I*, bars 7–11.

In the second segment, the metre changes from 3/8 to 4/4. The composer also calls for a substantial change of tempo – from *Allegretto*, with the quarter note = 104, to *Sostenuto*, where the quarter note = 76. This shift facilitates the shaping of melodic motifs in sixteenth notes: in the first bar they appear in the flute part, accompanied by the viola in *glissandi*. In the following bar, it is the viola that continues the melodic idea, while the flute “completes” it with quarter notes preceded by grace notes. In the third bar of this section, the melodic line returns to the flute, with the viola accompanying it by performing a quarter note and two-note figures in eighth notes. This bar ends with a fermata, after which a two-bar conclusion follows: the instruments alternate between two-note half notes (in the viola part) and quarter notes with grace notes (in the flute part). The use of longer note values supports the sense of approaching closure: the final sounds consist of a fermata in the flute part and a *tremolo*⁸⁶ played behind the bridge on the viola’s D string.

Aquarelle II

The central miniature of the cycle consists of nineteen bars. It opens with a four-bar flute solo, which is repeated in the subsequent four bars with slight modifications. The viola part, in turn, shapes a contrapuntal line.

⁸⁶ Kazimierz Sikorski, *Instrumentoznawstwo* (Cracow: PWM, 1975), 47.

II

Andante

Vln. *mf*

Vln.

Vla. *f mf*

K. Borsuk, *Aquarelle II*, bars 1–8.

The first four bars of the piece allow the flautist considerable expressive freedom, directly influencing the perception of musical time. The viola part stabilizes the rhythmic values, significantly enlivening the melodic–rhythmic flow while remaining in a lower register than the flute. As the piece unfolds, this relationship is reversed:

Vln. *mf f*

Vla. *mf mf*

K. Borsuk, *Aquarelle II*, bars 9–12.

The viola⁸⁷ takes over the musical idea, analogous to the phrase previously presented in the flute part. Its melodic line spans wide intervallic distances, enabling exploration of the instrument's full register. The flute part provides a contrapuntal line derived from the same musical material that earlier appeared in the viola, fulfilling an equivalent structural function. In the following bars, the texture changes: both instrumental parts exchange motifs of similar construction:

⁸⁷ Kazimierz Sikorski, *Instrumentoznawstwo* (Cracow: PWM, 1975), 50–53.



K. Borsuk, *Aquarelle II*, bars 13–16.

The short musical ideas, exchanged alternately between the two parts, lead to the miniature's climax in bars 15 and 16, where emphasizing the heightened musical intensity – the composer allows the instruments, for the only time in the piece, to form shared vertical structures, further highlighted through articulation. The final three bars return to the earlier texture.



K. Borsuk, *Aquarelle II*, bars 17–19.

Both instrumental parts return to the exchange of motifs. This creates the impression of a reduced intensity of motion, allowing the piece to conclude naturally, without the need for excessive tempo relaxation.

Aquarelle III

The final miniature of the cycle comprises only five bars. Both instrumental parts are given equal prominence.

III

Adagio

Vln. *mp* *mf* *mf* *pizz.*

Vla. *mp* *mf* *mf* *frullato*

sf *p*

K. Borsuk, *Aquarelle III*, bars 1–5.

The material performed by the two players is shaped independently, owing to the diversity of its musical content – the two parts share no analogous elements. This creates a kind of free, alternating monologues that align only in the final bar, where the tremolo in the viola part finds its counterpart in the flute's *frullato*⁸⁸. In this way, the composer allows the final sonorities of the piece to fade with a shimmering quality.

The articulation markings visible in the score of the third miniature – such as *pizzicato* and *arco* in the upper part – together with the initial indication allowing the flute line to be performed on the violin, make it possible to include the piece in duos of two different instrumental configurations. The three miniatures of the cycle are inseparably connected, forming a unified narrative despite their division. The intensity of the central movement, with its uniquely expanded climax, determines the role of the outer movements as a quasi-introduction and coda.

⁸⁸ Kazimierz Sikorski, *Instrumentoznawstwo* (Cracow: PWM, 1975), 123–129.

3.2.7. *Pictures*⁸⁹ / *Bilder* (2018)

The first version of the piece was written for violin and viola, and its premiere was given by Dariusz Blaskiewicz and Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz in 2018 in Berlin-Reinickendorf. The composition was created after an exhibition of pictures by the artist and illustrator Justyna Majewska. Karol Borsuk performed at the opening of the exhibition and was so deeply impressed by her works – that he decided to express this response in a new composition. The piece was completed in 2018. The composer gave the miniature the subtitle *Justyna Majewska's Dancing Pictures*. The work is highly varied in character, incorporating dance elements clothed in Borsuk's distinctive musical language. Frequent changes of metre and tempo are accompanied by clear shifts in dance stylization. The opening bars function as an introduction, presenting a dialogue between the instruments:

Bilder

Karol Borsuk

The musical score for the first six bars of 'Bilder' by Karol Borsuk is presented for Violin and Viola. The Violin part (treble clef) begins with a trill (tr) on a dotted quarter note, followed by a half note. The Viola part (bass clef) begins with a pizzicato (pizz.) eighth note, followed by a quarter note. The score is divided into three two-bar units. In the first unit, the Violin has dynamics 1x *f* and 2x *p*, while the Viola has a pizz. eighth note. In the second unit, the Violin has dynamics 1x *p* and 2x *f*, and the Viola has a quarter note. In the third unit, the Violin has dynamics 1x *f* and 2x *p*, and the Viola has a pizz. eighth note and an arco (tr) eighth note. The tempo and meter change from 3/4 to 2/4 and then to 3/4.

K. Borsuk, *Bilder*, bars 1–6.

In the repeated sections, the composer indicates dynamic changes intended to create an echo effect. In the first two sequences, a clear division between the instrumental parts is evident in the material each of them employs. In the third two-bar unit, both instruments use the same motifs, meeting in a fermata that precedes the beginning of the first dance-like section of the piece.

⁸⁹ Karol Borsuk, "*Pictures*" (album), *Amazon Music*, <https://www.amazon.de/Pictures/dp/B0FC6XLQW6>, accessed 23 March 2026.

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a Violin (Vln.) staff and a Viola (Vla.) staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature starts in 3/4, changes to 2/4 for two systems, and returns to 3/4 for the final system. The Violin part is marked 'pizz.' (pizzicato) and 'arco' (arco). The Viola part is marked 'pizz.' and 'arco'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

K. Borsuk, *Bilder*, bars 7–26.

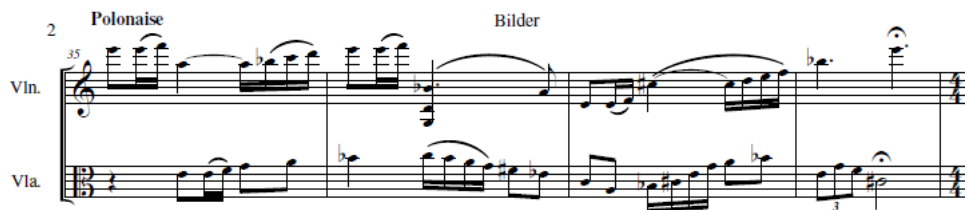
The composer describes these twenty bars as a stylization of the waltz, traditionally set in 3/4 metre. The musical narrative is interrupted three times by the introduction of 2/4 metre – initially in short, two-bar segments, and later in a five-bar span. Each of these interruptions is followed by a return to the dance-like character of the triple metre. Both instrumental parts employ varied types of dialogic interaction. In the first four bars of this section, the flute and viola exchange one-bar, melodically active sequences – the part that is passive in a given bar provides the accompanying line. In the two two-bar passages in 2/4, the composer alludes to the material of the introduction, which, due to its new structural placement, is subjected to a stricter rhythmic framework. The longer, five-bar segment in the same metre features melodic patterns in the flute part analogous to those found in the 3/4 sections. The viola accompanies the wind instrument with motifs built from longer rhythmic values moving in seconds. The return to 3/4 metre marks the continuation of the flute’s melodic dominance – the viola fills the space created by the longer note values in the upper part with short motifs. The “waltz”

section comes to a halt on a fermata, after which the composer introduces a new passage in the style of a mazurka.



K. Borsuk, *Bilder*, bars 27–34.

The mazurka is marked with the tempo indication *Allegro*, which leaves no doubt as to the intended character of the music. The second four-bar unit of this section, marked *Andante kujawiak*, likewise directs the performers toward the idiom of Polish folk dances. In both four-bar passages, the composer employs closely related rhythmic and melodic patterns. The distinction between the mazurka and the *kujawiak* sections arises from the change of tempo and from the transformation of the lively mazurka motifs into the more melancholic inflections characteristic of the *kujawiak*. The subsequent passage is a stylization of the polonaise:



K. Borsuk, *Bilder*, bars 35–38.

The wide *ambitus* of the flute line allows it to assert dominance over the viola part, which functions as a complementary layer while employing analogous rhythmic patterns. As the piece unfolds, the composer introduces a subtle surprise: although he continues to develop material of polonaise origin, he shifts the metre from 3/4 to 4/4.



K. Borsuk, *Bilder*, bars 39–42.

The *Moderato* tempo slightly calms the musical narrative, yet rhythm becomes the governing element of this passage – the melodic aspect recedes into the background. Each of the four bars contains the characteristic polonaise rhythm, expanded by an additional fourth quarter-note beat, which is filled either with rests or with the sustained resonance of a note held under a fermata. As the piece unfolds, the 3/4 metre returns, though now in a form that merges elements of the polonaise with the motivic shapes of the earlier waltz section:

K. Borsuk, *Bilder*, bars 43–49.

In the first four bars of this passage, the composer draws on motifs consisting of two sixteenth-notes followed by an eighth-note – the same material that previously served as the building block of the “polonaise” section. Both parts display equal activity, which changes as the music progresses: in bars 47–49, the flute performs motifs derived from the earlier “waltz” section, while the viola accompanies it with longer note values. The musical narrative pauses briefly in a short caesura, after which the composer once again alters the character of the music:



K. Borsuk, *Bilder*, bars 50–54.

The five bars above mark a return to mazurka-style writing, this time drawing on an analogy with the *oberek*. This transformation is facilitated by the shift to 3/8 metre and the introduction of short motifs shaped in both instrumental parts. The dance-like momentum dissipates in the triplet sequences:

K. Borsuk, *Bilder*, bars 55–64.

The melodic lines in the flute and viola parts introduce a cantabile quality to the phrasing, guiding it toward the conclusion of the piece. The composer returns to the opening material, creating a structural frame that closes the work.

Elements of dance stylization – despite drawing on source models that are functionally distant from one another – form a coherent structure in Borsuk's arrangement. The principle of sequencing does not give the impression of juxtaposing overly disparate components; the use of affinities in melodic and rhythmic material binds the segments of the piece together, resulting in a compact formal design.

3.2.8. *Andante* (2001)

The composer wrote *Andante* in 2001 on the occasion of his daughter's wedding. The premiere took place in Międzyzdroje on 2 June 2001. The piece was originally scored for violin, cello and organ. A later version, prepared by the composer for two violins, was subsequently transcribed and performed by Duo de Soleil in an arrangement for flute and viola. The work follows an ABA1 design, with section A1 based on an alternative distribution of musical material across the individual instrumental parts. The harmonic layer of the composition is rooted in the classical major–minor system.

Section A spans seventeen bars and is constructed as a homophonic texture: the melodic line in the flute part is accompanied by the viola.



K. Borsuk, *Andante*, bars 1–8.

What draws attention is the symmetrical division of this passage into two eight-bar phrases, identical in terms of the melodic content presented in the flute line. In the first eight bars, the viola part provides accompaniment by outlining the components of broken chords, whereas in the second it performs double stops – in both passages the harmonic aspect is crucial, as it defines the colouristic profile of the piece. The composer specifies the articulation with great precision, marking slurs in the viola part in the first eight bars, each connecting two notes. This device introduces a micro-breath into the viola line and adds a melodic quality to the accompanying part, shaping its autonomous contour. In the following eight-bar phrase, the accompanying line performs double stops whose rhythmic structure is

grounded in the accentuation of the bar's first beat, with the remaining space filled by syncopations. The subsequent middle segment of the piece brings a change of mode – from minor to major.



K. Borsuk, *Andante*, bars 17–24.

The mutual relationship between the two instrumental parts also changes. The principal melodic line continues to be shaped in the flute part, whereas the viola no longer provides a purely accompanimental texture but instead performs a second melodic line. Both parts move at an intervallic distance that allows the shaping of independent melodic contours while maintaining harmonic coherence. The change of mode introduces a brighter, more joyful colouring, which is soon counterbalanced by the return of the opening material – now presented in a different configuration:



K. Borsuk, *Andante*, bars 25–32.

The theme in the viola part is a literal repetition of the flute's initial material. The wind instrument, in turn, takes over the accompanying role, in which the

composer introduces rhythmically characteristic sequences – two semiquavers followed by a quaver – producing a heightened sense of motion across the entire sonic spectrum. Within this context, the lyricism of the melodic line becomes subtly transformed, as the accompanying part assumes a contrapuntal function that affects the overall musical narrative. As the piece unfolds, the melody returns to the flute part:



K. Borsuk, *Andante*, bars 33–45.

In bars 37–40, changes in the principal musical idea become apparent when compared with its original form in section A. These differences involve the abandonment of shorter note values in favour of quavers and crotchets, which calm the melodic motion. The accompaniment in the viola part now functions as brief responses to each motif of the melodic line. This passage concludes in D minor, signalling that the narrative is approaching its end. The final four bars form a coda that reduces the element of motion in the music. The miniature closes with a clear dominant–tonic progression.

The composer employs classical structures not only in the overall design of the piece but also in the harmonic layer, which remains highly transparent to the listener. The relationship between the flute and viola parts is straightforward, yet their distribution reveals considerable compositional inventiveness in the handling of various melodic–rhythmic patterns that shape successive segments of the work.

Andante is Karol Borsuk’s most frequently performed composition.

3.2.9. *Souvenir de Kazimierz* (2012)

The piece was created on the basis of the miniature *Kazimierz* – the composer retained the viola part from the solo original and added a new layer that may be performed either by soprano or flute. The viola line contains slight modifications compared with the original version.

The work consists of 41 bars. The viola assumes the leading role for most of the piece, while the flute part complements the narrative with elements of instrumental dialogue. The first 13 bars are dominated by the viola melody.

The musical score for *Souvenir de Kazimierz*, bars 1–13, is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 1–4, and the second system covers bars 5–8. The third system covers bars 9–13. The Flute (Fl.) part is written in treble clef, and the Viola (Vla.) part is written in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 at bar 5, and back to 4/4 at bar 9. The Viola part is marked with 'pizz.' (pizzicato) and 'arco' (arco) in bars 1, 2, 5, and 6. The Flute part has a 'pizz.' marking in bar 1. The score shows the first 13 bars of the piece.

K. Borsuk, *Souvenir de Kazimierz*, bars 1–13.

In bars 1 and 2, the flute joins the viola in shaping the sonority of the introduction. As the piece unfolds, the melodically autonomous viola line is supported by the flute, which provides brief motivic responses that align in scale with the main line. The composer does not indicate a tempo marking in this section, allowing performers to shape the resonance of individual motifs freely. The changing metres – 3/4, 4/4 and 6/4 – are adapted to the rhythmic character of successive phrases. In bar 14, the musical narrative becomes more animated, as Borsuk introduces the tempo indication *Allegro*.

Allegro

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a Flute (Fl.) staff and a Viola (Vla.) staff. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The score includes bar numbers 14, 17, 21, and 25. The Flute part is mostly silent in bars 14-20, then becomes active in bars 17-20, and takes over the leading role in bars 25-28. The Viola part is active throughout, with various melodic lines and dynamics like *ppp* and *pizz.* The score includes bar numbers 14, 17, 21, and 25.

K. Borsuk, *Souvenir de Kazimierz*, bars 14–28.

The flute part becomes more active in bars 17–20, echoing the viola melody and using analogous gestures at the same pitch levels. The intervallic structure of the melodic line changes in comparison with the previous passage: wide intervallic spans give way to stepwise motion – the presence of minor and augmented seconds results from the composer’s use of a scale characteristic of Jewish music. In the final bars of this section, the flute takes over the leading role in the narrative – the musical idea is intervallically and rhythmically analogous to the earlier viola phrases.

During this time, the string instrument performs an accompanying sequence that contributes to the harmonic layer.



K. Borsuk, *Souvenir de Kazimierz*, bars 29–31.

The renewed use of pizzicato in the viola part is complemented by a motif performed by the flute. These bars conclude the middle segment of the piece – the *Allegro* tempo and the resulting musical momentum dissipate in the rest and caesura in bar 31. This gives the narrative an opportunity to settle before the return of the opening material:

K. Borsuk, *Souvenir de Kazimierz*, bars 32–41.

In bars 32 and 33, the material from bars 1 and 2 reappears, with slight modifications. Both instruments contribute to the same harmonic layout. In the following bars, the flute twice repeats motifs previously played by the viola, continuing them in a semiquaver motion that leads to a moment of intensified sonority in the form of double stops and a chord containing the greatest emotional saturation in the piece. This culmination, analogous to the viola original, is shaped exclusively in the viola part, but during the subsequent release of accumulated tension both instruments share the narrative until the final sounds of the piece.

Souvenir de Kazimierz retains an expressive profile almost identical to that of the viola original. However, the addition of the flute part broadens the work's sonority, enriches it with a quasi-vocal element and introduces a dialogue that significantly intensifies the musical narrative, despite the fact that these innovations are implemented with exceptional refinement.

3.3. A Solo Piece for Viola with Choir and Orchestra

3.3.1. *Fantasia*⁹⁰ for Viola, Choir and Orchestra (2017)

The *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra was composed in 2017 and is dedicated to the author of this doctoral dissertation. A fantasia (from Lat. *phantasia*, Gr. φαντασία – imagination) is a musical form characterised by a free structure, often lacking strict rules governing its construction. It may be shaped freely by the composer and incorporate diverse elements of musical expression. This definition aptly describes Karol Borsuk's *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra. The piece is filled with material varied in many respects, enabling a highly expressive musical discourse. It comprises 108 bars, and the performing forces include a solo viola, a choir consisting of sopranos, altos, tenors and basses, and an orchestra made up of first and second violins, violas, cellos, double basses, two flutes, a clarinet and two horns. The harmonic layer employs classical functional harmony.

The piece opens with a nine-bar orchestral tutti in 4/4 *alla breve* and at an *Andante* tempo, presenting the main melodic line in the first violin part. In bars 7–9, the choir enters, performing material analogous to that of the first and second violins as well as the flutes and clarinet. The choral parts contain no text. In bar 10, the viola begins its solo line with a one-bar cadenza – an ascending arpeggiated figure – and subsequently performs motifs that complement the melodic material of the violins and violas.

⁹⁰ Karol Borsuk, “*Fantasia for viola, choir and orchestra*,” YouTube video, accessed 2 April 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PYIwKr9N-0>.

Fl. *mf*

C Cl. *mf*

Hn. *mf*

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I *pizz.* *mf*

Vln. II *pizz.* *mf*

Vla. *pizz.* *mf*

Vc. *pizz.* *mf*

Cb. *pizz.* *mf*

K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 11–14.

An analogous relationship between the solo part and the orchestra is maintained throughout the subsequent passage up to bar 22, from which point the viola gains melodic autonomy.

6 Fantasia

19

Fl.

C Cl.

Hn.

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

a tempo

p

mp

mp

f

pizz.

arco

mf

p

pizz.

arco

mf

p

pizz.

arco

mf

p

mf

p

mf

mp

K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 19–23.

24

Fl.

C Cl.

Hn.

S

A

T

B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

mf

mp

f

ord.

mf

mp

mf

K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 24–28.

Initially, the melodic line in the viola part is shaped against a background of tremolo in the violin and viola sections, while the flutes provide a contrapuntal idea in relation to the solo layer. The solo phrase is highly expressive – the composer makes effective use of the instrument's low and middle registers, whose distinctive timbre enhances the sense of heightened tension in the music. From bar 27 onwards, the orchestra begins a more active dialogue with the viola, leading to a solo cadenza:



K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 33–38.

In the first three bars of this passage, the composer introduces a quasi-virtuosic structure that enriches the melodic element present in the upper voice. The dominant (D major), stated twice, leads into the subsequent bars of the cadenza, whose texture is analogous to that of bars 22–29. This allows the viola to deliver an independent, highly expressive statement. The passage concludes in the tonic key (G minor), after which the accumulated musical tension is sustained by the full orchestral forces in bars 39–45, leading to another solo cadenza:



K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 45–49.

This time, the solo viola bars constitute a variation-like elaboration of the motifs presented in bars 3–6 by the first and second violins. The intensification of expression within the cadenza leads directly into an orchestral tutti, which begins with the resolution of the viola's final dominant chord to the tonic of the VI degree (E-flat major) in bar 50. The four-bar passage precedes the next appearance of the solo viola, now employing triplets and two-voice writing in the interval of a sixth. The increasing tension in the viola line, supported by an orchestral crescendo, initiates a change of metre to 3/4, which – despite the composer's instruction to maintain the initial *Andante* tempo – creates a slightly more animated impression due to the introduction of triple metre.

13

K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 57–60.

140

Fantasie

14

Fl. 63 *f* *mf* *rit.*

C Cl. 63

Hn. 63

S 63

A 63

T 63

B 63

Vla. Solo 63 *f* *pizz.*

Vln. I 63 *f* *mf*

Vln. II 63 *f* *mf*

Vla. 63 *mf*

Vc. 63 *f* *mf*

Cb. 63 *f* *mf*

K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 63–65.

In the subsequent passage, the composer reiterates the four-bar orchestral tutti, in which the musical narrative is calmed. All instruments perform chromatic intervallic progressions in the first bar of this section and then successively take over the shared melodic contour. This passage has a sentimental quality, intended to release the tension accumulated earlier in the piece. The viola part that follows

interacts more closely than before with the orchestral material. Once again, the section concludes with a viola pizzicato resonating into silence, which simultaneously introduces the next solo cadenza:

Fantasie

16

Fl.

C Cl.

Hn.

Vla. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

70

74

pizz.

arco

Viola solo Cadenza

K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 70–77.

The solo passage is lyrical, offering the performer considerable interpretative freedom. The cadenza is enriched by numerous dissonances – ninths and sevenths – appearing both horizontally, in the melodic line, and vertically, in the double stops woven into the narrative. The passage is rhythmically active,

employing semiquaver figures and quaver triplets. The changing metres – 4/4, 9/8 and 5/4 – enhance the expressive fluidity of the cadenza. The viola part then transitions smoothly into interaction with the orchestral forces, this time in the character of a polonaise.

Fantasie

Moderato $\text{♩} = 88$

17

78

Fl. *mf*

C. Cl. *mf*

Hn. *mf*

S

A

T

B

Vla. Solo *f*

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 78–82.

Here, the orchestra provides accompaniment to the leading viola part. Despite its strong rhythmic profile, the passage retains a melancholic quality and moves seamlessly into the next section, reflective yet also heroic in character. This is supported by the composer's introduction of the *Maestoso* tempo and the return to 4/4, which abandons the dance-like quality.

Fantasie

18

Maestoso $\text{♩} = 80$

Fl.

C Cl.

Hn.

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 83–87.

Nearly the full ensemble participates here: all string instruments, flutes, all choral voices and the solo part. This passage forms the expressive climax of the piece. The subsequent polonaise-like section brings a renewed sense of motion – after *Maestoso*, the composer indicates a change to *Moderato*. The characteristic rhythm in the string parts, consisting of a quaver followed by two semiquavers and interrupted by a dotted rhythm, is distinctly dance-like. The viola engages in dialogue with the orchestra, leading to a change of mode to G major in bar 102.

22 Più animato Fantasia

100

Fl. *mf*

C Cl. *mf*

Hn. *mf*

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bars 100–104.

From bar 103 onwards, virtuosic passages appear, signalling the approaching conclusion of the piece, in which all instrumental and vocal forces participate. The final solo cadenza of the viola incorporates earlier melodic patterns. The piece concludes with a unified chord played by the entire ensemble.

24 Fantasia

Viola solo
Cadenza

tutti

108

Fl.

C Cl.

Hn.

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

K. Borsuk, *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, bar 108.

The structure of the piece fully corresponds to the definition of the fantasia form. The ordered sections share a common origin in terms of motivic material and harmonic content. The principal element shaping the narrative is the fluctuation of musical tension, achieved through the use of various performance means: tempo, metre, orchestral and choral texture, and either virtuosity or lyricism in the solo part. The composer employs only slight variation in harmonic progression,

oscillating around the tonic – this aspect, combined with the refined selection of performance techniques, requires the performer to consider all possible ways of shaping musical expression so that the resulting effect does not lead to an excessive exaggeration of the composer's artistic intention.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Working on the solo and chamber works of Karol Borsuk posed a challenge for the author of this doctoral dissertation due to the absence of a performance tradition surrounding these compositions as artistic works, as well as the lack of studies addressing the entirety of his output. This phenomenon is not uncommon in contemporary music – the oeuvre of only a small number of living composers is present on concert stages to such an extent that one could speak of more broadly defined characteristic features of their works. The author's pioneering efforts combined a thorough analysis of the musical material with direct work on the instrument itself. The balance between these two elements was essential for achieving an interpretation that was both coherent and faithful to the composer's intentions. The previous chapter presented noteworthy details concerning each of the works recorded as part of the artistic component of this dissertation. When appropriately systematised, these elements define the key areas of Karol Borsuk's viola writing from the performer's perspective, enabling the identification of an interpretative framework and supporting a proper understanding of the composer's artistic ideas.

The composer's musical language displays considerable diversity. According to Borsuk, the most crucial moment in the creative process is the initial inspiration, from which the concept of a piece emerges. The subsequent work is based on experimenting with the elements of musical structure, which take shape only during the act of composition. Borsuk is, on the one hand, an advocate of classical structures, and on the other, a proponent of a mode of expression accessible to listeners shaped by the sensibilities of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. For this reason, any discussion of the elements of his output requires an approach that takes this specificity into account. As an experienced musician and pedagogue, Borsuk is simultaneously a composer who continues to experiment in search of a universal artistic expression. This may position his work as inherently eclectic, drawing on diverse models and juxtaposing varied elements.

Each of the works presented in this dissertation has a distinct origin, described in the course of detailed analyses. *Goethe auf Tegel* and *Kazimierz* arose

from a fascination with literature – the writings of Otto Pniower and Maria Kuncewiczowa. *Three Aquarelles* were composed with specific performers in mind (Duo de Soleil), *Ave Maria* is based on the structure of a prayer, *Bilder* reflects the composer's visual impressions during a painting exhibition. *Erinnerung*⁹¹ was dedicated to the performer, the *Fantasia in D minor*⁹² was inspired by Baroque music, and *Kolding* emerged from impressions gathered during a visit to an exhibition of Carl Fabergé's art. Knowledge of the inspirations underlying the creation of a work provides the performer with invaluable interpretative guidance, directing the artist's sensitivity onto the appropriate path and often suggesting the expressive and emotional domains in which the interpretation should unfold.

Karol Borsuk's compositions are, for the most part, miniature forms (with the exception of the *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra). Their structures are based on the principle of sequencing musical ideas. In some cases, this method of constructing musical narrative results in a ternary, reprise-like form – ABA1. In *April*, such a design reinforces the impression of recurring emotions; in *Kazimierz*, it helps organise characteristic melodic structures. In the remaining works, sequencing creates the impression of a free artistic statement, in which successive musical phrases are linked through the compositional techniques employed. In *Goethe auf Tegel*, the composer juxtaposes fragments related through intervallic structures. He also connects musical ideas through contrast – *Three Aquarelles* exemplify such structuring within a cycle of three movements. This type of construction effectively realises Borsuk's artistic intentions in the realm of instrumental miniatures: the small scale of the works allows the composer to shape an artistic statement that contains a maximum of content within a minimal space. The *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra is likewise constructed as a sequence of musical ideas; in this case, however, the internally varied material, differentiated in terms of emotional qualities, enables the creation of an extended, expressive musical discourse. Throughout the piece, the composer remains within a domain of expression characterised by varying degrees of intensity.

⁹¹ Karol Borsuk, *Erinnerung / Remembrance*, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcdY_yXNnBg, accessed 2 April 2026.

⁹² Karol Borsuk, *Fantasia in G minor*, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=za4-Bu8eghY>, accessed 2 April 2026.

Harmonic tendencies are identifiable in nearly all the works, though their role differs considerably. Some compositions are devoid of functional harmonic progression – the composer employs vertical sonorities with a defined harmonic colour, yet without a broader harmonic context. In *Three Aquarelles*, Borsuk creates a dissonant space through the dialogue between the instruments. In *Goethe auf Tegel*, harmony enriches individual sonorities, and the harmonic stabilisation at the end provides an effective conclusion to the piece. Several works are based on classical functional harmony, which plays an active form-shaping role. In the *Fantasia in D minor*, the inspiration drawn from the music of G.Ph. Telemann directly informs the harmonic layer. In the *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, the composer employs functional harmony with only a small number of dissonances. In *Kolding*, harmonic relationships do not form a larger structural whole, yet they generally prevail over dissonant elements. In some works, the composer abandons functional harmony altogether, leaving isolated harmonic relationships that colour specific, structurally significant moments. In *April*, the composer uses subtle fluctuations of individual elements that create the impression of modal shifts. Given the emotional character of the piece, these techniques highlight seemingly minor colouristic differences that resonate strongly within the expressive layer. The spectrum ranging from functional harmony to extreme atonality confirms that Borsuk is a composer continually searching for new modes of artistic expression. Broadly speaking, the harmonic dimension of his musical language oscillates between classical harmony and modern means of expression, without a clear predominance of either.

Melodic structures are directly linked to the harmonic layer. In the solo works, the melodic line determines the harmonic shape either independently or with the support of additional voices that complete individual sonorities. In the chamber works, both instrumental parts carry melodic lines that, through their dialogue, generate the harmonic layer. The work that demonstrates the most traditional understanding of melodic shaping is *Andante*. This can be attributed to the circumstances of its creation: the piece was conceived for a specific occasion – the wedding of the composer's daughter – and thus intended for an audience with particular expectations regarding the character of the music.

Melody in Karol Borsuk's musical language extends beyond classical models and becomes a vehicle of expression. In *Kazimierz*, the composer uses the

melodic element – specifically the Jewish scale – to define the source of inspiration. This determines its contour, intervallic layout and the exploration of wide registral spans. In the *Fantasia* for viola, choir and orchestra, the solo instrument shapes the melodic dimension for the most part, yet it also participates in forming the texture of the piece, occasionally performing secondary material. The textural aspect in Borsuk's works is subordinated to the performing forces. In the viola compositions, the composer frequently employs changes of articulation – pizzicato and arco – which allow him to exploit nearly all sound-producing possibilities of the instrument and contribute to shaping expression by expanding the viola's sonic volume.

The chamber works are characterised by a dialogue between two equally significant instrumental parts. In *Goethe auf Tegel*, the composer unifies the means of sound production in both parts. Because the piece was transcribed from a violin part to the flute, certain elements had to be adapted to the capabilities of a wind instrument. These adjustments included reducing double stops or chords to single notes, or breaking up multi-note verticalities by rendering them as upper notes preceded by grace notes. Borsuk rarely employs virtuosic elements – when they do appear, they are always subordinated to expressive shaping.

In *Mosaik*, the composer presents an exceptionally refined dialogue containing numerous actively evolving elements while maintaining structural homogeneity in both parts. Dance elements also appear. In *Bilder*, one finds a waltz, a mazurka and a polonaise – characteristic motifs are present in both instrumental parts. In *Preludium a canzona*, Borsuk instructs the performer to play and sing simultaneously, pushing beyond the limitations of the instrument and, indeed, of the performer.

A particularly interesting phenomenon in Karol Borsuk's works is metre. A fixed, unchanging metre appears only in *April*. In *Ave Maria*, the composer omits a time-signature altogether. *Erinnerung* likewise contains no metre; moreover, the composer divides the musical content into bars in a way that preserves the impression of natural breathing within the music. In the remaining works, metre fluctuates according to the needs of the musical material. In *Kolding* and *Odessa*, the composer changes metre almost every bar. Metre, by its very nature, supports the shaping of musical discourse, stabilising time within successive bars, yet through its variability it generates an impression of natural narrative flow. The

presence of a metrical indication gives the performer a sense of operating within defined temporal boundaries – the absence of metre is, by association, too close to *ad libitum*. However, in Borsuk's music, the lack of metre is sufficiently compensated by the precision of the notation, which prevents the performer from exercising excessive freedom. Thus, the absence of metre becomes a deliberate, carefully considered expressive device.

Dynamic markings provide the performer with valuable information about the composer's vision of shaping musical tension. Borsuk often uses them as auxiliary indications – at times the dynamic differences follow logically from the direction of the phrase, yet regardless of this, the abundance of authorial annotations is extremely helpful for the interpreter. The composer rarely operates within extreme dynamic ranges – *fortissimo* and *pianissimo* appear only sporadically. In some works, Borsuk omits dynamic markings altogether. In *Bilder*, he indicates them only in short, repeated fragments; the remainder of the piece contains no suggestions regarding dynamic intensity.

The chamber works – duos for flute and viola, and for violin and viola – significantly expand the chamber repertoire for these instruments. The viola part is shaped on an equal footing with the instrument possessing the higher register. The viola performs material often analogous to that of the flute or violin, and its characteristic timbre is deliberately employed in Borsuk's works to impart an individual colour that highlights the instrument's uniqueness. The fact that Borsuk is a violinist has a substantial impact on his ability to write effectively for string instruments, ensuring that the material is entirely idiomatic.

Borsuk's works for solo viola and his chamber compositions can be successfully incorporated into the repertoire of students at secondary music schools and conservatories. The level of difficulty varies, allowing performers to select pieces suited to nearly any stage of technical advancement. All the elements discussed above also enable teachers and performers to adapt the content of the works to their individual artistic expectations. Given the wide range of diverse compositions, it is certainly possible to cultivate the sensitivity of a young instrumentalist at every stage of their artistic development.

A number of Karol Borsuk's works were not originally intended for the viola. Transcription has long been a common practice in the history of music. Instruments such as the viola, double bass, horn or oboe began to appear on concert

stages independently much later than, for instance, the violin or piano. Their solo repertoire is therefore less extensive than that of instruments which, from the outset, were predisposed to a soloistic career. To fill this gap, works originally written for other instruments are transcribed. This does not imply that performing a piece on an instrument other than the one envisaged by the composer diminishes its artistic value. That value is timeless, and the demands placed on performers do not change depending on the instrument on which the work is played. When composing for the violin, Borsuk naturally explored a domain close to him. The transcriptions for viola are the result of the author's initiative, guided by the intention to enrich the viola repertoire with works of unquestionable artistic merit.

Borsuk's music combines classical structures with modern elements of musical expression. The sonorities characteristic of twenty-first-century music do not preclude the legitimacy of drawing on classical models. The purpose of his music is to convey emotions and ideas to listeners. To fulfil this aim, it is essential to ensure that the content of the work is comprehensible and endowed with a degree of universality in the means employed, which naturally broadens the potential audience by accommodating listeners with varying sensitivities and preferences. References to the surrounding world, social events or specific places allow his music to evoke extramusical associations, facilitating its reception. Music lives only when it is heard. Karol Borsuk composes with listeners in mind – with the experiences and emotions they may encounter through his music. Leaving space for the listener's subjective interpretation is a *sine qua non* of art; excessive literalness excludes a work from belonging to the sphere of high culture.

Work on the interpretation of Karol Borsuk's compositions for solo viola, viola with flute, and viola with choir and orchestra has revealed not only the composer's technical mastery but also his ability to transcend traditional musical boundaries, creating works that are at once innovative and deeply rooted in tradition.

In the course of this research, the author conducted a detailed analysis of the formal aspects of selected works, examining the characteristic features of Borsuk's musical language and his innovative compositional techniques. Working with the composer's original manuscripts made it possible to capture his distinctive style, which combines precise harmonic structuring with a rich emotional palette. The interpretation of the works recorded on the accompanying album constitutes an

essential complement to the analytical process, demonstrating that this music is alive and capable of resonating with contemporary audiences.

One of the central themes of this dissertation was the exploration of the influence that the composer's personal experiences and diverse artistic interests had on his life and work. From an early age, Borsuk was fascinated by literature, painting and other art forms, and he successfully transferred these inspirations into his compositions, creating works that are both deeply personal and universal. His regular visits to art galleries, concerts and theatres, as well as his frequent engagement with poetry, enriched his imagination and shaped his artistic sensitivity.

Equally important was the opportunity to gain insight into the composer's life through conversations with him, which made it possible to understand how difficult life decisions – such as emigration and separation from family – influenced the development of his artistic voice. Despite adversity, Borsuk remained faithful to his roots and his passion for music, resulting in a substantial body of work that significantly enriches both Polish and international musical literature.

Particular attention was devoted to the viola repertoire, which constitutes one of the pillars of Borsuk's output. His compositions for solo viola, as well as duos with flautist Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca and works performed with the Koszalin Philharmonic and the Szczecin Choir under the baton of Jacek Piotr Kujawski, represent valuable and inspiring examples of contemporary chamber music. Performances of these works, both in concert and in recordings, reveal their remarkable richness and diversity.

Karol Borsuk combines past and present in a unique way, creating music that speaks to a wide audience. His oeuvre demonstrates that contemporary music can be both innovative and deeply rooted in tradition, and that its message can be universal and timeless. The analysis of his works for viola provides insight into the significance of his contribution to the development of the instrument and the considerable potential inherent in his music.

The composer's output is not only a valuable contribution to Polish viola literature but also an important element of contemporary world music. His willingness to experiment and search for new means of expression, combined with a profound grounding in tradition, makes his music exceptional and inspiring. It is to be hoped that this dissertation will contribute to a broader recognition and

appreciation of this remarkable composer and encourage performers to continue exploring and engaging with his work.

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Appendix

7.1. Composer Piotr Moss on Karol Borsuk

My encounter with Karol Borsuk took place in Berlin, at that time still West Berlin. After the premiere of my work *Gloria* for choir, organ and wind instruments at the Berlin Philharmonie, a very kind man approached me to congratulate me on the piece and – incidentally – on the award I had received for it. This was in 1982. I did not imagine that this meeting would mark the beginning of a long friendship and artistic collaboration.

Karol persuaded me to write numerous works for the ensembles – primarily choirs – with which he collaborated. For me, it was an interesting opening towards choral music, which had previously occupied a rather modest place in my output. Karol Borsuk inspired me; he constantly had new ideas, remarkably diverse ones. For alongside short choral pieces, we created together *Snuć miłość...* for reciter and strings, *Weihnachtskantate* for soprano, choir and small orchestra, as well as *Musik einer Sommernacht*, written for several mixed choirs, instrumental groups and carillon, performed in front of the Berlin Kongresshalle on the occasion of Berlin's 700th anniversary.

But there were more works than these. I fondly recall performances of my *Spandauer Messe* in many Berlin churches, as well as at the Konzerthaus.

At a certain point, Karol Borsuk added composition to his conducting activities. And here he demonstrates great diligence – which is extremely important for a composer. His works are full of imagination; he writes both chamber music and larger vocal–instrumental pieces. I have attended many performances of his compositions. They were always very successful. Sometimes we discuss his new works; at times I take on the role of teacher and timidly offer him some advice or make small remarks... Karol has considerable compositional talent; he does not write “against the instruments,” and he devotes much attention to string writing, being himself a violinist.

Karol Borsuk is a very interesting person – an intellectual in the fullest sense – who takes the profession of musician very seriously. Music is, of course, his greatest passion.

Piotr Moss
Kompozytor
https://pwm.com.pl/en/kompozytorzy_i_autorzy/5095/piotr-moss/index.html

7.2. Professor Tomasz Tomaszewski⁹³ on Karol Borsuk

He is a Polish violinist, conductor and composer who has been active in Berlin for many years. He is among the most important figures in the city's musical life. His compositional output testifies to his excellent education and broad intellectual horizons. I have had the opportunity to perform many of his works on numerous occasions – always eliciting vivid, positive reactions from audiences. These include both chamber pieces and larger works for choir and orchestra, such as the cantata *Quo vadis, Domine?* or *Misdroy Fantasie* – for viola, choir and orchestra.

On several occasions, I had the opportunity to take part in performances of the impressive *Misdroy Messe* – a significant work for orchestra, organ, choir and soloists, offering a fresh approach to the classical mass form and featuring a number of superbly crafted, refined sonic effects. In this piece, Borsuk demonstrates an impressive command of compositional technique, particularly evident in the choral writing – which in many passages dominates the orchestral parts and beautifully complements the expressive solo sections.

Karol Borsuk also excels in the aphoristic, witty and intellectually engaging form of the miniature. I am thinking here of *Übersetzen* – a song to words by Dedecius, *Seneca Sentenzen*, or *Hommage à Piotr Moss* for solo violin. I have performed the latter many times.

In 2023, I had the opportunity to take part in the premiere of one of Karol Borsuk's most recent compositions, written for the centenary of Karl Dedecius's

⁹³ Deutsche Oper Berlin – Ensemble, https://deutscheoperberlin.de/de_DE/ensemble/16973, accessed 23 March 2026.

birth. It was *Fantasia Dedecius* for two violins and chamber orchestra, in which I performed one of the solo parts. Here, Borsuk makes excellent use of his extensive knowledge of the violin, giving the soloists ample opportunity for virtuosic display. The work, rich in emotional content, unfolds with a fluent and highly engaging narrative and is full of outstanding formal ideas.

To conclude, I would like to state that I consider Karol Borsuk's music to be highly valuable and compelling. It operates in its own recognisable language – original and striking. Without abandoning ambitious explorations of new sonorities, it nonetheless reaches a wide audience; in short, it is worthy of the finest concert halls

prof. dr Tomasz Tomaszewski
Universität der Künste Berlin
Prezydent Internationale Beethoven Gesellschaft e.V.
https://deutscheoperberlin.de/de_DE/ensemble/16973

7.3. Professor Bogdan Narloch⁹⁴ on Karol Borsuk

Karol Borsuk is one of the significant figures in Berlin's musical life, serving as a bridge between Polish and German musical culture. His extensive activity in the fields of pedagogy, leadership of numerous musical ensembles, organisation of concert life and compositional work makes him one of the most active and creative Polish musicians residing in the city. A considerable part of his artistic activity also takes place in Poland, where he has participated in many concerts, appearing as both conductor and violinist. His music has likewise been performed here on numerous occasions.

What I find particularly valuable in his work is his constant commitment to promoting Polish musical culture in Germany – as well as his enduring admiration for German and European culture. This sphere of interests and passions is clearly reflected in his compositional output and concert activity. Of special importance to

⁹⁴ About Bogdan Narloch, *About.me*, <https://about.me/narlochbogdan.eng>, accessed 23 March 2026.

him are those figures who, in the realm of art and culture, connect our two nations. One such figure is Karl Dedecius, the German translator and promoter of Polish and Russian literature, born in Łódź. Karol is undoubtedly a refined erudite. As we are friends and have had many conversations, I know how broad the spectrum of his interests is, encompassing – in addition to music – many other artistic disciplines. I am familiar with his continual peregrinations through the world's museums, theatres, opera houses and concert halls. He is constantly immersed in reading dozens of books. This undoubtedly contributes to the high artistic awareness and maturity of the art he creates. It is evident in the quality of the concerts he leads, including the many premieres he has conducted, particularly with the choirs and orchestras he directs in Berlin.

In the last two decades, he has also become a prolific composer. His works are written with specific performers in mind. As a result, they have been presented many times both in Germany and in Poland. I have personally taken part in several joint concerts, during which I not only had the opportunity to become acquainted with many of his works, but also performed in some of them, playing the organ parts. In my view, Karol Borsuk's creative process is highly conscious and mature – both in terms of compositional technique and artistic intent. He has succeeded in developing his own original musical language, which stylistically combines classical and modern textural means.

prof. dr hab. Bogdan Narloch⁹⁵

<https://about.me/narlochbogdan.eng>⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Bogdan Narloch, *Organy i muzyka organowa na Pomorzu. Do problematyki* (Poznań: Akademia Muzyczna im. I. J. Paderewskiego, 2012), 142–145.

⁹⁶ "About Bogdan Narloch," *About.me*, <https://about.me/narlochbogdan.eng>, accessed 23 March 2026.

7.4. Photographic History of the Artistic Achievements of Karol Borsuk



Honorary Citizenship of the City of Międzyzdroje. The composer's archive.



Private statuette from the musicians of the Koszalin Philharmonic. The composer's archive.



Letter of thanks to Karol Borsuk from Herwig Kempinger, President of the Wiener Secession, for supporting the restoration and gilding of the Secession building's dome in Vienna. The composer's archive



Sculpture with a plaque for the composition and premiere of the Misdroy Messe, presented by the residents of Międzyzdroje. The composer's archive.



Commemorative token marking the conferral of the title Meritorious for the Parish for the compositions written for the parish and for the city of Międzyzdroje: Misdroy Messe, Misdroy Requiem, and Fantasia for Viola, Choir and Orchestra. The composer's archive.



‘Stowarzyszenie Młodzieży Muzycznej, Sekcja Padwa’ — honorary member's medal presented to Karol Borsuk with thanks, Abano Terme, 29 August 1996, following concerts in Italy featuring Carl Orff's Carmina Burana. The composer's archive.



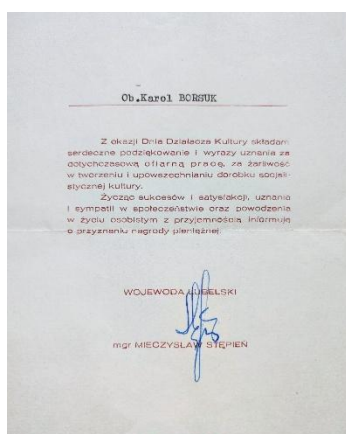
Coat of arms of the City of Łuków, presented by the mayor. The composer's archive.



Certificate of the German Choral Association for 40 years of work with the Lichterfelde Choir, signed by the former President of the Federal Republic of Germany. The composer's archive.



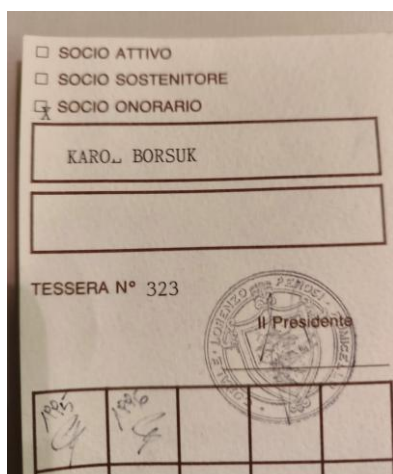
130th anniversary of Karol Borsuk's work with the Lichterfelde Choir. The composer's archive.



Award presented to Karol Borsuk by the Voivode of Lublin in 1979. The composer's archive.



Honorary diploma of the City of Spandau awarded to Karol Borsuk for 30 years of conducting with the Frauenchor Spandau, presented on 10 October 2015. The composer's archive.



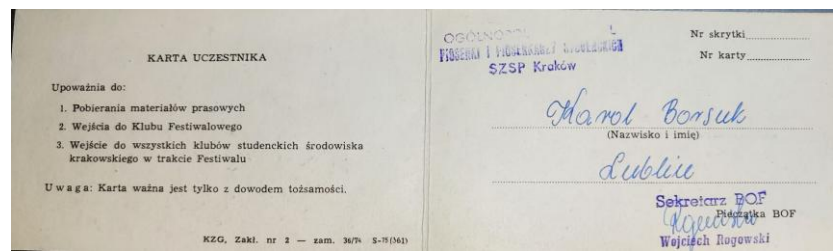
Honorary membership insurance card of the 'Lorenzo Perosi' Choir in Fiumicello (Udine), Italy. Karol Borsuk collaborated with this choir for several years, conducting numerous concerts in Italy featuring major vocal-instrumental works, including Carl Orff's Carmina Burana (around fifteen performances in Trieste, Abano Terme, Grado and Fiumicello), Sergei Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky (concerts in Hungary and Italy), and Alexander Borodin's Polovtsian Dances. The composer's archive.



Official honorary diploma issued by the authorities of the Berlin-Spandau district on 28 November 2024, confirming the award of the 'Ehrennadel des Bezirks Spandau von Berlin' to Karol Borsuk for outstanding contributions to community service. The composer's archive.



Frank Bewig, representative of the Spandau district authorities, pins the 'Ehrennadel des Bezirks Spandau von Berlin' on Karol Borsuk during the official ceremony, underscoring the public and institutional character of the distinction and its significance for the local community. The composer's archive.



Participation card for the 11th National Festival of Student Songs and Singers, held in Kraków in 1974, where Karol Borsuk performed with Janek Wroczyński and received a distinction. The invitation was designed by Edward Lutczyński, a renowned Polish graphic artist who, at the age of eight, won first prize in an illustration competition organised by Świerszczyk, a popular children's magazine. The composer's archive.



Plaquette of the choral association 'Vox Julia' from Ronchi, Italy, presented in thanks for participation in the performance of Carl Orff's Carmina Burana at the Berlin Philharmonie, 19–23 November 1996. The composer's archive.



Pierluigi da Palestrina Medal of the Polyphonic Choir Association of the City of Palestrina, Italy, awarded for participation in performances of Carl Orff's Carmina Burana in Italy and at the Berlin Philharmonie. The composer's archive.

7.5. Catalogue of Musical Materials

7.5.1. Solo Works for Viola

7.5.1.1. *Kolding*

Kolding

Karol Borsuk

Viola

Allegro

mf

f

mf

Andante

f

mf

Allegro

mf

pizz.

arco

mp

f

mf

auf der Geige klopfen

7.5.1.2. Odessa

Odessa

K. Borsuk

Lento

pizz. *mf* arco *p* *mp* *f*

5 *mf* *f*

9 *mf* *f* *mp*

Moderato

13 *mf* *f* *mf* *mp* *mf*

17 arco *f* *mf*

20 pizz. arco *mf* *p*

Allegro

23 pizz. arco *mf* rit. pizz. arco

26 pizz. arco *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* **Allegro**

7.5.1.3. *Scherz I*

Scherz I

Karol Borsuk

Andante



Allegro



7.5.1.4. Scherz II

Scherz II

Andante ♩ = 60

Karol Borsuk

Measures 1-3: *mf p f mf p f f p mf p f p*. Articulations: *pizz.*, *arco*, *ten.*, *rit.*.

Allegretto ♩ = 75 - 80

Measures 4-5: *mf mf < ff p f*. Articulations: *pizz.*, *arco*, *accel.*, *arco*, *ten.*.

Andante ♩ = 60

Measures 6-7: *p mf f f subito p*. Articulations: *arco*, *ten.*, *rit.*.

Allegro

Measures 8-9: *mf f f mf*. Articulations: *arco*.

7.5.1.5. Fantasia in D minor

Fantazja d-moll

Karol Borsuk

Andante

mf *tr* *mf*

5 *f* *mp* *f*

10 Moderato *mf* *f* *f* *pizz.* *arco* *Andante* *p*

14 *mf* *pizz.* *arco* 3

18 *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *Allegro moderato*

21 *p* *mf* *f* *tr* *mf* *Andantino*

25 *arco* *arco* *pizz.* *pizz.* *arco* *mf*

29 *f* *pizz.* *tremolo* *rit.* *p*

klopfen
pudło rezonansowe

7.5.1.6. Fantasia Piccola / Piccola Fantasia

Piccola Fantasia

Karol Borsuk

Moderato ♩ = 90

Viola

pizz. arco

mf

Vla.

6 pizz. arco

mf *f* *mp* ³

Vla.

12 *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *f* pizz.

Vla.

17 arco pizz.

Vla.

20 pizz. arco pizz. arco

Vla.

24 *pp* ³

Vla.

29

Vla.

34 *f* *p*

Piccola Fantasia

2

Vla. 37 *pizz.* *arco* *ppp*

Vla. 41 *mf*

Vla. 46 *ppp*

Vla. 51 *mf* *pizz.* *arco*

Vla. 58 *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.*

Vla. 66 *arco* *pizz.arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.arco* *arco* *pizz.*

Vla. 71 *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.*

Vla. 75 *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.arco* *pizz.*

Vla. 81 *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.*

7.5.1.7. *Kazimierz*

Kazimierz

Score

Karol Borsuk

Viola

pizz. arco pizz. arco

5

Vla.

9

Vla.

14 **Allegro**

Vla.

17

Vla.

21

Vla.

25

Vla.

29

Vla.

32

Vla.

pizz. arco

pizz. arco

pizz.

7.5.1.8. Cloud 7 / Wolke 7

Wolke 7

Karol Borsuk

1 *p* *mf*

5 *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

7 *mf* *f* *mf*

10 C *f* *mp* *mf* *f*

14 *f* *pizz.* *arco* *tr* *mp* *mf* *f*

21

7.5.1.9. Remembrance / Erinnerung

Erinnerung

Karol Borsuk

Moderato

mf *f*

mf *p* *mf*

mf *f* *mf* *f* *p*

mf *f* *mp* *p* *rit.*

a tempo

mf *mp* *mf* *mf* *Col legno battuto*

7.5.1.10. April

April

Karol Borsuk

The musical score for 'April' by Karol Borsuk is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a *mp* dynamic and a crescendo leading to a *mf* dynamic. The second staff starts at measure 6 with a quintuplet marked '5' and a *mf* dynamic. The third staff begins at measure 11. The fourth staff starts at measure 16 with a *p* dynamic. The fifth staff begins at measure 20 with a *mp* dynamic and a crescendo leading to a *mf* dynamic. The sixth staff starts at measure 25 with a *p* dynamic, followed by a *f* dynamic and then a *p* dynamic. Performance markings include 'hinter dem Steg' and 'pizz.' above the staff at measure 25, and 'rit.' above the staff at measure 26. The score concludes with a double bar line.

7.5.1.11. *Preludium a canzona*

Preludium a canzona

Karol Borsuk

mp mf mp mf

4 f p tr mp mf f

8 mf

13 pizz. arco

18 rit. a tempo mp

22 mf

25 mp

Ars auro gemmisque prior -
sztuka cenniejsza, niż złoto i kamienie

29

Ars au - ro gem - mis - que — pri - or

29 pizz.

33

sztu - ka cen - niej - sza niż zło - to i ka - mie - nie

33

37 pizz. arco

40

43

48

51

ars au - ro

51 pizz.

pp *p* *f* *ff* *mp*

7.5.2. Duos – Works for Flute and Viola

7.5.2.1. *Mosaik*

Score

Mosaik

Karol Borsuk

Adagio

Violin *mf*

Viola *mp* *mf* *pp* *p*

7

Andante

11

Vln. *mf*

Vla. pizz. arco

14

Vln. *f* *mf*

Vla. *mf* pizz. arco

Moderato

17

Vln. *f* *rit.*

Vla.

21

Vln. pizz. arco

Vla. pizz. arco

24

25

Vln. 3

Vla.

28

30

Vln.

Vla. pizz. arco

33

34

Vln.

Vla. pizz.

38

39

Vln. arco

Vla.

42

Mosaik

3

43 pizz. arco

Vln.

Vla.

46

Vln.

Vla.

7.5.2.2. Pastorello

Score

Pastorello

K. Borsuk

The musical score for 'Pastorello' by K. Borsuk is written for Violin (Vln.) and Viola (Vla.). The score is in 12/8 time and features a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notation is presented in six systems, each with a Violin staff on top and a Viola staff on the bottom. Measure numbers 4, 7, 9, 12, and 14 are indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, with some measures containing triplets. The Viola part often provides a harmonic foundation with sustained notes and moving lines, while the Violin part features more melodic and rhythmic activity.

Pastorello

Vln. ¹⁷ *rit.*
 Vla. ¹⁷

Vln. ¹⁹ *a tempo*
 Vla. ¹⁹

Vln. ²²
 Vla. ²²

Vln. ²⁵
 Vla. ²⁵

Vln. ²⁸
 Vla. ²⁸

Vln. ³¹ pizz. arco
 Vla. ³¹ pizz. arco

7.5.2.3. Goethe auf Tegel

Score

Goethe auf Tegel

Karol Borsuk

The musical score is written for Violin (Vln.) and Viola (Vla.) in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into five systems, each containing a Violin staff and a Viola staff.

- System 1:** Violin starts with a whole rest, then plays a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. Viola starts with a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a half note B3. Dynamics: *mp* (pizz.) for Viola, *mf* (arco) for Violin.
- System 2:** Violin plays a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. Viola plays a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a half note B3. Dynamics: *mf* (arco) for Violin, *mp* (pizz.) for Viola.
- System 3:** Violin plays a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. Viola plays a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a half note B3. Dynamics: *mf* (arco) for Violin, *mp* (pizz.) for Viola.
- System 4:** Violin plays a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. Viola plays a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a half note B3. Dynamics: *mp* (arco) for Violin, *mp* (pizz.) for Viola.
- System 5:** Violin plays a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. Viola plays a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a half note B3. Dynamics: *mp* (arco) for Violin, *mp* (pizz.) for Viola.

Additional markings include *Ord.* (Ordinary) and *tr* (trill) in the Viola staff of the fifth system.

7.5.2.4. Ave Maria

Ave Maria

Karol Borsuk

A - ve Ma - ri - a gra - ci - a ple - na A - ve
A - ve Ma - ri - a gra - ci - a ple - na A - ve

Do - mi - nus te - cum be - ne - dic - ta - tu
Do - mi - nus be - ne - dic - ta - tu

et be - ne - dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris tu - i Je - su Chris - te
et dic - tus fruc - tus ven - tris tu - i Chris - te

Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a ma - ter De - i Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a o - ra pro - no - bis
ma - ter De - i Sanc - ta Ma - ri - a o - ra pro - no - bis

et in ho - ra mor - tis nos - tre A - men A - men A - men A - men
et in ho - ra mor - tis nos - tre A - men A - men A - men A - men

7.5.2.5. Three Miniatures

Score

Miniaturen 1-3

I

Andante Lyrico

Karol Borsuk

Andante

Flute

mf

Viola

f

4

3

mf

6

7

, Moderato

mp

mf

Gliss.

frullato

12

f

12

f

©

II

Lento - Allegro

Fl. **Lento** *mp* *mf* **Allegro** *mf* frullato

Vla. *mp* *mf* *f* pizz.

Fl. *mf*

Vla. *mf* arco sul G

Fl.

Vla. sul D *Gliss.* *Gliss.* pizz.

III

Moderato (♩ = 84)

29 Fl. *f* *mf*

29 Vla. *mf* pizz. arco *mf*

32 Fl. *rit.* **Andantino** (♩ = 69)

32 Vla. *mf* *Psst* *sprechen* *piano*

Moderato (♩ = 88)

36 Fl. *p* *mf*

36 Vla. *p* *mf*

38 Fl. *mf* *mf* *rit.*

38 Vla. *f* *mf*

7.5.2.6. Three Aquarelles

Score

Aquarelle

I

Karol Borsuk

Allegretto ♩ = 104

Sostenuto ♩ = 76

frullato
ohne Tonhöhe

Violin (Flute)

Viola

Vln.

Vla.

mf

f

mf

mp

mf

mf

hinter dem Steg

II

Andante

Vln. *mf*
 Vln. *f* *mf*
 Vla. *mf*
 Vln. *mf* *f* *mf*
 Vla. *mf*
 Vln. *mf*
 Vla. *pizz.*

III

Adagio

Violin (Vln.) and Viola (Vla.) score, Adagio, III.

First system:

- Measure 1: Vln. *mp*, Vla. *mp*.
- Measure 2: Vln. *mf*, Vla. *mf*. Both parts feature triplets (3).
- Measure 3: Vln. *pizz.*, Vla. *mf*. Vln. features a triplet (3).

Second system:

- Measure 4: Vln. *arco* (with *tr*), Vla. *mf*. Vln. features a triplet (3).
- Measure 5: Vln. *frullato*, Vla. *sf* (with *p*). Vln. features a triplet (3).

7.5.2.7. Pictures / Bilder

Bilder

Karol Borsuk

Violin

Viola

1x *f*
2x *p* pizz.

1x *p*
2x *f*

1x *f*
2x *p* arco

6

pizz. arco (*tr*) pizz. arco

11

pizz. arco

17

22

Allegro mazurka

Andante kujawiak

27

Vln.

Vla.

2

Polonaise **Bilder**

Vln. ³⁴

Vla.

Moderato

Vln. ³⁹

Vla.

Vln. ⁴³

Vla.

Vln. ⁴⁷

Vla.

Vln. ⁵³

Vla.

Vln. ⁵⁸

Vla.

3 - 4x

7.5.2.8. *Andante*

Andante

Karol Borsuk

The musical score is written for piano in G major, 4/4 time, with a tempo marking of Andante. It consists of five systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-4) features a treble staff with a half rest followed by a quarter note G, and a bass staff with a half rest followed by a quarter note G. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the melody in the treble staff with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The third system (measures 9-12) shows a more complex melodic line in the treble staff with slurs and ties, and a bass staff with chords. The fourth system (measures 13-16) maintains the melodic development in the treble staff and the accompaniment in the bass staff. The fifth system (measures 17-20) concludes the piece with a final melodic phrase in the treble staff and a sustained bass line.

2

Andante

21

25

29

33

37

41

This musical score is for a piano piece, marked 'Andante'. It consists of six systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score begins at measure 21. The first system (measures 21-24) features a melody in the right hand with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass line with quarter and eighth notes. The second system (measures 25-28) continues the melodic development with some rests in the right hand. The third system (measures 29-32) shows a more active bass line with eighth-note patterns. The fourth system (measures 33-36) features a dense texture with sixteenth-note runs in both hands. The fifth system (measures 37-40) has a more spacious feel with longer note values. The sixth system (measures 41-44) concludes the piece with a final cadence, including a double bar line at the end of measure 44.

7.5.2.9. *Souvenir de Kazimierz*

Score

Souvenir de Kazimierz

Karol Borsuk

The musical score is for the piece "Souvenir de Kazimierz" by Karol Borsuk. It is written for Flute (Fl.) and Viola (Vla.). The score is divided into five systems, each with a measure number at the beginning of the Flute staff.

- System 1:** Measures 1-4. The Flute part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. The Viola part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G3, a half note A3, and a half note B3. The Viola part has markings "pizz." and "arco" above the first two measures.
- System 2:** Measures 5-8. The Flute part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. The Viola part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G3, a half note A3, and a half note B3. The Viola part has markings "pizz." and "arco" above the first two measures.
- System 3:** Measures 9-12. The Flute part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. The Viola part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G3, a half note A3, and a half note B3. The Viola part has markings "pizz." and "arco" above the first two measures.
- System 4:** Measures 13-16. The Flute part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. The Viola part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G3, a half note A3, and a half note B3. The Viola part has markings "pizz." and "arco" above the first two measures.
- System 5:** Measures 17-20. The Flute part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. The Viola part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G3, a half note A3, and a half note B3. The Viola part has markings "pizz." and "arco" above the first two measures.

The tempo marking "Allegro" is placed above the Flute staff at measure 14.

21

Fl.

Vla.

25

Fl.

Vla.

ppp

pizz.

Allegro

29

Fl.

Vla.

33

Fl.

Vla.

37

Fl.

Vla.

7.5.3. Solo Work with Choir and Orchestra

Viola Solo

Fantasie

für Viola, Chor und Orchester

Karol Borsuk

Andante

9 *mf*

14 *mf*

20 *f* *a tempo*

25

30 *mf* *rit.* *f* *f*

34

38 *f*

45 Viola solo Cadenza

50 *tutti*

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a Viola Solo part, titled 'Fantasie' by Karol Borsuk. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It begins at measure 9 with a tempo marking of 'Andante' and a dynamic of 'mf'. The music features various melodic lines with triplets and slurs. Measure 14 has a 'mf' dynamic. Measure 20 has a 'f' dynamic and a tempo change to 'a tempo'. Measure 25 continues the melodic development. Measure 30 has a 'mf' dynamic, followed by a 'rit.' (ritardando) section and then a 'f' (forte) section. Measure 34 continues the 'f' section. Measure 38 has a 'f' dynamic. Measure 45 is marked 'Viola solo Cadenza'. Measure 50 is marked 'tutti' and begins with a 4-measure rest followed by a melodic line with triplets. The score ends at measure 50 with a 3/4 time signature.

Andante

Viola solo
Cadenza

7.5.4. *Fantasia* for Viola, Choir and Orchestra

Score

Fantasia für Viola, Chor und Orchester

Karol Borsuk

Andante

The musical score is written for a Viola, Choir, and Orchestra. The tempo is marked **Andante**. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The time signature is 3/4. The score includes parts for the following instruments and voices:

- Flute: Starts with a melodic line in the first measure, marked *p*.
- Clarinet in C: Starts with a melodic line in the first measure, marked *p*, and continues with a sustained note in the second measure, marked *mp*.
- Horn in C: Remains silent in the first two measures, then plays a sustained note in the third measure, marked *pp*.
- Chor I S A: Remains silent throughout the first three measures.
- Chor II T B: Remains silent throughout the first three measures.
- Viola Solo: Remains silent throughout the first three measures.
- Violin I: Starts with a sustained chord in the first measure, marked *pp*, and continues with a melodic line in the second and third measures, marked *mp*.
- Violin II: Starts with a sustained chord in the first measure, marked *pp*, and continues with a melodic line in the second and third measures, marked *mp*.
- Viola: Starts with a sustained chord in the first measure, marked *pp*, and continues with a melodic line in the second and third measures, marked *mp*.
- Cello: Starts with a sustained chord in the first measure, marked *p*, and continues with a melodic line in the second and third measures, marked *mp*.
- Contrabass: Starts with a sustained chord in the first measure, marked *p*, and continues with a melodic line in the second and third measures, marked *mp*.

Fl. *mf*

C Cl. *mf*

Hn. *mp*

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

The musical score is for a piece titled "Fantasie". It features a woodwind section with Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in C (C Cl.), and Horn (Hn.), and a string section with Violins I and II (Vln. I, Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score is written for a 4-measure phrase. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The Flute part begins with a *mf* dynamic and features a melodic line with slurs and ties. The Clarinet part also begins with a *mf* dynamic and plays a more rhythmic, eighth-note pattern. The Horn part plays a series of chords, marked *mp*. The Violins I and II parts play a melodic line with slurs and ties, marked *mf*. The Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass parts play a series of chords, marked *mf*. The Soprano (S) and Alto (A) vocal parts are present but contain no notes. The Tenor (T) and Bass (B) vocal parts are also present but contain no notes. The Viola Solo part is present but contains no notes.

3

206

Musical score for measures 11-14 of a piece titled "Fantasie". The score is for a full orchestra and vocal soloist. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The instruments and parts are:

- Fl. (Flute): Measures 11-14, *mf*.
- C Cl. (Clarinet): Measures 11-14, *mf*.
- Hn. (Horn): Measures 11-14, *mf*.
- S A (Soprano Alto): Measures 11-14.
- T B (Tenor Bass): Measures 11-14.
- Vla. Solo (Violula Solo): Measures 11-14.
- Vln. I (Violin I): Measures 11-14, *pizz.*, *mf*.
- Vln. II (Violin II): Measures 11-14, *pizz.*, *mf*.
- Vla. (Viola): Measures 11-14, *pizz.*, *mf*.
- Vc. (Violoncello): Measures 11-14, *pizz.*, *mf*.
- Cb. (Contrabass): Measures 11-14, *pizz.*, *mf*.

The score shows a variety of musical textures, including sustained chords, moving lines, and pizzicato patterns. Dynamics range from *mf* (mezzo-forte) to *pizz.* (pizzicato).

15

Fl.

mf *mp* *mf*

C Cl.

15

Hn.

mf

S

A

T

B

15

Vla. Solo

mf

Vln. I

arco *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vln. II

arco *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vla.

arco *mp*

Vc.

arco *mp*

Cb.

arco *mp*

19 *a tempo*

Fl. *p* *mp*

C Cl.

Hn. *mp*

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo *f*

Vln. I *pizz.* *mf* *arco* *p*

Vln. II *pizz.* *mf* *arco* *p*

Vla. *pizz.* *mf* *arco* *p*

Vc. *mf* *p*

Cb. *mf* *mp*

7

210

211

9

212

43

Fl.

C Cl.

43

Hn.

43

S
A

T
B

43

Vla. Solo

Viola solo
Cadenza

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

11

214

215

13

57

216

61

Fl.

mf *f* *mf* *rit.*

C Cl.

mf

Hn.

61

S

A

T

B

61

Vla. Solo

f *pizz.*

Vln. I

mf *f* *mf*

Vln. II

mf *f* *mf*

Vla.

mf

Vc.

mf *f* *mf*

Cb.

mf *f* *mf*

Fantasie

15

Moderato

Fl. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

C Cl. *mp* *mf* *p*

Hn. *mf* *p*

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo *mf* arco

Vln. I *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Vln. II *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Vla. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Vc. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Cb. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Fantasie

16

70

Fl.

C Cl.

Hn.

Vla. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

rit.

pizz.

arco

Viola solo
Cadenza

74

Vla. Solo

Fantasie

Moderato $\text{♩} = 68$

17

78

Fl. *mf*

C Cl. *mf*

78

Hn. *mf*

78

S
A

T
B

78

Vla. Solo *f*

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

221

88

Fl.

C Cl.

Hn.

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

mf

This musical score page contains measures 88, 89, and 90 of a piece titled 'Fantasie'. The score is written for a large ensemble, including Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in C (C Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Soprano (S) and Alto (A) voices, Tenor (T) and Bass (B) voices, Violoncello Solo (Vla. Solo), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. Measure 88 begins with a forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. The Flute part has a melodic line in measure 88, while the Clarinet in C, Horn, and other instruments have rests. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) have a sustained chord in measure 88. The Violoncello Solo part has a melodic line in measure 88. The Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass parts have a sustained chord in measure 88. Measures 89 and 90 show the continuation of the musical themes, with the Flute part having a melodic line in measure 89 and the other instruments having rests. The vocal parts have a sustained chord in measure 89. The Violoncello Solo part has a melodic line in measure 89. The Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass parts have a sustained chord in measure 89. Measures 90 show the continuation of the musical themes, with the Flute part having a melodic line in measure 90 and the other instruments having rests. The vocal parts have a sustained chord in measure 90. The Violoncello Solo part has a melodic line in measure 90. The Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass parts have a sustained chord in measure 90.

20

Fantasia

rit.

91

Fl.

f

C Cl.

f

Hn.

91

S
A

91

T
B

Vla. Solo

91

Vln. I

f

Div.

Vln. II

f

Div.

Vla.

f

Vc.

f

Cb.

f

Moderato Fantasie 21

95

Fl. *f*

C Cl. *f*

Hn. *f*

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

Cb. *f*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 95 to 99. It features a variety of instruments: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in C (C Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Soprano (S) and Alto (A) voices, Tenor (T) and Bass (B) voices, Viola Solo, Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The tempo is marked 'Moderato' and the mood is 'Fantasie'. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'f' (forte) and 'f' (faint). The Flute and Clarinet parts are marked with 'f' at measure 95. The Horn part is marked with 'f' at measure 95. The Viola Solo part is marked with 'f' at measure 95. The Violin I and Violin II parts are marked with 'f' at measure 95. The Viola part is marked with 'f' at measure 95. The Violoncello part is marked with 'f' at measure 95. The Contrabass part is marked with 'f' at measure 95.

22 Più animato Fantasie

100

Fl. *mf*

C. Cl. *mf*

Hn. *mf*

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Cb. *mf*

rit

23

105

Fl.

C Cl.

Hn.

S
A

T
B

Vla. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

23

rit.

Viola solo
Cadenza

tutti

108

Fl.

C Cl.

108

Hn.

108

S
A

T
B

108

Vla. Solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

7.6. Works by Karol Borsuk Awarded at the International *Musical Eagles* Competition 2023/2024



During the 4th International “Musical Eagles” Competition held in Łódź in 2023, Karol Borsuk was nominated in the category Composition (Foreign) and received the Bronze Medal for his work *Mosaik* for solo harpsichord.

7.7. Diplomas – Distinctions from International Music Competitions Featuring Works by Karol Borsuk

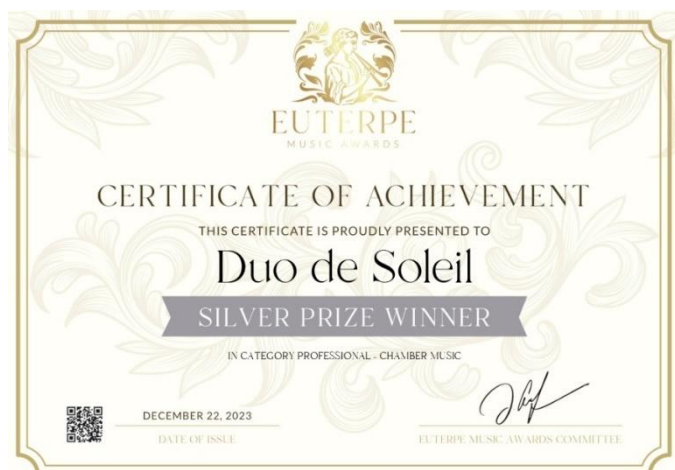




97



⁹⁷ GICMC – Global International Classical Music Competition Winners, <https://gicmc.com/winners/>, accessed 23 March 2026.







98



⁹⁸ World Artistry Music Awards – Winners, <https://www.worldartistrymusic.com/winners>, accessed 23 March 2026.

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Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz
Sound of Expression
The Music of Karol Bor-suk
Classical



Achievement Letter

To Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz

On behalf of the Best Classical Musicians Awards, we extend our heartfelt
congratulations on your outstanding achievement in Season 2 of the 2025 competition.
Competing among talented musicians from 13 countries, you have demonstrated
exceptional artistry and musical excellence.

It is with great pleasure that we recognize your accomplishment in receiving the
Diamond Prize - F: Best Professional Musician (No age limit), Viola

This award is a testament to your remarkable talent and unwavering commitment to
music. We are honored to celebrate your success and look forward to seeing your
continued growth and contributions to the world of music.



Issue Date: 19 May 2025
Best Classical Musicians Awards
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AKADEMIA FONOGRAMATYCZNA
 ZWIĄZEK PRODUCENTÓW AUDIO VIDEO
 ul. Fabryczna 5A, 00-446 Warszawa
 tel.: 0226239219, fax 0226231661, e-mail: akademia@paw.pl

**POTWIERDZENIE ZGŁOSZENIA
 MUZYKA KLASYCZNA - ALBUM**

TYTUŁ: Sounds of Expression
 WYDAWCA: Requiem Records / Opus Series
 DATA WPROWADZENIA DO OBROTU: 10.06.2025
 KOMPOZYTOR: Karol Borsuk
 WYKONAWCA: Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz
 DRYWISER: Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz
 REŻYSER DŹWIĘKU: Grzegorz Szeć, Jacek Sokolowski
 KATEGORIA MUZYCZNA: Album Roku Muzyka Kameralna - Duet
 NAJWYBITNIEJSZE NAGRANIE MUZYKI POLSKIEJ: Sounds of Expression
 ZGŁASZAJĄCY: FIRMA ZGŁASZAJĄCA: Requiem Records
 OSOBA ZGŁASZAJĄCA: Łukasz Pawlak
 DATA ZGŁOSZENIA: 07.12.2025
 E-MAIL: info@requiem-records.com
 TELEFON: 663735922

Oświadczam, iż artysta/artystki, których nagrania zgłoszone do Nagród Akademii FonoGramatycznej FRYDERYK 2026 zostały zgłoszone oraz dotychczasowych statystyk, aby uczestniczyć w Gali wręczenia nagród FRYDERYK 2026 w trybie konkursu.

Oświadczam, iż zgłoszenie nie jest zgodne z treścią Regulaminu Nagród Fryderyk 2026, regulującego zasady udziału w konkursie Fryderyk i nieujętych jego treści.

Oświadczam, iż zgłoszenie nie jest zgodne z treścią Regulaminu Nagród Fryderyk 2026, regulującego zasady udziału w konkursie Fryderyk i nieujętych jego treści.

Oświadczam, iż zgłoszenie nie jest zgodne z treścią Regulaminu Nagród Fryderyk 2026, regulującego zasady udziału w konkursie Fryderyk i nieujętych jego treści.



*Opus Klassik – qualification for the competition with the album
 Sound of Expression. The Music of Karol Borsuk.*

7.8. Album *Sound of Expression⁹⁹. The Music of Karol Borsuk* (Requiem Records)

OPUS 116 | 2025

The phonographic release *Sound of Expression. The Music of Karol Borsuk*, published on 10 June 2025 by Requiem Records, represents an important stage in the process of documenting and disseminating the composer's work. This album, the first to present such a comprehensive overview of Karol Borsuk's music, brings together selected compositions that are representative of various periods of his artistic activity.

Requiem Records, a label that for many years has focused on promoting artists and phenomena overlooked within the dominant discourse of contemporary Polish music, has contributed through this release to the wider recognition of Karol Borsuk's oeuvre.

Thanks to its meticulous editorial design and high-quality sound production, the album serves not only as an artistic document but also as a valuable source material for further research on his music.



⁹⁹ *Allegro.sk – Hudba: Expression, Allegro*, <https://allegro.sk/kategoria/hudba-1?string=expression>, accessed 23 March 2026.

7.8.1. Reviews of the Album *Sounds of Expression*

7.8.1.1. *Fanfare Magazine*¹⁰⁰

7.8.1.1.1. Review by Dominic Hartey

This album feels like a double celebration. In the first place it provides an excellent introduction to the music of the German-based Polish composer Karol Borsuk. It's also very much a reminder to us that when played with the perfection Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz displays here, there is no more magnificent instrument than the viola¹⁰¹. In her uncommonly interesting interview with me above, Filuś-Olenkiewicz tells us that Borsuk's music is influenced by Polish traditions as well as modern and even avant-garde compositional methods. That suggests a wide range but even so, it didn't prepare me for the sheer variety of approach and multiple voices Borsuk employs here. That variety is even more remarkable given the focus on a single instrument for a substantial part of the album.

The recital, entitled *Sounds of Expression*, falls into three parts: a set of pieces for solo viola; an approximately equal number where Filuś-Olenkiewicz is joined by her partner in the chamber group Duo de Soleil, flutist Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca; and a spectacular orchestral finale. As I've implied, for proof of the versatility of Borsuk's approach one need look no further than the range of solo pieces which come first, brilliantly realized by Filuś-Olenkiewicz. All were originally written for Borsuk's instrument, the violin, but in the arrangements made by Filuś-Olenkiewicz in collaboration with Borsuk, they're a wonderful fit for the viola.

The journey is remarkable: from a colorful visit to the Danish town of *Kolding* to the bleakness of *Odessa*, Filuś-Olenkiewicz's bare chords at the start of the latter piece conveying a chilling desolation. On to *Piccola Fantasia*, an engaging 21st-century take on unaccompanied Bach. In *Cloud 7*, Filuś-Olenkiewicz's double-stopping is so remarkable I thought at first she must be

¹⁰⁰ *Fanfare Archive*, <https://fanfarearchive.com/>, accessed 23 March 2026.

¹⁰¹ *Bratsche und Pädagogik vereint*, Deutsch-Polnische Nachrichten, <https://deutsch-polnische-nachrichten.eu/2023/09/05/bratsche-und-padagogik-vereint/>, accessed 23 March 2026.

multitracked. In *Remembrance* she seems to take this technique even further, giving us clearly differentiated voices emerging from Borsuk's dialogic writing. The sequence concludes with the virtuosic *Prelude and Canzona*, again with breathtaking double-stopping, and this time with an additional voice, because the soloist is required to sing (wordless) notes while playing. That might sound gimmicky, but the effect is actually wholly organic and adds a latent ethereality to the whole.

The next sequence sees Gehlmann-Dinca joining Filuś-Olenkiewicz. You may not think of flute and viola as the most obvious pairing of instruments, but the dazzling display of color they give is a triumph for counterintuitive thinking. The highlights are the two sets of three miniatures specially written for Duo de Soleil: *Three Watercolors* and *Three Miniatures*. Five of the six pieces are under a minute long (the other is just under 90 seconds) and all are masterly examples of the perfection that is possible in succinct composition. All do something different and indeed, in each the instruments seem to be regarded from a distinct perspective. I found myself looking at details of imaginary paintings or framing a narrative while listening to the wholly captivating playing. The other pieces in the sequence are similarly entrancing. For example, the brilliantly theatrical evocation of an episode in the life of the author of *Faust* in *Goethe at Tegel*, where the sense of the poet walking around, pausing, observing, is vividly depicted. Another sensory-based scene is painted in *Souvenir de Kazimierz*, where the author's memories and reflections on a town (Kazimierz Dolny) are seemingly set out in the exquisite writing for viola to which Gehlmann-Dinca's flute adds a sometimes affirmatory, sometimes questioning line. It's beautifully done, chamber music playing of the utmost sensitivity.

We shift genres dramatically for the album's finale. Borzuk's *Fantasy for Solo Viola, Choir, and Orchestra* is dedicated to Filuś-Olenkiewicz and is an eight-minute celebration of the possibilities of the solo instrument in an orchestral and choral context. The viola is initially in dialog with the combined forces (the choir singing wordlessly throughout, adding a distinctive instrumental timbre) before forging its own path, with Borzuk exploiting the warmth and resonance of the instrument before somewhat more equivocal interactions with the orchestra develop. This culminates in a powerful and majestic resolution, which is emotionally and spiritually charged. Borzuk could have left things there, but he

concludes winningly with a compelling, highly Bachian cadenza, after which the orchestra and choir rejoin only to share the final chord with the soloist. It's a brilliant touch, and the perfect way to conclude the recital, which is captured in fine recorded sound. I should add that Filuś-Olenkiewicz receives very fine support in the Fantasy from orchestra and choir under Jacek Kujawski.

I'm so glad to have made the acquaintance of both the distinctive voice which is Karol Borzuk and the remarkable playing of Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz. It's one of those albums that reveals more each time you listen to it. Seek it out.

Dominic Hartley

7.8.1.1.2. Review by Mark Gabrisch Conlan

This unusual release from Polish-German violist Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz (she was born in Bielsko-Biała, Poland, but has lived in Berlin since 2010) appeared as a physical CD on the Requiem Records label in June 2025, as well as on streaming platforms. The album was awarded a Silver Medal in the Global Music Awards 2025. It is devoted entirely to the music of Karol Borsuk (b. 1949), a fellow Polish-German expatriate who is so little known that he had not previously appeared in the *Fanfare* archive. He can also be found on Wikipedia under the entry Karol Borsuk (conductor).

The album *Sounds of Expression – The Music of Karol Borsuk* presents a program of 21 short works for solo viola, viola and flute, and a concluding “Fantasie” for viola, chorus, and orchestra, recorded during several sessions in Koszalin and Berlin in late 2024 and early 2025. The sequence opens with *Kolding*, *Odessa*, *Scherzo I*¹⁰², *Scherzo II*, *Fantasie in D minor*, *Fantasia Piccola*, *Kazimierz*, *Wolke 7*, *Erinnerung*, and *April*, followed by *Prehodium a Canzona*, *Mosaik*, *Pastorello*, *Goethe auf Tegel*, and *Ave Maria*. The central portion of the program consists of three *Miniatures* and three *Aquarelles*, after which come *Bilder*, *Andante*, and *Souvenir de Kazimierz*, leading to the final *Fantasie for viola, chorus, and orchestra*, recorded in March 2025 at the Koszalin Philharmonic under the baton of Jacek Piotr Kujawski, with sound engineering by Grzegorz Stec and orchestral leadership by concertmaster Agnieszka Tobik.

Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz has known Karol Borsuk since 2010. Both are of Polish origin, but for many years they have lived and worked in Germany, where they met at one of Berlin’s music schools, in which the composer served as deputy director. Their collaboration soon developed into a long-term artistic dialogue, encompassing numerous concert projects and, in time, the first works written by Borsuk specifically for Filus-Olenkiewicz. This long-standing artistic collaboration has resulted in the accumulation of a substantial viola repertoire, including transcriptions of works originally conceived for the violin. The artist has opened

¹⁰² Karol Borsuk, *Scherz I*, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FQX6FFR3VU, accessed 2 April 2026.

doctoral studies and is currently preparing a dissertation devoted to Borsuk's music and its role in enriching Poland's viola literature.

Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz emerges on this album as an artist of strong personality and high interpretative culture. Her playing combines nobility of tone with natural musicality and close attention to detail. She shapes long phrases with ease and subtly colors the sound, giving this music a convincing and personal narrative. Karol Borsuk, who has been composing for more than twenty-five years for a wide range of instrumental forces, draws his inspiration from poetry, the visual arts, and the exhibitions he regularly visits, a background that is clearly reflected in the introspective and atmospheric character of the works presented here.

Borsuk's music is mostly slow and plaintive, more concerned with setting a mood than with providing Filus-Olenkiewicz an opportunity for virtuoso display. On the Duo de Soleil tracks, flutist Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinka blends sensitively with Filus-Olenkiewicz, creating a contrast between the bright, overtone-rich register of the flute and the warm, deep tone of the viola, as described in the liner notes. Perhaps the most striking piece on the album is *Preludium a Canzona*, placed at the point where we suddenly hear both the singing and speaking voice of Filus-Olenkiewicz, alongside the voice of the viola.

One might wish for more variety in the programming; perhaps the release would have worked even better if the solo viola and viola-and-flute pieces had been intermixed, instead of offering 29 uninterrupted minutes of solo viola followed by 22½ minutes of viola and flute. Also, given that the notes state that in addition to being a composer Karol Borsuk is also a professional violinist, one wonders why he did not participate in the album directly and write some violin–viola duets for himself and Filus-Olenkiewicz, as well as trios in which he could have added Gehlmann-Dinka's flute. Still, this is a beautiful album, well worth hearing in whatever format one can obtain.

Mark Gabrish Conlan

Four stars: Worthwhile showcase for a talented violist, her flute-playing colleague, and a composer who deserves to be better known.

7.8.1.1.3. Review by Phillip Scott

Under the general title *Sounds of Expression*, this recital contains music by the Polish-born composer and violinist, long based in Berlin, Karol Borsuk (b. 1949). The viola is the dominant instrument here, playing throughout. Violist Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz and flutist Cornelia Gelmann-Dinca together form the musical partnership of Duo de Soleil. Both have worked closely with the composer; Filuś-Olenkiewicz especially, having also produced the recording.

Borsuk is quite clearly a string player himself. His musical sketches that comprise the three sets of *Miniatures* and other duo items are expertly written for the viola, making characterful use of double-stopping and pizzicato. Filuś-Olenkiewicz plays with ingratiating tone, technical strength, and clear musicality. Borsuk is also a dab hand at contrasting the timbres of flute and viola, which complement each other well (as we know from much French chamber music.) While the movements of the suites have individual titles, the contrast between them is subtle rather than dynamic. Generally, Borsuk's music in this program leans toward a reflective aspect, ruminating on musical ideas instead of developing them in any structural sense. There is a sameness in approach as well as texture, but of course these sets of short pieces were not written with the intention of being heard back to back. The larger *Fantasy for Viola, Choir, and Orchestra*, itself only seven minutes long, retains that level of calm contemplation, with the all-female choir providing color rather than singing a specific text. It has a distinctly Polish folk strain of melancholy in the thematic material, and a cadenza for the viola which Filuś-Olenkiewicz dispatches with real passion. The accompanying body uses strings performing in a quintet formation, with a reduced wind section.

This release is available as a CD, which is best procured through the violist's website or direct from Requiem Records. I did not have access to that format, but the album can be heard in full on YouTube, and is available on streaming platforms such as Apple Music and Amazon. (I might actually open a streaming account one day, when they stop treating all classical music as a random set of "songs," and tell you exactly what a particular release actually contains.)

In sum, this recording makes for pleasurable listening, thanks to the quality of the music and the excellent performances. I am convinced Borsuk is capable of writing a memorable “conventional” viola concerto on a larger scale for Filuś-Olenkiewicz. He does not appear to have done so at this stage, but we shall see.

Phillip Scott

https://www.fanfarearchive.com/articles/atop/49_4/4940320.aa_KAROL_BORSUK_Kolding_Odessa.html

7.8.1.1.4. Review by Ken Meltzer

Kolding. Odessa. Scherzo I & II. Fantasy in d. Piccola Fantasia. Kazimierz. Cloud 7. Remembrance. April. Prelude and Canzona. Mosaic. Pastorello. Goethe at Tegel. Ave Maria. Miniature 1-3. Watercolour 1-3. Pictures. Andante. Souvenir de Kazimierz. Fantasy for Solo Viola, Choir, and Orchestra

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz (viola);

Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca (flute);

Jacek Piotr Kujawski (conductor);

Maritime University Choir in Szczecin;

Koszalin Philharmonic, *REQUIEM* – no catalogue number. Streaming, 63 min.

<https://classical.music.apple.com/au/album/1819038854>

***Sounds of Expression*¹⁰³: *The Music of Karol Borsuk*¹⁰⁴** offers works by the Polish composer, conductor, and instrumentalist. According to the short bio included in this new release on the Requiem label, Borsuk was born in Łuków on November 6, 1949. He studied at the Faculty of Music of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. In the early 1980s Borsuk moved to Berlin, where he has worked as an educator, violinist, conductor, and composer. A search of the *Fanfare* archives does not indicate any prior reviews of Borsuk's music. The written materials for this release provide no commentary on the featured works. They are divided into several pieces for solo viola, for viola and flute duo, and a *Fantasy for Solo Viola, Choir, and Orchestra*. The numerous brief solo viola works adopt a modernist harmonic idiom, with sparing use of extended techniques. The writing is lyrical, with frequent allusion to folk melodies and, on occasion, Bach's writing for solo strings. The same approach appears in the works for viola and flute, where the composer explores a close and intense interaction between the

¹⁰³ Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz – *Sounds of Expression* (album), Apple Music, <https://classical.music.apple.com/de/album/1819038854>, accessed 23 March 2026.

¹⁰⁴ Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz – *Sounds of Expression* (mp3), Empik, <https://www.empik.com/sounds-of-expression.p1624334135,ebooki-i-mp3-p>, accessed 23 March 2026.

instruments. The concluding *Fantasia* places the viola center stage, with the orchestra and wordless chorus making brief appearances. Again, the emphasis is on lyrical, songful expression.

Violist Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz, a frequent collaborator with Borsuk, plays with a marvelously rich and focused tone, rhythmic verve, and elegant phrasing. Borsuk and flutist Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca often perform together as the Duo de Soleil. They are impressive collaborators in the Borsuk works for viola and flute. The Koszalin Philharmonic and The Choir of the Maritime University of Szczecin, conducted by Jacek Piotr Kujawski, are appropriately mellifluous in the *Fantasia*.

If Karol Borsuk's music is neither strikingly unique nor groundbreaking, it is artfully constructed, attractive, and often quite affecting. The performances by Filus-Olenkiewicz and Gehlmann-Dinca are first rate. I'm pleased to recommend this recording for your consideration.

Ken Meltzer

Four stars: Music for viola and flute by Polish composer Karol Borsuk



„Fanfare Magazine” Tenafly, New Jersey, grudzień 2025.

7.8.1.1.5. Review in *Fanfare Magazine*

”Sounds of Expression”: An interview with Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz.

By Dominic Hartley

Joanna, a very warm welcome to Fanfare! We’re going to talk today about your new recording, *Sounds of Expression*, which features the music of Karol Borsuk. Borsuk will be a new name to many of our readers and this album will mark his first appearance in Fanfare as well as your own. Could you tell our readers something about him please?

Karol Borsuk is a Polish composer, violinist, pedagogue, and conductor, born on November 6, 1949, in Łuków, Poland. Since 1981, he has lived in Berlin, where he has developed his artistic and compositional work. His music is distinguished by a combination of Polish musical traditions, including folk influences, with modern and avant-garde compositional techniques. Borsuk was connected to music from a young age, taking his first steps in local ensembles and choirs, and his family, particularly his uncle who was an organist, played a significant role in shaping his musical interests. His education and later experiences in Berlin shaped his unique musical language, characterized by both formal precision and emotional expression.

In his compositions, Borsuk often draws on elements of Polish folk music, reinterpreting them in innovative ways. His works are characterized by complex harmonic and rhythmic structures, as well as a deep understanding of instrumental specificity, especially of the viola. I believe that Borsuk’s oeuvre, with its rich emotional and social context, represents an important voice in contemporary Polish music, combining tradition with modernity and demonstrating that art can be both personal and universal.

When did you first encounter Borsuk's music?

I first met Karol in 2010, during a series of chamber music concerts. Even then, his work made a profound impression on me. Its originality, deep

emotionality, and intellectual precision were striking. Over time, our collaboration began to grow. Karol started composing works with me in mind as a performer, and I increasingly included his music in both my concert repertoire and academic work. This personal encounter¹⁰⁵ with his music drove an impulse in me to delve deeper into his compositional language and creative philosophy. Over the years, it became clear that his music deserved a wider audience, as a significant voice in both Polish and European contemporary music.

What inspired you to record a whole album of Borsuk's music? Did you have particular considerations in mind when devising the recital?

The idea to record an entire album dedicated to Karol Borsuk's music grew naturally from our long-term collaboration. Performing his works and working on transcriptions showed me the unique place his music occupies in the viola repertoire, both in terms of sound and emotional expression. His compositions are incredibly diverse: from solo viola pieces to duets with flute or violin, yet they are unified by a recognizable style and profound musicality.

When selecting the recital program, I wanted to showcase the full spectrum of his musical world, its lyricism and energy, meditative character, and innovative approach to the instrument. I aimed for the album to be not just a presentation of selected pieces, but a musical narrative of Karol Borsuk's creative journey: his fascinations, explorations, and the relationship between composer and performer. The album is, for me, a tribute to his music and an attempt to introduce it to a wider audience. I hope it will inspire other performers and encourage further exploration of his works.

In terms of the mix of the music, I think there are some transcriptions as well as pieces written specially for the viola. Can you tell us how the arrangements were approached?

¹⁰⁵ Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz, *Karol Borsuk – Filus Trifft Borsuk*, Discogs, <https://www.discogs.com/de/release/27346791-Joanna-Filus-Olenkiewicz-Karol-Borsuk-Filus-Trifft-Borsuk>, accessed 23 March 2026.

As you say, the album includes both works originally written by Karol Borsuk for solo viola and duets with violin or flute, as well as transcriptions of his earlier violin compositions. The arrangements were developed in collaboration with the composer himself. This was a highly creative process seeking the best way to translate his music to the viola. It was not merely a mechanical exercise in transcription, but required a deep understanding of the viola's idiom, its specific sound, timbre, and expressive possibilities. Many decisions regarding articulation, register, and texture were made collaboratively. For me, it was an invaluable experience comparing my performance perspective with Borsuk's compositional vision. The result is works that sound entirely natural on the viola, preserving the original character of Borsuk's music while gaining a new dimension of sonority.

Borsuk is a professional violinist, which must help him in writing so evocatively for the viola. Is he also a secret violist? Did you work with him during the compositional process at all?

No, Karol Borsuk is not a violist, but his thorough knowledge of violin technique and sensitivity to string instrument timbre allows him to write for the viola with great understanding. His music demonstrates not only technical comprehension but, above all, awareness of the instrument's emotional potential: his viola can be lyrical and intimate, or dramatic and expressive.

I had the privilege of working closely with him on several pieces, discussing performance details, technical and articulatory possibilities, and interpretative ideas. Karol was always open to my suggestions and treated the creative process as a dialogue. This collaboration was profoundly inspiring, showing how fruitful a meeting between composer and performer can be when they listen to each other and shape the music together.

Turning now to some specific pieces. The *Fantasy* for Solo Viola, Choir and Orchestra stands out as something on a larger scale than anything else on the album. Can you tell us something about its origins and what it's like to play?

Fantasy for solo viola, choir, and orchestra was composed in 2017 and is dedicated to me, the author of this doctoral dissertation. This work is particularly significant in Borsuk's oeuvre due to both its scale and emotional depth. The title refers to the free-form "fantasy" (Latin *phantasia*, Greek *φαντασία* – "imagination"), allowing the composer complete freedom in shaping the musical form, mood, and progression.

The piece is scored for solo viola, four-part choir, and string orchestra with two flutes, clarinet, and two horns. Borsuk uses functional classical harmony, but through flexible treatment of form and texture, he creates a rich, expressive sound world.

The work begins with an orchestral tutti, at an *andante* tempo. The main theme appears in the first violins, and the choir enters, singing wordlessly, giving the music an almost instrumental character. In measure 10, the viola enters with a rising passage, developing a dialogue with the orchestra, but gradually becomes fully independent and expressive, playing largely in the middle and lower registers, highlighting the instrument's warm timbre.

As the piece progresses, the relationship between the viola and orchestra becomes increasingly complex. Borsuk introduces quasi-virtuosic cadenzas, builds musical tension through dense string textures, flute counterpoints, and shifting meters. The choir appears again, serving a purely sonic role, becoming an integral element of the orchestral fabric.

The culmination is an expansive *maestoso* section where nearly the entire ensemble interacts with the solo part, a moment of immense emotional power which is both monumental and introspective. A following *moderato* polonaise section introduces rhythmic relief, ultimately concluding in a bright G major.

Fantasy exemplifies the form's free yet logically coherent nature, combining lyricism, virtuosity, drama, and choral-orchestral grandeur. For the performer, it is a significant challenge requiring technical precision and deep understanding of the composer's intentions. For me, it is profoundly personal, not only because it is dedicated to me, but because it emerged through dialogue. The viola becomes an inner voice conversing with choir and orchestra about the ineffable, making performance an intensely spiritual and moving experience.

I suspect there is a story behind a lot of the other pieces on the album. Can I pick out a couple? First there are two which mention Kazimierz. Are they specifically evoking the the place Kazimierz Dolny do you know?

Yes, Borsuk has frequently visited Kazimierz Dolny since childhood, combining local characteristics with literary inspiration, especially Maria Kuncewiczowa's novel *Dwa księżyce*, which describes the town's history. *Kazimierz* (2022) incorporates Jewish and local musical motifs, with free tempo for the performer to interpret the "life of the town." *Souvenir de Kazimierz* similarly evokes the town's atmosphere and Borsuk's reflections, creating a musical portrait of the place.

I was also intrigued by Goethe at Tegel. What's behind the work?

Goethe at Tegel was inspired by the notes Goethe took during his stay in Berlin in May 1778. Borsuk drew inspiration from Otto Pniower's book *Goethe in Berlin und Potsdam* (1925), which describes this journey, including visits to the opera, concerts, a porcelain factory, and meetings with the royal painter and draftsman Daniel Chodowiecki.

In Goethe's diary, on the sixth day of the journey, the Berlin suburb of Tegel is mentioned which later finds reflection in the Walpurgienacht scene in *Faust*. Although it is unclear whether Goethe actually visited the Humboldt family residence in Tegel, this location became the inspiration for Borsuk's miniature.

The composition was written in 2020 with the idea of performing it at an outdoor concert at the Tegel estate. Karol and I gave the world premiere in November of that year. The piece is short but very expressive. Through detailed instrumental gestures, Borsuk evokes the atmosphere of an episode from Goethe's life, combining history, space, and musical impression into a coherent whole.

Are there other pieces you would like to pick out?

Absolutely. The album includes both chamber works and solo miniatures, many of which have unique creation stories, often tied to places, events, or

literary/artistic sources, revealing the deeply narrative and intimate nature of Borsuk's music.

Scherzo I and *Scherzo II*, were composed almost simultaneously around 2005. Their original version was for solo violin but proved equally effective on the viola. They were composed while Borsuk served as vice-director at the State Music School in Reinickendorf, Berlin, and represented a musical and intellectual escape from administrative work.

Kolding was written after Borsuk's visit to the city in Denmark, where he admired Carl Fabergé's craftsmanship.

Another miniature, *Odessa*, was inspired by Borsuk's visit to Ukraine and reflects family history: his father Piotr lived in Odessa from 1915–1923 due to forced relocation. The piece has a free-flowing structure and repeating melodic patterns, giving interpretive latitude.

Piccola Fantasia for solo viola was composed at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in Berlin, and reflects contrasting psychological states during isolation, beginning with pizzicato on open strings to imitate church bells at Berlin Haselhorst.

It's probably an unfair question, but do you have any particular favorites?

Yes, I would single out three pieces that hold particular significance for me. *Prelude and Canzona* was composed in 2023 to mark the 10th anniversary of the Karl Dedecius Foundation at Viadrina University in Frankfurt. From the very first bars, Borsuk uses various sound-production techniques, giving the performer wide interpretive possibilities.

April was originally written for solo violin as a memento of a reunion after many years with former Frauenchor Spandau chorister Astrid Stähler and is inspired by memories and conversations over coffee. It has an appropriately lyrical and nostalgic character. The high register references the violin original, while the lower passages, using the viola's timbre, convey deeper emotions and enrich the musical expression.

The *Fantasy* in D minor was written by Borsuk in 2002 whilst working at the Reinickendorf Music School. It was inspired by Telemann's 12th solo violin

fantasy, and Borsuk sought to translate Baroque ideas into a 21st-century language, combining classical forms with modern expressive means. It has received many performances.

You're joined on many of the pieces by your collaborator in Duo de Soleil¹⁰⁶, flutist Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca. Your instruments absolutely sound as if they were made to be played together in the music on this album but flute and viola doesn't seem an immediately intuitive combination. How did you start playing together?

We met through Karol Borsuk, although we both previously worked at the Reinickendorf Music School. Our collaboration began with performing Borsuk's works together, both those originally written for flute and viola and transcriptions of his other compositions. Although the combination of viola and flute may not seem obvious due to differences in timbre and register, our instruments complement each other perfectly. Early rehearsals showed that the warm, singing tone of the viola blends beautifully with the bright, clear tone of the flute, creating a wealth of colors and expression.

Our collaboration is based not only on technical compatibility but also on musical dialogue. We strive for every phrase to be a conversation in which both instruments inspire each other and create a coherent narrative. This allows Borsuk's complex music to gain lightness, clarity, and richness of timbre, making the works sound exceptionally full and expressive.

I've really enjoyed hearing you and Cornelia playing Borsuk on this album. How far does Duo de Soleil's repertoire span?

Duo de Soleil performs works from many different eras and in various styles. Our repertoire includes classical duets and arrangements of Mozart, Stamitz, Martinů, Janáček, Vivaldi, and Massenet's *Méditation*. We also play Bach (Italian

¹⁰⁶ *Feine deutsch-polnische Note*, Deutsch-Polnische Nachrichten, <https://deutsch-polnische-nachrichten.eu/2023/12/08/feine-deutsch-polnische-note/>, accessed 23 March 2026.

Concerto), Beethoven (*Allegro und Menuet für zwei Flöten*), Giuseppe Sammartini, and F.A. Hoffmeister.

Recently, I had the pleasure of arranging works by Józef Kaczkowski (Duets op. 24 and 25) for the Polish publisher Eufonium. These pieces have been performed successfully in concerts across Germany.

Our repertoire also includes larger forms, such as A. Corelli's Pastorale for piano trio and J. Halvorsen's *Passacaglia*. Essentially, we can perform anything composed for two melodic instruments, usually two violins or flute and viola. We often switch roles: if a piece was originally for two violins, I play violin while Cornelia plays flute, or in other cases, we perform it as flute and viola.

You've had the most distinguished career as both a violinist and violist. I think it's less common that it was say 50 years ago for a professional musician to play both at the highest level. What inspired you as a young musician to keep on with both instruments and how has your violin and viola playing being enhanced as a result?

I was inspired in childhood when my older sister, five years my senior, practiced viola at home. Listening to her, I decided to explore the instrument myself. Since then, the viola has become not only a curiosity but a true musical passion, accompanying me alongside the violin.

From the beginning of my musical journey, both instruments, violin and viola, were present. As a student, I was fascinated by the viola's sound. Its depth, warmth, and singing quality contrasts beautifully with the brighter, more brilliant tone of the violin. Over time, I came to view them not as alternatives but as two distinct modes of artistic expression.

Playing in various orchestras, I had the privilege of sitting in multiple positions and locations, both as a violinist and a violist. A special discovery was my place in the viola section, next to the double basses and cellos. I remember the extraordinary sensation when their sounds and phrases literally resonated with me, a unique experience of feeling the pulse and harmony of the entire ensemble, the musical heart of the orchestra.

This dual experience of playing both instruments greatly influenced my approach to music. The violin provided precision, technical freedom, and lightness,

while the viola taught inner calm, deeper phrasing, and careful listening to harmony. I believe this has enhanced my understanding of chamber music, enabling me to both lead a voice and build accompaniment, listening to and co-creating a narrative with my partner.

Today, I cannot imagine giving up either instrument. Each inspires me differently, and switching perspectives keeps music alive, fresh, and full of emotion.

I have to ask if you have a favorite. Violin or viola?

This is a very difficult question because both instruments are extremely close to me, and each offers something unique. The violin represents brilliance, virtuosity, and expression, allowing one to convey emotions with intensity and lightness. The viola, on the other hand, embodies calm, warmth, and depth. Its sound touches more internally, moving in a subtler but very powerful way.

Your next album is rather different. A delightful selection of tangos by Piazzolla. How important is variety and breadth of repertoire to you as a musician?

Diversity of repertoire is extremely important to me, almost indispensable, to continuously develop and derive joy from music. Each style, era, and composer opens a different world of emotions, colors, and meanings. Therefore, I strive not to confine myself to one niche but to constantly seek new inspirations.

The album of Astor Piazzolla tangos was a special adventure, one full of passion, rhythm, and melancholy. His music combines classical form with the lively energy of tango and jazz improvisation, providing immense interpretive freedom. For the performer, it is not only a technical challenge but also an emotional one, requiring the ability to convey tension, passion, and subtlety simultaneously.

Behind all this are, of course, wonderful people: the musicians I have the fortune to collaborate with. Their passion, energy, and exceptional skills draw me deeply into their artistic worlds. Often, new fascination, new directions, and shared exploration of musical meaning begin with them.

I believe that this diversity and the people who create it make music endlessly engaging. Every new project, every encounter with a different style or artist allows me to see music from a new perspective and continuously rediscover why I love it so deeply.

Joanna, thank you for your exceptionally thoughtful answers. I have very much enjoyed discovering Borsuk's music in your performances. I'm also looking forward to hearing what comes next!



The illustration announcing the contents of the March/April 2026 issue of *Fanfare. The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors* presents a selection of phonographic album covers alongside the names of performers and ensembles featured in that issue. Among the releases shown is *Sounds of Expression* by Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz, devoted to the music of Karol Borsuk, placed among internationally recognized artists and recording ensembles. Its presence in this prestigious phonographic magazine confirms the album's reception within the international critical circuit and underscores the significance of the recording as part of artistic-research activity.

7.8.1.2. Cameral Music¹⁰⁷

Sound of Expression is an exceptional phonographic project centered on the contemporary music of Karol Borsuk – a Polish composer, conductor and violinist who has been active in Berlin for many years. It is the first phonographic release to present his music in such a comprehensive way, conceived and brought to life through the initiative and artistic commitment of Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz (JFO) – violist, interpreter of contemporary music and the album's producer.

She was the first to undertake the task of recording and publishing a selection of works by this underrecognized composer, assuming responsibility not only for their performance but also for the entire artistic concept – from repertoire selection, through the recording process, to the graphic and editorial design.

In the recordings she is joined by Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca – a flutist and chamber musician with whom JFO forms an exceptionally cohesive duo. Their joint interpretation of Borsuk's music invites the listener into a world of emotion, expression and subtle contrasts.

The album features solo and chamber works that reveal the many facets of the composer's style – from neoclassical structures and lyrical, meditative elements to expressive tensions bordering on expressionism. The music encompasses both introspection and drama, intellectual clarity as well as an inner freedom of sound.

Karol Borsuk (b. 1949 in Łuków) is an artist with a wide spectrum of activities. He studied at the Faculty of Music at UMCS in Lublin, where he also engaged in teaching and choral work. Since the 1980s he has lived and worked in Berlin as a pedagogue, conductor and composer. His works have been performed in Poland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Russia and Ecuador. Since 2001 he has been composing intensively, creating works for choir, orchestra, chamber ensembles and solo instruments.

Sound of Expression is not merely a presentation of music – it is a personal journey, an artistic gesture in which sound becomes a medium of communication and emotional expression.

¹⁰⁷ "Sound of Expression – recenzja," *Cameral Music*, accessed 23 March 2026, <https://cameralmusic.pl/artykul/-sound-of-expression--667178.html>.

“I do not interpret this music. I open it – I draw out what I experience myself, and what – I hope – the listeners may also experience themselves. This is the sound of expression – the sound of expressivity, but also expression *through* sound.”

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz

7.8.1.3. Interview in *Presto Magazine*

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz: Otwieram muzykę

Interview conducted by Monika Szulc, published in *Presto Magazine* – 6 November 2025.

<https://prestportal.pl/joanna-filus-olenkiewicz-otwieram-muzyke>

From Bielsko-Biała to Berlin, from childhood dreams of playing the violin to her own interpretations of Piazzolla and Borsuk – this is the musical path of Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz. The artist and special-needs educator speaks about growing up, crossing boundaries and the power of gratitude.

Monika Szulc: Let's begin simply. What does music mean to you?

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz: (pause) That's a difficult question... Music is part of a larger whole – my whole. On the one hand, it fills me; on the other, it completes those spaces I sometimes cannot name, cannot even “guess at.” It is a kind of emanation of energy, but also a way of sensing the world. I participate in it, and at the same time I am a beneficiary of that energy – and I want to carry it, to pass it on.

You've mentioned that even as a child you sensed that energy, that it drew you in...

As children we are unformed. We search, we try to name things. I used to be a very quiet, shy, even insecure child. I dreamed of having a violin. I imagined that with it I would finally release “that something” inside me that I didn't understand – that those would be the moments of the real me. And I wasn't wrong. Through the violin I could speak without using words.

Do you remember that violin?

Of course! The money for it was given to me by the parish priest in Bielsko-Biała, Father Józef Zydek. Just like that. I've been very fortunate to meet people of goodwill – people with great hearts and great minds – who became my guides and inspirations.

Tell me about them.

My childhood and early youth were not easy. I grew up in a large family that could rely on the support of the Church. Thanks to Janina Wizer, a sister of the Notre Dame congregation in Bielsko-Biała (the School Sisters' House), we often received help – not only material. I met her when I was six. She had an extraordinary influence on me. I admired her knowledge, her command of many languages, her calm, her wisdom, her intelligence, her brilliance. She often travelled to Germany and Austria, bringing back treats (laughs) and wonderful stories. Sister Janina awakened my curiosity about the world and about the German language. We talked about absolutely everything. She instilled in me the imperative to keep becoming better and better, to demand more of myself. I visited her for thirty years, until her death. Today I can say: my second mother...

And what was your home like?

It was always lively, crowded and full of work. Well, there were quite a few of us – nine children (laughs). I owe my love of music to my parents. Our home was full of tapes and records with classical music. My father was obsessed with it – he listened constantly, and with him, so did I. The shelves bending under the weight of books are another vivid memory. I read ancient Greek literature, I dove into philosophy – especially Stoicism, which I came to love deeply. (pause) And there is one more object I must mention. A black box – the Grundig radio. On Polish Radio Three I listened to radio dramas. I drifted into another world, one that absorbed me completely. Yes, radio dramas undoubtedly shaped my sensitivity and expanded my imagination.

You also mentioned biographies...

Oh yes! Biographies of great figures, especially those born in the nineteenth century. I was deeply impressed by the personalities of Rubinstein and Paderewski – their breadth of education. How did they do it... As a teenager I promised myself that when I grew up, I would do everything I could to be like them – versatile.

And here we are – you certainly are (laughs)! You’re a violinist, a violist, a coach, a teacher of geography, music, violin, viola, a special-needs educator – and all of this in German. And you still perform, record albums... How do you manage it?

I don’t know (laughs, pause). I don’t want to stand still. I’m a restless spirit, probably a hard-working one. I like to set the bar high, to test myself – and to make the right decisions (laughs). I undoubtedly inherited my work ethic from my parents. Watching their daily struggles, I understood that to combine many activities you must be organized, consistent and persistent. And as a child I had to learn quickly, train my memory. Just like Łukasz and Paweł Golec, who were in my class in Bielsko-Biała.

You’re a girl from the mountains. Resilience and endurance are qualities you have “by default” (laughs). And there’s also the highlander sensitivity... I feel you carry it within you.

I think you’re right... (longer pause). The metaphysical experiences that come from contact with nature – I carry them inside me, they sustain me. I learned to observe the world attentively, in its changes. And in Germany I miss... that smell of moisture, of decaying wood, of forest floor. That is the smell of Poland for me. When I want to draw warm colors from the viola, I immerse myself in the Polish autumn – I see those open spaces, the peaks veiled in mist. Then my sound spreads like goat’s milk. And I know it is beautiful and true, because it comes from the depth of my own experience.

And yet... in one interview you said that as a little girl you dreamed of leaving Poland, of travelling across different waters...

Yes! (laughs) Because I am dual. On one side there is the longing for the family nest, and on the other the great dreams of a little girl – dreams that came true. And here I must mention someone who helped bring those plans closer to reality. I am grateful to Antoni Kabut – an important figure for Bielsko-Biała – who was the first to sponsor my scholarship.

And the wheel began to turn! Today you are both a violinist and a violist. Do you love these instruments equally?

In music I am a seeker of colour. I once played a Guarneri violin; now I own an M. Klotz from 1737. The Guarneri has exactly what I love – depth, warmth, and also... that “blood.” Stradivari is, for me, too sharp, too shrill, too brutal. As for the viola – since 2012 I’ve been playing an instrument made by Pawlikowski.

I’ve noticed you emphasize that in your interviews. What is so special about the Pawlikowski viola?

Pawlikowski made the instrument especially for me. This viola sounds like... our tree, the spruce. And it matters to me that Pawlikowski’s family comes from Podhale. When you know someone personally, there is a bond, a transmitter – that invisible thread that flows through the instrument...

That invisible thread also connected you with Karol Borsuk. Today you are a promoter of his music. I’m curious about the meeting of those similar energies.

I’ve lived in Germany since 2001. I played in various orchestras, created projects that helped me grow, but at some point I felt it was time to settle somewhere for longer. In 2010 I “landed” in Berlin, although I wasn’t fully convinced about the city at first. But life writes its own scripts. I applied to a music school in Berlin and was accepted. Mr. Karol was the director at the time. After two years of very good cooperation he invited me to take part in a concert he was conducting. And that’s how our “musical meetings” began. Rehearsals took place alternately at my place and at Karol’s. We played duos for violin and viola – Stamitz, and our own

transcriptions of Brahms, Vivaldi, Mozart. At that time there was no talk of contemporary music yet. I was invited to the orchestra and choirs (Sinfonisches Ensemble Reinickendorf, Lichterfelder Chorkreis, Frauenchor Spandau) which Karol still conducts today. His first piece to “reveal itself” was *Andante*, composed for his daughter’s wedding. He transcribed it for violin and viola – and that piece officially opened his contemporary repertoire. The treasure chest kept growing, until one day Karol announced he had composed a piece for me. It was a gift – I felt deeply honored.

Two “gates” opened at once: his compositional one, and yours – the performative one...

Indeed. From that moment we performed more often, creating programs of Karol’s works written specifically for the viola.

Did you participate in the creative process? It’s like having a dress tailored to measure...

Karol has a method: he creates a small motif, then develops it into a phrase, and from that phrase another, and another. A puzzle method (laughs). At first he asked what I thought, whether it would work well on the viola. We discussed, brainstormed, sometimes even argued – but in the end he allowed me to make my adjustments. Today it’s no longer necessary; we catch each other’s artistic and aesthetic “threads” instantly.

Do you play from the “originals”?

Yes. I transfer everything from “pencil” to the computer (laughs). Karol writes beautifully, in calligraphic notation, but very small – so I need glasses (laughs). My friend Adam Vogelsinger, a violinist from Koszalin, helps me with the digital engraving.

How difficult are these pieces?

Very diverse. Some are virtuosic, but many can be played by a music-school student.

What do you like in Karol Borsuk's music?

Karol uses very interesting percussive effects. Because of his vocal training he has a great sense of sung phrasing. His music – like his personality – contains a lot of humor. He likes to send a musical joke to the listener. I recommend the miniature *Aquarelles*...

And I can recommend the entire album of his works, *Sounds of Expression*. These compositions are structurally intriguing, often nostalgic, leading the listener into unexpected, sometimes strange worlds...

This album is important to me also for personal reasons. I decided to dedicate *Sounds of Expression* to Jakub Kukiola, a childhood friend who passed away this spring. His parents – especially Mr. Franciszek, founder of one of the first painting galleries on the Hill in Bielsko-Biała – always supported and encouraged us. I spent countless hours in their home, feeling like part of a second family. The Kukiola family kept an open house. Their gallery hosted exhibitions by artists such as Wojciech Gawor, and chamber and jazz concerts – including performances by the Golec brothers.

You submitted the album to the Global Music Awards in the category Album of the Year 2026 – Crossing Boundaries. How do you understand this “crossing boundaries” in the context of Karol Borsuk's recording?

The album received a Silver Medal in 2025 at the Global Music Awards in the Classical category. I think that success alone shows that it can reach listeners across boundaries – both geographical and cultural. It is music that unites rather than divides. The competition to which I submitted Karol Borsuk's album is a highly prestigious undertaking, organized with great care and respect for the artists. I understand “crossing boundaries” not only symbolically, but also literally – as crossing the border between Poland and Germany. It takes enormous faith and inner

consistency to carry the voice of our Polish music out into the world here, in Germany. These are demanding circumstances and not the easiest of times. The very process of composing was, in fact, an act of crossing one's own fears and limitations. But the composer himself can speak about that best – no one can do it better than he can.

What kind of person is Karol Borsuk?

He has a Polish heart – you can hear it in his music. His life path, his philosophy, can serve as an example of a beautiful way of living. Borsuk is extraordinarily persistent, modest and patient. Today there is a tendency to “monetize” one's skills and talents immediately. Young people especially struggle with “delayed gratification.” Borsuk's example shows that it is worth waiting – that something within a person sometimes needs to mature deeply before it can reveal itself with greater force. He often says, “I am grateful for what I have,” and he means it. That way of thinking gives breath, inner freedom. Karol knows how to be beautifully grateful for everything. Gratitude is so underestimated today...

This perspective of maturing into artistic freedom seems close to you as well...

Indeed, it is also my experience. I can now “unwrap” music on my own terms. Only now do I feel that the time has come. As a young artist I travelled to competitions and won them. But I felt that playing according to the “cut of the jury” was not my world – that my artistic expression was being... “executed” by perfectionism. I sensed it more than I could name it. When I stepped out of those frames, I became free. Something released. Today I finally feel at home – with myself, within myself. This is me – Joanna, with my own signature. Sometimes it's an “error” (laughs).

And in that freedom you also created your album of Piazzolla's works – the 24 tangos for viola and piano.

Yes, also in freedom (laughs). I had been considering this project for a very long time. I am in love with Piazzolla's music. I adore the "swing," the energy and emotionality of the folklore. I have old, slightly yellowed photocopies of the scores that kept calling to me. At some point I came across tangos for violin and piano. I didn't want to play them on the violin – there are already many wonderful recordings – so I transposed these "gems" for viola. And last winter the machine started rolling. I invited dancers and organized a concert in a Berlin townhouse that serves as a cultural center. The event was met with great enthusiasm – the hall was bursting at the seams. We secured funding for more concerts. Another success. And I thought: it's time for an album.

When I am listening to you, I have the impression I'm speaking with someone who feels deeply gifted.

I do. Good things must be shared. What one has received must be given back (pause), passed on. Sometimes, however, I feel a certain sadness, perhaps a disappointment with reality, because what I could still give does not always find a recipient. Here in Germany I encounter various difficulties arising from differences in environment and mentality. The path I walk is not always the easiest. But this is not the time or place for complaints. Professor Korcz, the distinguished violist from NOSPR, used to say: "You must know your place." Once, those words seemed limiting. Over time I understood they carried a deeper meaning – an encouragement to know oneself, one's abilities and one's worth. I know my worth. And from that I draw strength.

You're constantly on the move – more studies, courses, qualifications. Do you ever think: "One day I'll just reap the rewards" (laughs)?

(Laughs). You never know when something will prove useful, when it will bear fruit. Financially, it will probably never "add up" for me – I won't be reaping rewards. (pause) I just wonder what my "reward," my capital, really is... (pause). Everything we have seen, experienced, lived through – that is the reward. It has a value that cannot be translated into money; it is a value in itself. It is the whole ME. If I can be of value to the world, then that is my REWARD. And that is my way of

living. And one more thing: the fruits of selflessness often taste the best. When the war in Ukraine began, I organized many benefit concerts. Besides the artists I invited, others joined spontaneously, out of the goodness of their hearts. We raised a large sum for the German Red Cross. Such actions give me wings – they build me as a human being.

You also promote Polish music...

I try (laughs). I'm in regular contact with the Eufonium publishing house in Gdynia, which promotes Polish composers whose works are not often heard on Polish stages. I had the pleasure of editing the scores of *Duets for Flute and Viola*, op. 24 and 25 by Józef Kaczkowski, and Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca and I performed them at several concerts. In 2024 we also presented them on 1 September in front of the Bundestag. I keep knocking on the door of the Polish Institute in Berlin to organize a concert with a ready program. Unfortunately, I still have no answer. I "force" my friend – flutist Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca – to perform with me. Cornelia even speaks a little Polish. Isn't that promotion? (laughs)

You are also a special-needs educator. That, too, is a gift of the heart. And surely very difficult work...

At one of the schools where I teach, the children are indeed very challenging – often rejected, unloved. Working with them is exhausting. But... I always wanted to teach, so I endure these difficulties by choice. Because the fruits of this work also give me wings, energy and satisfaction. I want to share my sensitivity. It is a calling. I want to create a space for these children where they can believe in their strengths, their resources – where they can dive in and feel in their element.

Does music help you in inclusive contexts?

(Pause) I work with a Turkish student – very, very challenging – who does not speak. Recently I had the thought to sing to him. To simply be with him and sing. I didn't expect much. I only wanted him to open up a little, in any way... And

it happened. He still does not speak, but when I sing, words begin to pour out of him¹⁰⁸...

¹⁰⁸ Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz, “*Otwieram muzykę*,” interview by Monika Szulc, Presto Portal, accessed 23 March 2026, <https://prestoportal.pl/joanna-filus-olenkiewicz-otwieram-muzyke>.

7.8.1.4.1. Review by Łukasz Dębowski – *Polska Płyta / Polska Muzyka*

<https://polskaplyta-polskamuzyka.pl/2025/08/01/joanna-filus-olenkiewicz-sounds-of-expression-recenzja/>

The review titled *Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz – “Sounds of Expression”*, published on the portal *Polska Płyta / Polska Muzyka*, presents an overall impression of the album, discusses the interpretative role of the artist, highlights the most significant parts of the repertoire (solo, chamber and experimental works), and emphasizes the expressive and timbral qualities of Karol Borsuk’s compositions as performed by Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz.

Sounds of Expression is the title of the album by violinist and violist Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz (JFO), featuring arrangements of contemporary compositions by Karol Borsuk. Below is the review of this project.

Review of the album *Sounds of Expression* – Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz (Opus Series¹⁰⁹, 2025).

This encounter was exceptional, as it initiated a project that ultimately culminated in the album *Sounds of Expression*. Several years ago, violinist and violist Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz met composer Karol Borsuk on her musical path – a remarkable figure capable of grounding his work in broad artistic motifs and presenting diverse perspectives on compositional form. Although not limited to the string-instrument idiom, it is precisely this domain that occupies a central place here and finds strong justification. The most important value of the project lies in its ability to capture an understated expressivity within richly colored works that, in the artist’s interpretation, acquire a unique and often deeply emotional dimension.

Violin music has undergone a long evolution – from Baroque sonatas and solo partitas (Bach, Biber), through Classical concertos (Mozart, Beethoven), Romantic tone poems (Brahms, Tchaikovsky), to contemporary experiments with microtonality and instrument preparation. These examples refer, of course, to the composers’ contribution to the violin idiom rather than to performance practice.

¹⁰⁹ *Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz*, Opus Series, https://opus-series.com/pl/artysci/joanna_filus_olenkiewicz, accessed 23 March 2026.

Where, then, can Karol Borsuk's achievements be situated within Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz's interpretative framework? This is not an easy task, as the breadth of his output resists a single definition. Yet the violinist's own abilities make it possible to fully capture and demonstrate this diversity. The presented compositions often explore tensions between the sacred and deeply personal reflection, while avoiding pathos. This individual quality shapes the overall reception, creating a unique artistic situation that gains strength through its unconventional expression.

The album consists of several parts. The first includes solo works – not overly ornamented, yet fully revealing the exceptional compositional character of these imaginatively crafted pieces, in which we find intimate accents stemming from the violist's genuine emotionality. The next section comprises chamber works performed in duo with Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca, where the mutual understanding of the musical material is striking, revealing its true character – for example, the subtly crafted *Miniatures 1–3*, shaped with sensitivity and finesse. Another offering is *Fantasy* (composed especially for Joanna for viola, choir and orchestra).

The artist did not hesitate to depart from schematic solutions, boldly introducing her own, often highly personal elements that enrich the concept of the project. In the experimental piece *Mosaic*, we even hear vocals, and some motifs were transcribed for viola (the intriguing *April*). Courage in shaping a particular musical reality is an essential and meaningful component of this thoroughly authentic project. There is also space for reflection and even subtle detachment from reality, demonstrating the music's power to stimulate the listener's imagination (*Remembrance*).

The album *Sounds of Expression*, performed by Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz (sometimes in duo with Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca), constitutes the first comprehensive phonographic presentation of Karol Borsuk's contemporary music – it brings his works into the sphere of conscious, multifaceted dialogue while emphasizing their emotional resonance and timbral clarity. Through this project and its interpretative perspective, the composer's oeuvre has finally found a place within the interpretive discourse – dynamic contrasts, coloristic nuances and emotional narrative are refined in every detail. One can lose oneself in them entirely – after all, it is over an hour of unconventional musical solutions, expansive harmonic passages, sophisticated articulations and discreetly shaped details. It

seems that this album simply had to be created in precisely this form, where the presence-based discourse was never lost.

Łukasz Dębowski

7.8.1.4.2. Review – *Polska Płyta / Polska Muzyka*

18 JULY 2025

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz presents the album *Sounds of Expression*

<https://polskaplyta-polskamuzyka.pl/2025/07/18/joanna-Filuś-olenkiewicz-prezentuje-album-sounds-of-expression/>

*Sounds of Expression*¹¹⁰ is the title of the album by violinist and violist Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz¹¹¹ (JFO), featuring arrangements of contemporary compositions by Karol Borsuk. The album was released by Opus Series.

Sounds of Expression is a unique project whose core is the contemporary music of Karol Borsuk – a Polish composer, conductor and violinist who has been active in Berlin for many years. It is the first comprehensive phonographic presentation of his music – initiated and produced by Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz (JFO), violist, interpreter of contemporary music and the album's producer. She was the first to decide to record and release a selection of works by this under-recognized composer, taking on not only their performance but also the entire artistic concept – from repertoire selection, through the recording process, to the graphic and editorial design.

She is joined on the recording by Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca – a flutist and chamber musician with whom JFO forms an exceptionally cohesive duo. Their shared interpretation of Borsuk's music leads the listener into a world of emotion, expressivity and subtle contrasts.

Karol Borsuk (b. 1949 in Łuków) is an artist of wide-ranging activity. He studied at the Faculty of Music at UMCS in Lublin, where he also engaged in teaching and choral work. Since the 1980s he has lived and worked in Berlin as a pedagogue, conductor and composer. His works have been performed in Poland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Russia and Ecuador. Since 2001 he has composed

¹¹⁰ Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz, Boomplay, <https://www.boomplay.com/artists/111779215>, accessed 23 March 2026.

¹¹¹ Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz, SoundCloud, <https://soundcloud.com/joannafilus-olenkiewicz>, accessed 23 March 2026.

intensively – creating works for choir, orchestra, chamber ensembles and solo instruments.

The album *Sounds of Expression* is not only a presentation of music – it is a personal journey, an artistic gesture in which sound becomes a medium of communication and emotional expression. “I do not interpret this music. I open it – I draw out what I myself sense, and what – I hope – the listener may also sense. This is the sound of expression – the sound of expressivity, but also expression through sound,” says Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz.

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz, born in Bielsko-Biała, has lived in Berlin since 2010. A passionate musician, she works as a violinist and violist and is a laureate – both as a soloist and as a chamber musician (Duo de Soleil) – of numerous international music competitions. She is a graduate of the Academies of Music in Katowice, Kraków and Gdańsk, as well as the University of Szczecin in Poland; the Universität der Künste in Graz, Austria; the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Rostock; and the University of Potsdam.

She has received scholarships from the Mayor of Bielsko-Biała (2000), the University of Southern California in Los Angeles (2001), and the ZAiKS Artists’ Association in Warsaw (2021). She has performed as concertmaster and tutti player with many orchestras (including Staatstheater Kassel, Radio-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Staatstheater Oldenburg, Sinfonieorchester Münster, Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg, Hofer Symphoniker, Thüringer Symphoniker Saalfeld-Rudolstadt, Berliner Symphoniker, Philharmonisches Orchester Wernigerode, and the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice). She also performs as a chamber musician and soloist.

She has taken part in numerous radio recordings, including with the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice and the Berlin Radio Orchestra, and has participated in many international concert tours. Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz is a viola lecturer in the Young Talent course in Toyohashi, Japan. Since 2012 she has been closely associated with the music school in Reinickendorf, Berlin, where she teaches violin and viola.

For several years she has collaborated with composer Karol Borsuk¹¹², a creator of contemporary music. She premieres and disseminates his works through recordings, public performances and music publications. As a member of the Internationale Beethoven Gesellschaft Berlin, Joanna actively contributes to the organization of the Young Ludwig Young Music Competition. She is also an active member of the European Forum of Polish Music in Berlin. The artist organizes musical projects and concerts¹¹³, inviting various performers to collaborate under the name *Filus Music Moments*. In addition, she works in special education for individuals with intellectual and visual disabilities and supports conflict resolution as a mediator and communication trainer at Business Trends Academy in Berlin.

In addition, she works in special education for individuals with intellectual and visual disabilities and supports conflict resolution as a mediator and communication trainer at Business Trends Academy in Berlin¹¹⁴.

¹¹² Karol Borsuk – *Sounds of Expression* (playlist), YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_ka9eOa4bIxIY0T_4qLokcNOM9lxjqt5Sw, accessed 23 March 2026.

¹¹³ *Bunter Teller mit Musik*, Deutsch-Polnische Nachrichten, <https://deutsch-polnische-nachrichten.eu/2024/06/11/bunter-teller-mit-musik/>, accessed 23 March 2026.

¹¹⁴ Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz prezentuje album *Sounds of Expression*, Polska Płyta – Polska Muzyka, <https://polskaplyta-polskamuzyka.pl/2025/07/18/joanna-filus-olenkiewicz-prezentuje-album-sounds-of-expression/>, accessed 23 March 2026.

7.8.1.4.3. Interview in *Polska Płyta / Polska Muzyka*

**“I feel as if I were levitating inside the sounds my instrument creates”
– Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz¹¹⁵ (interview)**

Sounds of Expression is the title of the album by violinist and violist **Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz (JFO)**, featuring arrangements of contemporary compositions by Karol Borsuk. More about this remarkable project can be found in our interview with the artist.

The album *Sounds of Expression* presents the music of Karol Borsuk – what drew your attention to his works in particular, and why did you decide to record them now?

The music of Karol Borsuk captivated me with its sincerity, diversity and the courage with which it seeks its own musical language. His works are deeply emotional and at the same time intellectually refined. My attention turned to Karol in 2010, when we met at the Music School in Reinickendorf in Berlin, where I had just been appointed as a violin and viola teacher. At that time, Karol Borsuk was head of the string department and invited me to collaborate on his musical projects with choir and orchestra – projects he continues to lead successfully to this day.

This is how a friendship and mutual trust developed between us, and with them came compositions dedicated to me. Over time, the repertoire grew significantly, and within me matured the need to share this extraordinary music with the world. The decision to record the album arose from an inner need to express my artistic voice through works that move and inspire me. I also wanted to draw attention to the music of a composer who, in my view, deserves far wider recognition.

¹¹⁵ *Joanna Filus-Olenkiewicz: Mam wrażenie, że lewituję w dźwiękach...* (wywiad), *Polska Płyta – Polska Muzyka*, <https://polskaplyta-polskamuzyka.pl/2025/07/28/mam-wrazenie-ze-lewituje-w-dzwiekach-ktore-wydobywa-moj-instrument-joanna-filus-olenkiewicz-wywiad/>, accessed 23 March 2026.

I am currently working on a doctoral dissertation devoted to his oeuvre at one of the music academies in Poland, and the album was released especially in connection with this project.

The album features both solo works and chamber pieces (in duos with Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca). How did you select the repertoire to showcase both the diversity of Borsuk's style and your own artistic vision?

The process of selecting the repertoire was both intuitive and deeply considered. I wanted to present the full spectrum of Karol Borsuk's stylistic language – from neoclassical forms to more experimental, expressive compositions. My aim was to allow the listener to experience the breadth of his musical voice, while at the same time letting this music carry my own artistic expression.

The chamber works performed in duo with Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca, with whom I have formed the ensemble Duo de Soleil for several years, offered the opportunity for musical dialogue and a shared search for meaning within sound. The solo pieces, in turn, became an intimate space for expressing my own emotions and interpretations.

Each work on the album has its own story – it reflects experiences, emotions, impressions and sometimes even the composer's personal concerns. Many of them were inspired by travels to previously unknown places, such as Kolding or Odessa. Some of the solo violin pieces, such as *Wolke 7 (Cloud 7)* or *April*, I transposed for viola – I wanted to give them a deeper, warmer timbre that, in my view, better conveys their atmosphere and poetic character.

A particularly special place on the album is occupied by the piece composed especially for me – for viola, choir and orchestra. Its premiere took place in June 2014 in Międzyzdroje with the Koszalin Philharmonic under the baton of the composer himself. On the album, this work closes the entire programme – I consider it a personal jewel. I am especially moved by the musical dialogue between the viola, the choir and the orchestra – it is an exceptionally intriguing and emotionally dense composition. The recording features the Choir of the Maritime University in Szczecin conducted by Sylwia Fabiańczyk-Makuch, which added a unique character and depth to the whole.

As both producer and performer, you played a key role in the making of the album – what were the biggest challenges in combining these two roles?

The greatest challenge was maintaining a balance between the producer's necessary distance and the deep immersion required of a performer. I had to be precise, decisive and emotionally open at the same time. At moments, it was difficult to switch from the role of organizer to that of artist – but in retrospect, I believe that this duality gave me greater control over the final shape of the album.

The production process is not only about practising the musical material, meeting and discussing ideas with the composer, but also about having a vision of how the work should come together as a whole. It is an incredibly inspiring process that deserves special attention. One must not forget the people who may seem invisible at first glance, yet without whom the proverbial “final button” could never be fastened. I mean the sound engineers and music technicians – their contribution is invaluable and deserves full recognition.

What, in a broader sense, do you consider the greatest value of the album *Sounds of Expression*?

For me, the greatest value of this album lies in its sincerity and freedom of expression. It is a recording that does not shy away from emotion, yet is equally unafraid of silence and reflection. I hope that listeners will feel that sound is not merely a material substance, but a space for a personal encounter – both with the composer and with the performer.

In a broader perspective, I believe this music deserves to be brought into the light – to reach a wider audience and to inspire performers and educators to explore this repertoire. It is also an invitation to authenticity, to being oneself despite the absence of perfection. I believe that this album can also serve as a voice of encouragement for young creators – to take independent steps and to embrace courage in musical creation.

***Sounds of Expression*, as you say, is “a personal journey, an artistic gesture.” How did you seek to befriend these compositions so that they could**

**become such a personal and emotionally charged form of creative expression?
Did preparing this material take a long time?**

Working on this material was, for me, a form of inner work – not only musical, but also spiritual. It was a process that matured within me over many years. Gathering the repertoire, waiting for new compositions, conversations with the composer, the first concert performances – all of this laid the foundation for the later, intensive artistic work. Initially, these pieces appeared within various concert programmes, woven into a broader context. Over time, however, their strength and significance led them to form independent concert evenings – musical encounters entirely devoted to the life and work of this composer.

When the moment came to record the album, I spent many months with each piece, listening not only with my ears but also with my heart. Some of them became part of my daily life – I played them in silence, in contemplation, in moments of emotion and reflection. Thanks to this long, gradual process, which unfolded over many years and gained particular intensity in its final stage, *Sounds of Expression* became for me an exceptionally personal and deeply emotional artistic statement.

In the announcements you mentioned that “sound becomes a tool of communication and emotional expression” – could you describe a moment during the recording sessions that best reflects this idea?

There was a moment during the recording of one of the miniatures when I stopped “playing” in the traditional sense. Instead, I began to speak through sound. At that point, the music ceased to be merely a structure or a notated score – it became a pure transmission of emotion.

The composer I work with uses a wide range of performance techniques to achieve specific sonic effects and to evoke something deeply resonant in the listener. There are percussive elements, such as tremolo on the body of the instrument, pizzicato – plucking the string with the finger – and even the use of the human voice: sometimes as accompaniment, at other times as the primary means of expression in the form of spoken recitation.

During the recording sessions, the atmosphere also played an enormous role – the acoustics of the hall, the light, the presence of people close to me on stage or

nearby. The emotions flowing from them had a profound impact on me. In such moments, reality begins to blur – I lose my sense of time and place. I feel as if I am floating, levitating within the sounds produced by my instrument. In those moments, I become one with it – and sound becomes a true language of emotion.

The album is rich in contrasts – from neoclassical structures to expressive tensions. Which piece captures this diversity particularly well? Or is there a moment on the album that is especially meaningful to you?

A piece that is especially close to my heart is the *Fantasie for Viola, Choir and Orchestra* – on the one hand full of inner light and delicacy, on the other restless, pulsing with tension and a striking character. For me, it is a musical portrait of a human being – complex, ambiguous, full of contradictions. It is precisely this ambivalence that makes the album so rich and multidimensional.

Another work that is particularly meaningful to me is the *Three Miniatures for Flute and Viola*, which Cornelia and I premiered together at the Konzerthaus in Berlin on 3 September 2022. For this performance we received multiple awards in various international music competitions.

What would you like the listener to feel or discover within themselves when engaging with these compositions?

I would like the listener to find a space for themselves within these sounds – whether it be calm, emotion or questions. This music does not offer straightforward answers – it invites encounter, reflection, and a deeper listening to oneself and to the world, which often resonates more quietly than we think.

The album *Sounds of Expression* was released by Requiem Records/Opus Series – what was your collaboration with the label like in terms of graphic design, promotion and the publication of such a niche repertoire?

The collaboration with Requiem Records was highly creative and inspiring. I was given a great deal of artistic freedom, while also receiving valuable support in technical and promotional matters. The graphic design was created in

cooperation with the talented Łukasz Pawlak, who has been promoting niche Polish music for many years. In addition to graphic design and promotion, Łukasz also organizes concerts for his diverse roster of artists in Warsaw.

Until the end of June 2025, the concerts took place in the DomPolski space; currently, Łukasz is in the process of searching for a new artistic venue where – I hope – I will be able to perform and present my *Sounds of Expression* project. I am already looking forward to this new, inspiring space and to the continued development of Requiem Records, which will undoubtedly bring new opportunities for all the remarkable artists who appear on this important Warsaw stage.

What are your future artistic plans related to the *Sounds of Expression* album? Will it be possible to hear this repertoire in a similar form during concerts?

Absolutely – I am planning a series of concerts featuring this repertoire, both in solo and chamber formats. I would like these works to live not only in the studio, but also in concert halls, galleries and perhaps even in less conventional spaces. I also intend to continue the project with new compositions and with artists with whom I feel a strong artistic connection.

As I mentioned earlier, I am waiting for an invitation from Requiem Records to perform in their new artistic venue in Warsaw.

For several years I have also been involved in promoting and performing the works of Karol Borsuk. Concerts featuring his music have taken place mainly in Berlin, but also in Międzyzdroje, Gothenburg, Żywiec and Bielsko-Biała – my hometown, where I have the privilege of performing regularly at the Bielska Galeria na Wzgórzu, run by Mr Franciszek Kukiola.

My goal is to gradually familiarize audiences with 21st-century music – by weaving it, in small doses, into concert programmes that include works by composers of other eras. I am grateful for every opportunity and every performance of this exceptional Polish repertoire.

7.8.1.5. Review by Robert Majewski in *W kulturalny sposób*¹¹⁶

The album *Sounds of Expression* by Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz is a project that grows out of a deep, long-standing artistic relationship between the performer and the composer. By recording the music of Karol Borsuk – a composer with a broad stylistic spectrum and still insufficiently represented in the phonographic landscape – the violist undertakes not only an interpretative task but also a documentary and curatorial one. This is the first such comprehensive presentation of his work, initiated by the artist herself, who shaped the entire concept – from the selection of pieces to the final form of the release.

The most striking feature of this hour-long programme is its expressive unity combined with a richness of idioms. Borsuk moves between neoclassical clarity of form, meditative lyricism, and tensions with a distinctly expressionist lineage. In this context, the role of the interpreters becomes particularly significant: their sensitivity to detail, ability to shape tension, and consistency in structuring form allow the material's expressive potential to emerge and give the whole a distinct artistic profile. Filuś-Olenkiewicz intuitively reads this multilayeredness, avoiding both over-interpretation and emotional neutrality.

The solo pieces form the dramaturgical core of the album. The viola miniatures reveal the instrument in its most idiomatic dimension: a dark, overtone-rich sound shaped with long-breathed phrasing, and articulation – precise yet unobtrusive – that allows subtle harmonic tensions to resonate. Filuś-Olenkiewicz avoids ornamental excess; instead, she offers focus, intimacy, and a keen sense of micro-dramaturgy. In works such as *Remembrance* or *April*, the performer's ability to build emotional space without resorting to pathos is especially evident – the tension unfolds organically, as if from the very substance of the sound.

A broader perspective is provided by the chamber compositions recorded with flutist Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca. Their joint performance is distinguished by intonational unity and a shared sense of time – the phrase seems to arise from a single breath, and the timbral relationships between the instruments are shaped with chamber-music subtlety. In *Three Miniatures* or *Mosaic*, one notices not only the

¹¹⁶ Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz interpretuje muzykę Karola Borsuka, W Kulturalny Sposób, <https://wkulturalnysposob.com/2026/02/19/joanna-filus-olenkiewicz-interpretuje-muzyke-karola-borsuka/>, accessed 23 March 2026.

precision of ensemble blend but also the ability to differentiate character – from contemplative transparency to more complex, multilayered textures.

The dramaturgical breadth of the programme deserves particular emphasis. Alongside chamber forms appears the expansive *Fantasy* for viola, choir, and orchestra. The Choir of the Maritime University of Szczecin, led by Sylwia Fabiańczyk-Makuch, and the Koszalin Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Jacek Kujawski perform their parts with attention to ensemble discipline and clarity of sonic planes.

It is also worth mentioning the pieces that explore less obvious means of expression, such as vocal elements (these, admittedly, appealed to me the least) or transcriptional transformations of material. The whole forms a narrative in which successive segments do not compete stylistically but reveal different aspects of Karol Borsuk's musical world.

Across all recordings, Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz employs a wide dynamic range, and the expressive means she uses remain proportionate to the material of each piece. The colour of the sound is carefully shaped, the vibrato varied, and the bow control allows for a rich palette of textures. As a result, the listener receives a compelling emotional narrative in which every nuance has its justification.

Robert Majewski

7.9. List of Concerts Devoted to the Music of Karol Borsuk

On 17 June 2017, in the Berlin district of Marzahn, as part of the Open-Air *Chorkonzert* in the Renaissance Garden at the International Garden Exhibition IGA / *Gärten der Welt*, the world premiere of Karol Borsuk's *Fantasia for Solo Viola with Choir and Orchestra* took place. The performers were the *Frauenchor* and the *Reinickendorfer Ensemble* under the baton of the composer, with the viola part performed by Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz.

On 30 June 2017, at the International Cultural Centre in Międzyzdroje, a concert featuring Karol Borsuk's *Fantasia* for solo viola with choir and orchestra took place. The work was performed with the Koszalin Philharmonic under the baton of the composer himself, together with the Berlin-based Lichterfeld Choir, which Borsuk conducts on a regular basis.

https://miedzyzdroje.pl/pliki/miedzyzdroje/pliki/informator_samorzadowy/2017biuletyn6www.pdf

On 10 December 2017, as part of a Christmas concert at St. Nikolai Church in Berlin, the *Frauenchor Spandau* and the *Sinfonisches Ensemble Reinickendorf* performed under the baton of Karol Borsuk during the *Weihnachtskonzert*. The programme included, among others:

- Karol Borsuk – *Fantasia für Bratsche, Chor und Orchester*
- Karol Borsuk – *Ave Maria*
- Leo Delibes – *Messe brève*
- Franz Stolzenwald – *Weihnachtslieder für Sopran, Chor und Orchester*
- Weihenachtliche Orgelmusik

The soloists were:

- Joanna Petryka-Wawrowska – soprano
- Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz – viola
- Prof. Bogdan Narloch – organ

The concert combined classical repertoire with contemporary and Christmas works, highlighting the role of the choir and orchestra in interpreting Karol Borsuk's music.

<https://www.sinfonisches-ensemble-reinickendorf.de/konzerte/>

On 24 February 2018, a concert was held at the Evangeliumskirche in Berlin's Reinickendorf district, featuring music by Karol Borsuk and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The programme included, among others:

- Karol Borsuk – *Misdroy* – *Fantasie für Viola, Chor und Orchester*
- Karol Borsuk / K. Dedecius – *Lied „Übersetzen“* (Uraufführung)
- W.A. Mozart – *Sinfonie C-Dur Nr 34, KV 338*

The performers were:

- Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz – viola
- Joanna Petryka-Wawrowska – soprano
- Natalija Nikolayeva – piano
- Christina Farnold – recitation
- Dr. Ilona Czechowska – introduction

The choir and orchestra were the same as in the December concert – the *Frauenchor Spandau* and the *Sinfonisches Ensemble Reinickendorf*, conducted by Karol Borsuk.

The concert combined premiere performances of Borsuk's contemporary works with Mozart's classical repertoire, guiding the audience through diverse musical worlds ranging from choral and orchestral writing to solo viola passages and spoken narration.

On 9 December 2018, a Christmas concert entitled *Ave Maria – Weihnachtskonzert* was held at the Nathanael Church in Berlin-Friedenau. The programme featured both classical and contemporary works, some of which were intended for communal singing.

The performers were:

- Lichterfelder Chorkreis 1884 e.V. – mixed choir
- Sinfonisches Ensemble Reinickendorf – orchestra
- Karol Borsuk – conductor

The soloists were:

- Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz – viola
- Joanna Petryka-Wawrowska – soprano
- Bogdan Narloch – organ

The concert programme included:

- J.S. Bach – two chorales for organ
- J. Arcadelt, G. Donizetti, C. Saint-Saëns – *Ave Maria* (soprano, choir, organ, orchestra)
- Leopold Mozart – *Kindersinfonie*
- W.A. Mozart – *Kontretänze*
- Karol Borsuk – two works for viola

The concert combined traditional German and international carols with choral, organ and orchestral music, while also presenting contemporary works by Karol Borsuk, highlighting the virtuosity of the viola in his compositions.

On 11 May 2019, a choral concert entitled *Dir, Seele des Weltalls* was held at the Dorfkirche Alt-Schöneberg in Berlin. The event combined classical works with contemporary compositions. Admission was free, and the organisers invited voluntary donations.

The performers were:

- Lichterfelder Chorkreis 1884 e.V. – mixed choir
- Sinfonisches Ensemble Reinickendorf (SER) – orchestra
- Karol Borsuk – conductor

The soloists were:

- Joanna Petryka-Wawrowska – soprano
- Natalija Nikolayeva – piano
- Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz – viola

The concert programme included:

- Antonio Vivaldi – *Credo / Primavera*
- Gaetano Donizetti – *Ave Maria* (soprano, choir, orchestra)

- Anton Bruckner – *Locus Iste*
- W.A. Mozart – *Freemason Cantata "Dir, Seele des Weltalls"*
- Karol Borsuk – *Fantasie for Viola, Choir and Orchestra*
- Joseph Haydn – *Symphony Hob. I:99 in E-flat major, Finale*

The concert brought together choral and instrumental music, presenting classical works by masters of the Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras alongside contemporary compositions by Karol Borsuk, in which the viola played a central, virtuosic role.

On 22 August 2021, during the open-air *Draußenstadt-Konzert* in Berlin, Karol Borsuk's *Miniatures for Viola, Andante, Kolding* and *April* were performed.

On 9 September 2022, a solo / chamber concert took place at the Konzerthaus Berlin, featuring Borsuk's *Three Miniatures* and *Aquarelle* for flute and viola.

On 18 December 2022, a Christmas concert (*Weihnachtskonzert*) was held at the Taborkirche in Berlin, during which Borsuk's *Miniatures* for flute and viola, *Kolding, Odessa* and *Andante* were performed.

On 25 November 2022, a musical evening (*Musikabend*) took place at the ArtSalon bei Kiezkultur in Berlin, featuring Borsuk's *Miniatures, Aquarelle, Andante, Mosaik* for flute and viola, *Scherzo I* and *Scherzo II, Fantasia in D minor, Wolke 7*, and *Souvenir* for solo viola.

On 2 March 2022, during the school concert *Es ist ein Treiben in mir...* in Berlin, the following works by Karol Borsuk were performed: *Three Miniatures* for viola and flute, *Pastorello, Andante, Goethe auf Tegel, Ave Maria, April*, and *Fantasia in D minor*.

On 20 March 2022, a concert entitled *Hoffnung* took place at Taborstrasse in Berlin, featuring Borsuk's *Three Miniatures* for flute and viola, *April, Erinnerung*, and *Wolke 7* for solo viola.

On 25 June 2022, at *Le Salon* in Berlin, a presentation of music and poetry took place, featuring Karol Borsuk's *Three Miniatures*, *Pastorello*, and *Mosaik* for flute and viola, as well as *Kazimierz*, *Wolke 7*, and *Erinnerung* for solo viola.

On 7 February 2023, in Berlin-Spandau, a children's concert (*Kinderkonzert*) was held, featuring Borsuk's *Three Miniatures*, *Goethe auf Tegel*, *Souvenir de Kazimierz*, *Scherzo I* and *Scherzo II*, and *Fantasia in D minor*.

On 4 March 2023, in Heiligensee, Berlin, an event entitled *Passionsmusik* took place, featuring Borsuk's *Three Miniatures*, *Ave Maria*, *Pastorello*, *Fantasia in D minor*, *Kolding*, and *Odessa*.

On 28 March 2023, during the *Teacher on the Stage* concert in Berlin-Spandau, Borsuk's *Scherzo I*, *Scherzo II*, and *Fantasia in D minor* were performed.

On 2 June 2023, at Klang-Holz e.V. in Berlin, a concert entitled *Wir lieben Klassik* was held, featuring Borsuk's *Three Miniatures* and *Three Aquarelles* for flute and viola.

On 14 October 2023, at the Zitadelle Spandau in Berlin, as part of the *Festival*, Borsuk's *Three Miniatures* and *Three Aquarelles* for flute and viola, as well as *Erinnerung*, were performed.

On 15 November 2023, in Frankfurt (Oder), during the anniversary celebration of the Carl Dedecius Stiftung – marking the foundation's 10th anniversary, whose executive director is Dr Ilona Czechowska at the European University Viadrina – the world premiere of Karol Borsuk's *Preludium a canzona* for solo viola was performed¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁷ Kandulski, *O formach muzycznych*, 81.

On 18 November 2023, in Berlin-Spandau¹¹⁸, during the musical gathering *Discher Musiktreff*, Karol Borsuk's *Three Miniatures* for flute and viola and *Fantasia Piccola* were performed.

On 25 November 2023, in Gothenburg (Sweden), a concert of the Polonicus Choir took place, featuring Karol Borsuk's *Kolding*.

<https://www.polskakongressen.org/category/konsert/>

On 30 November 2023, in Berlin-Reinickendorf, a musical evening entitled *Musik und Leben von Karol Borsuk* was held, dedicated to the composer's work. The programme featured Borsuk's *Three Miniatures* and *Three Aquarelles*, *Mosaik*, *Pastorello*, *Ave Maria*, *Souvenir de Kazimierz*, *Goethe auf Tegel* for flute and viola, as well as *Kazimierz*, *Kolding*, *Odessa*, *Erinnerung*, *Wolke 7*, *April*, *Fantasia Piccola*, *Scherzo I* and *Scherzo II*, and *Preludium a canzona* for solo viola.

On 6 and 14 December 2023, in the districts of Reinickendorf and Heiligensee in Berlin, musical events under the shared title *Jewish Music* took place, featuring Karol Borsuk's *Three Miniatures* for flute and viola and *Kazimierz* for solo viola.

On 17 December 2023, at the headquarters of Klang Holz e.V. in Berlin-Spandau, a concert entitled *Perle des Barocks* was held, featuring Borsuk's *Three Miniatures* for flute and viola, *Fantasia in D minor*, and *Fantasia Piccola*.

On 23 December 2023, in the Treptow-Köpenick district of Berlin, during the Advent concert (*Adventskonzert*), Karol Borsuk's *Miniatures* and *Aquarelles* for flute and viola were performed.

On 16 March 2024, in Koszalin (Poland), a recording session dedicated to the music of Karol Borsuk took place. It included the recording of his *Fantasia* for

¹¹⁸ Deutsche Gesellschaft e.V. / Kreuzberg Museum (eds.). *Der Stoff, aus dem Berlin gemacht ist. Entdeckungsreisen zu den Industriedenkmälern Brandenburgs* [The Material Berlin Is Made Of – Exploratory Journeys to the Industrial Monuments of Brandenburg]. Berlin – Stattbuch Verlag, 1994.

solo viola with choir and orchestra, as well as solo works such as *Erinnerung*, *Fantasia in D minor*, *Odessa*, *Kolding*, *Scherzo I* and *Scherzo II*, *Wolke 7*, *April*, *Kazimierz*, *Fantasia Piccola*, and *Preludium a canzona*.

On 5 April 2024, in Elche (Spain), a poetic-musical concert entitled *Poezja i Muzyka* was held, featuring Karol Borsuk's *Kolding*, *April*, and *Fantasia in D minor* for solo viola.

On 5 April 2024, in Elche (Spain), a poetic-musical concert entitled *Poezja i Muzyka* [*Poetry and Music*] was held, featuring Karol Borsuk's *Kolding*, *April*, and *Fantasia in D minor* for solo viola.

On 7 April 2024, at the Spandau Citadel in Berlin, an improvisation on Karol Borsuk's *Fantasia* was performed by Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca (flute) and Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz (viola).

8. Recordings of Karol Borsuk's Works Available on the YouTube Platform

Fantasie for Viola and Orchestra performed by the Koszalin Philharmonic under the baton of Jacek Kujawski. Soloist: violist Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PYIwKr9N-0>

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz performing Karol Borsuk's *Scherz I*.

https://youtu.be/_FQX6FFR3VU

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz performing Karol Borsuk's *Scherz II*.

<https://youtu.be/zYMtsurNd80>

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz performing Karol Borsuk's *Fantasia in D Minor*.

<https://youtu.be/za4-Bu8eghY>

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz Karol Borsuk's *Remembrance*.

https://youtu.be/UcdY_yXNnBg

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz performing Karol Borsuk's *Odessa*.

<https://youtu.be/01XZVBIDSAw>

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz performing Karol Borsuk's *Kolding*.

<https://youtu.be/nQazQTZw7Ao>

<https://studio.youtube.com/video/wDFQVDZ7Vhs/edit>

Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca & Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz performing Karol Borsuk's *Three Miniatures* for flute and viola.

<https://youtu.be/ebg-7QAywsI>

9. Selected Original Manuscripts by Karol Borsuk

9.1. Duets for Flute and Viola

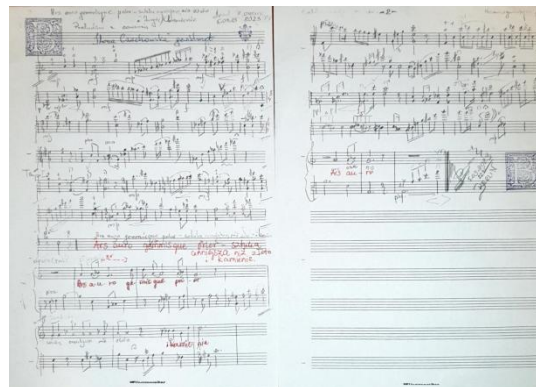


Three Aquarelles for Flute and Viola.

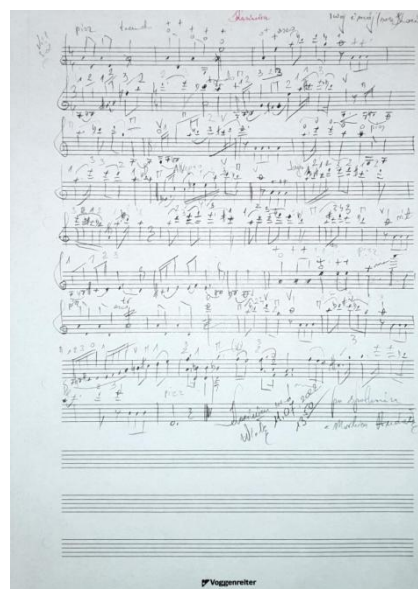


Souvenir de Kazimierz for Violin/Flute and Viola

9.2. Solo Works for Viola

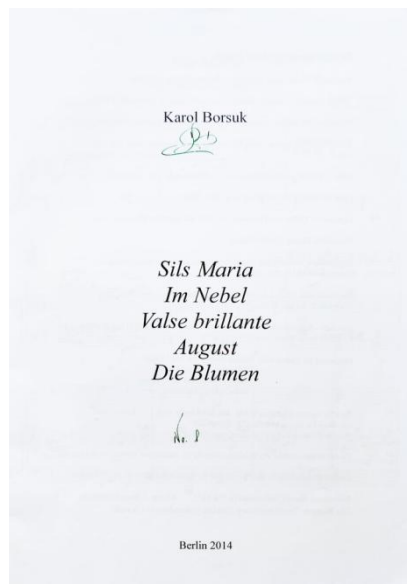


Preludium a canzona.



Kazimierz for solo viola.

9.3. Selected Compositions by Karol Borsuk – Source Documentation



Title page of the collection of works by Karol Borsuk, published in Berlin in 2014. It features the composer's name and the titles of the compositions: *Sils Maria*, *Im Nebel*, *Valse brillante*, *August*, and *Die Blumen*.

The image displays the first page of a musical score. At the top, the word 'Score' is printed. The title 'Fantazja "Dedecius"' is centered, followed by its Polish instrumentation 'na dwie skrzypce i orkiestrę smyczkową'. Below this, the German title 'Fantasie "Dedecius"' and instrumentation 'für zwei Violinen und Streichorchester' are provided. The composer's name 'Karol Borsuk' appears in the top right corner. The score itself begins with a tempo marking 'Andante' and a time signature of 4/4. It includes staves for Violin I, Violin II, Violoncello, and Contrabasso, with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'pp' and 'ppp'.

First page of the score of Karol Borsuk's *Fantasia "Dedecius"*, written for two solo violins and string orchestra. The title of the work is given in two languages – Polish and German (*Fantasie "Dedecius" für zwei Violinen und*

Streichorchester), which highlights the international context of the work's presentation and reception.



Excerpt from the score of Karol Borsuk's *Quo vadis, Domine?* – a concert cantata for solo soprano, choir, and orchestra, dated January 2012. The presented material shows the page that opens the Andante section, featuring an expanded performing ensemble characteristic of the cantata–concertante form.

The score employs a diverse instrumental and vocal apparatus, including woodwinds (flute, B-flat clarinet, B-flat trumpet), vocal soloists (soprano and tenor), mixed choir (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), piano, and string orchestra. The solo soprano line plays a particularly prominent role, set against a restrained instrumental texture, which underscores the narrative and expressive character of the passage as well as its connection to the vocal text.



Opening fragment of Karol Borsuk's vocal-instrumental work *Sils-Maria*, set to a text by Friedrich Nietzsche ¹¹⁹. The composition bears a dedication to Oskar Koziółek-Goetz, which points to a personal and extra-musical context behind its creation. The piece is written for solo voice with piano accompaniment, and its opening is marked *Andantino*.



Opening fragment of the score of Karol Borsuk's *Capriccio*, written for an expanded orchestral ensemble. The composition opens in an Andante tempo and includes a handwritten dedication placed above the title, which lends the manuscript an authorial and documentary character.

¹¹⁹ Wolfgang Beutin et al., eds., *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* [*History of German Literature: From Its Beginnings to the Present*] (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1989), 304–334; cf. Volker Gerhardt and Renate Reschke, eds., *Nietzsche weltweit. Der Philosoph und die Perspektiven der Moderne* [*Nietzsche Worldwide: The Philosopher and the Perspectives of Modernity*] (Stuttgart–Weimar: J.B. Metzler, 1996).



Opening title page of the score of Karol Borsuk's *Che mal si può amar*. The composition is vocal-instrumental in character and is written for solo soprano, mixed choir (soprano, alto), and string orchestra with separate solo violin parts. The work opens at $\text{♩} = 72$, with clearly marked dynamics and a gradual increase in sonic tension.



Title page of the score of Karol Borsuk's *Quo vadis, Domine?*, a concert cantata for solo soprano, choir, and orchestra, completed in January 2012. The typographic layout of the page is restrained and clear, with the composer's name and the title of the work prominently displayed. The title, formulated as a rhetorical question, already at the paratextual level suggests the reflective and dramatic character of the composition.



Fragment of the score of Karol Borsuk's *MISDROY-REQUIEM*. The excerpt shows the opening section of the composition, marked *Andante molto*, with clearly indicated bar numbers, suggesting an analytical and orientational function of the page within the larger structure of the work.

gewidmet Herrn Pfarrer Dr. Marian Wittlieb
Misdroy-Messe
 für Sopran solo, Tenor solo, Frauenchor
 und Kammerorchester
 Karol Borsuk
 (* 1949)

Kyrie

Moderato

Score for Soprano Solo, Tenor Solo, Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto, Klavier, Organ, Pedal, Kirchen-
 glocken, Violon I, Violon II, Solo, Violine, Tenor, Kontrabaß.

© 2009

Opening fragment of the *Kyrie* section from Karol Borsuk's *Misdroy-Messe*, written for solo soprano, solo tenor, women's choir, and chamber orchestra with the participation of keyboard and percussion instruments. The work bears a dedication to Rev. Dr Marian Wittlieb, which points to its sacred context and its connection to a specific performing and liturgical community.

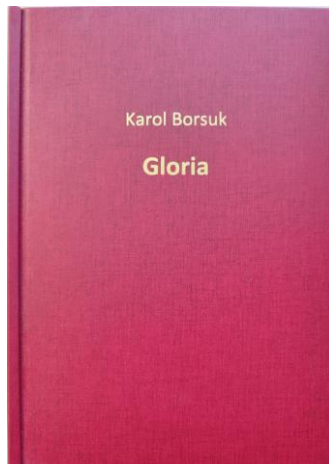


Cover of the published score of Karol Borsuk's *Missa Misdroyensis* (*Msza Międzyzdrojska / Misdroy Messe*), composed in 2009. The cover design combines visual and symbolic elements with references to the musical content and the sacred character of the work.

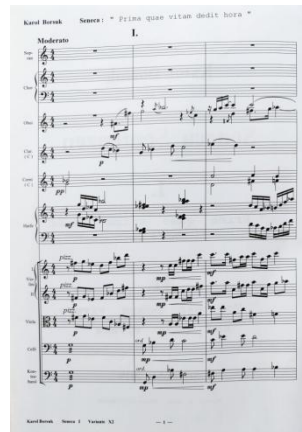


Fragment of the score of the *Gloria* section by Karol Borsuk, written for an expanded performing ensemble comprising vocal soloists, mixed choir, symphony orchestra, and percussion instruments¹²⁰. The page presents the opening portion of the movement, in which the composer shapes the dramaturgy through pronounced dynamic contrasts and a gradual densification of the texture.

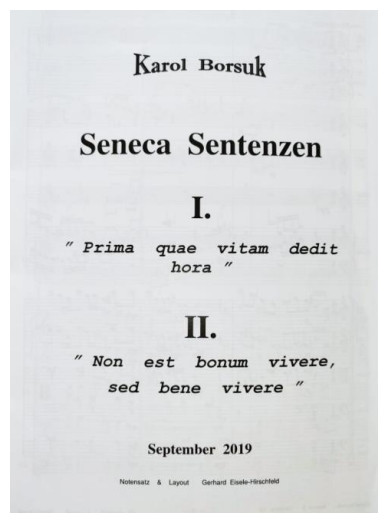
¹²⁰ Bogusław Schaeffer, "Perkussion," in *Leksykon kompozytorów XX wieku*, vol. 2 (M–Z) (Cracow: PWM, 1965), 189.



Title page of the score of Karol Borsuk's *Gloria*.



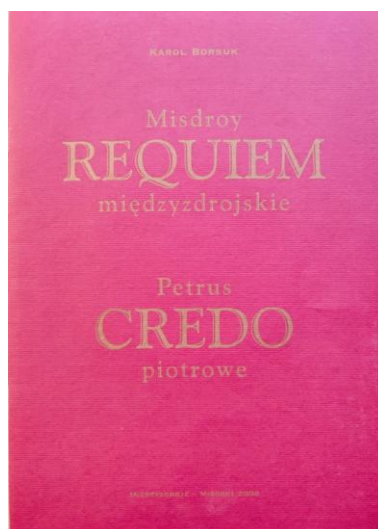
Opening page of the score of Karol Borsuk's *Seneca: "Prima quae vitam dedit hora"*, the first part of a work based on a text by Lucius Annaeus Seneca. The composition opens in a Moderato (4/4) tempo and represents a contemporary vocal-instrumental piece of a reflective and philosophical character.



Stronę Title page of Karol Borsuk's vocal-instrumental cycle *Seneca Sentenzen*, completed in September 2019. The page features a clear, hierarchical typographic layout that highlights the title of the work and its two-part formal structure. The cycle consists of two movements based on the *sententiae* of Lucius Annaeus Seneca:

I. *Prima quae vitam dedit hora*

II. *Non est bonum vivere, sed bene vivere*



Cover of the bound score containing two of Karol Borsuk's sacred works: *Misdroy Requiem (Requiem międzydrojskie)* and *Petrus Credo (Credo piotrowe)*.

10. Selected Major Works by Karol Borsuk

10.1. Miniature and Chamber Works (Discussed in the Doctoral Dissertation)

1. *Kolding* (1:17) – 2016; premiere: Berlin.
2. *Odessa* (2:40) – 2016; premiere: Berlin.
3. *Scherz I* (1:16) – 2005; premiere: Berlin.
4. *Scherz II* (2:13) – 2005; premiere: Berlin.
5. *Fantasua in D minor* (1:59) – 2002; premiere: Berlin..
6. *Fantasia Piccola* (6:03) – 2020; premiere: Berlin.
7. *Kazimierz* (2:42) – 2022; prawykonanie: Kazimierz.
8. *Cloud 7* (1:44) – 2013; premiere: Berlin.
9. *Remembrance / Erinnerung* (1:51) – 2010; premiere: Berlin.
10. *April* (2:15) – ok. 2012–2013; premiere:: Berlin.
11. *Preludium a canzona* (4:37) – 2023; premiere:: Frankfurt an der Oder.
12. *Mosaik* (3:33) – 2012; premiere: Berlin.
13. *Pastorello* (3:09) – 2012; premiere: Berlin.
14. *Goethe auf Tegel* (1:38) – 2021; premiere: Berlin.
15. *Ave Maria* (1:48) – 2013; premiere: Berlin.
16. *Three Miniatures* – 2022; premiere: Berlin.
 - 16.1. (0:54)
 - 16.2. (0:50)
 - 16.3. (0:54)
17. *Three Aquarelles* – 2023; premiere: Berlin.
 - 17.1. (0:45)
 - 17.2. (1:22)
 - 17.3. (0:29)
18. *Bilder* (4:35) – 2018; premiere:: Berlin.
19. *Andante* (2:45) – 2001 premiere: Międzyzdroje.
20. *Souvenir de Kazimierz* (3:18) – approx. 2012; premiere: Międzyzdroje.
21. *Fantasia for Viola, Choir and Orchestra* (7:56) – 2017; premiere: Berlin.

10.2. Chamber, Vocal, and Vocal-Instrumental Works (Main Catalogue)

22. *Andante* – for violin, cello, and organ – 2001; premiere: Międzyzdroje; CD recording 2006.
23. *Misdroy Requiem* – for soprano, piano, organ, and orchestra – 2004; premiere: Międzyzdroje; CD recording 2006.
24. *Petrus Credo* – or soprano, women's choir, piano, organ, and orchestra – 2006; premiere: Międzyzdroje.
25. *Misdroy Messe* – for soprano, tenor, piano, organ, and orchestra – 2006; premiere: Berlin; television recording 2009, Międzyzdroje.
26. *Skizze I* – for piano (to Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem*) – 2010; premiere: Gdańsk.
27. *Duett* – for violin and saxophone – 2011; premiere: Berlin.
28. *Capriccio* – for violin and orchestra – 2011; premiere: Marienwerder (Kwidzyn), Poland.
29. *Skizze II* – for piano – 2012; premiere: Berlin.
30. *Valse brillante, Im Nebel, August* – – for soprano and piano to texts by Hermann Hesse – 2012; premiere: Berlin.
31. *Symphonia sacra „Hodu l'Adonai”* – for two sopranos, violin, and organ – 2012.
32. *Scherzo* – for cello and piano – 2012; premiere: Berlin.
33. *Quo vadis, Domine?* – concert cantata for soprano, tenor, piano, mixed choir (SATB), and orchestra – 2012; premiere: Berlin (Konzerthaus).
34. Miniatures for solo violin:
Fantasie in D minor – 2012; premiere: Berlin,
Erinnerung – 2013; premiere: Berlin,
Scherzos I and II – 2013; premiere: Berlin,
Wolke 7 – 2013; premiere: Berlin,
35. *Kyrie* – for baritone solo and women's choir (SSA) – 2013; premiere: Berlin.
36. *Ave Maria* – for soprano and alto – 2013; premiere: Berlin.
37. *Fantasie Orientale* – for carillon or organ – 2013.

38. *Sils Maria* – for baritone and piano to a text by Friedrich Nietzsche – 2014; premiere: Berlin.
39. *Die Blumen* – for baritone and piano to a text by Piotr Borsuk – 2014; premiere: Berlin.

Music engraving: Anna Ciechanowski (A.C.)

Text translation (*Die Blumen*): Karolina Lewandowska (Borsuk)

10.3. Overview of the Compositions of Karol Borsuk

10.3.1. Category I Solo Instrumental Works

Flute

More than ten compositions for solo flute.

Violin

A rich and diverse collection of works in various forms and genres:

- fantasies,
- miniatures,
- epitaphs – works dedicated to deceased and esteemed individuals (including Maria Kuncewiczowa, Eugeniusz Zań-Wygowski),
- *Hommage* type pieces:
 - *Hommage à Piotr Moss*,
 - *Hommage à Rachmaninow* (with short, multi-note quotations),
- *Fantasia Dedecius* – containing quotations from J.S. Bach's *Concerto in D minor*,
- dance pieces (tango, waltz),
- occasional works: *Le Mariage I*, *Le Mariage II*.

Viola

Compositions for solo viola.

A cycle of works forming the core of the artistic component and the analytical chapters of this doctoral dissertation.

Piano

More than thirty piano works, including:

- miniatures (scherzos, musical jokes),
- pieces inspired by historical figures (e.g., *Italienskaja 15 – Maria Szymanowska*),
- multi-movement forms (*Angels and Demons* and others).

Harpsichord

- *Mosaics* – for solo harpsichord (premieres by Prof. Elżbieta Stefańska: Berlin, Kraków, Early Music Festival),
- *Christo* – performance piece for harpsichord/piano four hands.

Organ

- *Oriental Fantasia* – premiere by Prof. Bogdan Narloch, Berlin.

10.3.2. Category II

Works for Solo Instrument/Voice with Accompaniment and Chamber Music

Miniatures for flute and violin.

Duets for two violins (a dozen or so works).

Violin and piano/organ (performed in Berlin and in Poland).

Cello and organ (a work performed many times, including at the Catholic Academy in Berlin).

Solo voice and violin:

- *eight aphorisms* to texts by Henryk Bereska and Karl Dedecius,
- works to poetry by Wisława Szymborska, Cyprian Kamil Norwid, and others.

Solo voice and piano:

- works for soprano and baritone,
- texts by, among others, Hermann Hesse, Friedrich Nietzsche, Zbigniew Herbert, and Karol Borsuk.

Violin and cello:

- a dozen or so miniatures,
- the *NY* cycle (five works composed after a visit to New York), – *Diptych*, *Triptych*, and others.

10.3.3. Category III

Compositions for Chamber Ensembles

Triptych to three poems by Tadeusz Różewicz – for soprano, violin, viola, and piano.

Passion Fragments:

- *Foderunt manus meas* (Good Friday),
- *Ego sum resurrectio et vita* (Holy Saturday), for soprano, tenor/baritone, violin, and cello (no premiere),
- Frans Hals – to a poem by Tadeusz Różewicz, for soprano, violin, and cello (performed multiple times in Berlin and Frankfurt an der Oder).

10.3.4. Category IV

Orchestral Compositions

(String, Chamber, and Symphonic)

Hör es klagt die Flöte wieder (text: Clemens Brentano) – for solo soprano and large symphony orchestra (premiere: Stadttheater Luckenwalde; soprano: Olga Ksenicz; Koszalin Philharmonic).

Fantasia Piccola (I movement) – for chamber orchestra (performed multiple times in Berlin).

Misdroy Requiem – for soprano, piano, organ, and chamber orchestra (performed in Międzyzdroje and Berlin).

Fantasia for Violin and Orchestra – performances by the Otto Symphony Orchestra Berlin and the Koszalin Philharmonic.

10.3.5. Category V

A Cappella Choral Works

Ave Maria – for women’s choir.

Kyrie – for mixed choir.

Short pieces for three-part choir.

10.3.6. Category VI

Works for Soloists, Choir, and Orchestra

Misdroy Mass – for soprano, baritone, women’s choir, piano, organ, and orchestra (premiere and recording: TVP Szczecin, Międzyzdroje; approx. 60 min).

Quo vadis, Domine? – cantata for soprano, baritone, mixed choir, and orchestra (premiere in Berlin; approx. 30 min).

Fantasia for Viola, Choir and Orchestra (viola: Joanna Filuś-Oleniewicz; performances in Berlin and Międzyzdroje).

Two Sentences of Seneca – for choir and orchestra (premiere in Berlin).

Che mal si può amar (text: Michelangelo) – for women’s choir and string orchestra (premiere in Berlin).

Gloria – for two sopranos, two choirs (women’s and mixed), and orchestra.

Hommage à Fabergé for soprano, reciter, two choirs, and orchestra.

10.3.7. Category VII

Works Included in the Doctoral Dissertation (Artistic Component and Analytical Chapters)

1. *Kolding* (2016)
2. *Odessa* (2016)
3. *Scherz I* (2005)
4. *Scherz II* (2005)
5. *Fantasia in D minor* (2002)
6. *Fantasie Piccola* (2020)
7. *Kazimierz* (2022)
8. *Wolke 7* (2013)
9. *Erinnerung* (2013)
10. *April* (2012–2013)
11. *Preludium a canzona* (2023)
12. *Mosaik* (2015)
13. *Pastorello* (2016)
14. *Goethe auf Tegel* (2021)
15. *Ave Maria* (2013)
16. *Three Miniatures* (2022)
17. *Three Aquarelles* (2023)
18. *Bilder* (2018)
19. *Andante* (2001)
20. *Souvenir de Kazimierz* (2012)
21. *Fantasia* for Viola, Choir and Orchestra (2017)

10.3.8. Soloists Performing Works by Karol Borsuk

Prof. Elżbieta Stefańska – harpsichord

Prof. Tomasz Tomaszewski – violin

Prof. Piotr Łykowski – countertenor

Karol Borsuk – violin

Cornelia Gehlmann-Dinca – flute

Anna Ciechanowska – violin

Agnieszka Tobik – violin

Oskar Koziółek-Götz – baritone

Bernd Goebel – cello

Natalia Nikolaeva – piano

Joanna Petryka-Wawrowska – soprano

Natalia Lewandowska – soprano

Ute Mayer – soprano

Olga Ksenicz – soprano

Prof. Bogdan Narloch – organ

Joanna Filuś-Oleniewicz – viola

10.3.9. Ensembles Performing Works by Karol Borsuk

Filharmonia Koszalińska

Otto-Sinfonieorchester Berlin

Ensemble Beethoven Gesellschaft

Duo de Soleil

Ensemble Bizarre Berlin

Sinfonisches Ensemble Reinickendorf

11. Declaration

I hereby declare that I have prepared the doctoral dissertation entitled *Karol Borsuk's Works for Viola as a Contribution to Polish Viola Literature of the 21st Century* independently. All data, essential ideas, and formulations taken from the literature (quoted directly or indirectly) are provided with appropriate references.

This dissertation has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in this or any other form, for assessment to any institution, nor has it been published.

I also acknowledge that, should this declaration prove to be untrue, the decision to award me the doctoral degree will be revoked.

Joanna Filuś-Olenkiewicz