THE SYMPHONY AND SYMPHONIC THINKING IN POLISH MUSIC SINCE 1956

Beata Bolesławska

The Symphony and Symphonic Thinking in Polish Music Since 1956

1956 was a year of transition in Poland, and an important year for Polish music. This year saw the beginning of a political thaw – sometimes called the Polish October – in communist Poland. It was also the year of the establishment of the 'Warsaw Autumn' International Festival of Contemporary Music. This was a time of great artistic ferment in Polish music, which also deeply influenced symphonic thinking. The year 1956 is thus an appropriate starting point for Beata Bolesławska's study of the contemporary Polish symphonic tradition. Bolesławska investigates the influential Polish avant-garde, illuminating the ways in which new musical means and ideas influenced symphonic music and the genre of the symphony in the music of such important composers as Witold Lutosławski (1913–1994), Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (1933–2010) and Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933). Referring to the main elements of the European tradition, as well as examining briefly the symphonic activity in Poland before 1956, the book concentrates on the symphonic writing in the context of avant-garde trends, represented by the so-called 'Polish school of composers', as well as on its later redefinitions proposed by Polish composers up to the present day.

Beata Bolesławska (Bolesławska-Lewandowska) holds a PhD from Cardiff University. She is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and Chair of the Musicological Section of the Polish Composers' Union. She is the author of *Panufnik* (2001), *Górecki: A Portrait in Memory* (2013), *Panufnik: Architect of Emotions* (2014), *The Life and Works of Andrzej Panufnik (1914–1991)* (2015), and editor of *Zygmunt Mycielski – Andrzej Panufnik: Correspondence* (2016, 2018). In 2007, she was honoured by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and in 2015 by the Polish Composers' Union for her contribution to Polish culture.

The Symphony and Symphonic Thinking in Polish Music Since 1956

Beata Bolesławska

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2019
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Bolesławska, Beata, author.
Title: The symphony and symphonic thinking in Polish music since 1956 / Beata Boleslawska.
Description: Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2019. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018056865 | ISBN 9781409464709 (hardback) | ISBN 9781315552385 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Symphony–Poland–20th century. | Symphony–Poland–21st century.
Classification: LCC ML1251.P75 B65 2019 | DDC 784.2/18409438–dc22
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018056865

ISBN: 978-1-4094-6470-9 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-55238-5 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.

To the memory of my father

Contents

List of music examples

Permissions

Preface

This book aims to contribute to the exploration and understanding of the development of the symphony and symphonic thinking in Polish music in the second half of the twentieth century. This was a period when Polish composers, such as Witold Lutosławski (1913–94), Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (1933–2010) and Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933), among others, contributed profoundly into the symphonic repertoire, not only in the Polish context but worldwide. To my knowledge, there is no musical literature dealing with the symphony in Poland in a similarly synthetic way as in the present book. There are also not many sources devoted to the evolution of the genre in the twentieth-century music in general.

However, two publications should be indicated as the main sources and starting point for my research: Christopher Ballantine's *Twentieth Century Symphony*[1] and Mieczysław Tomaszewski's 'Sonorystyczna ekspresywność i alegoryczny symbolizm: symfonia polska 1944–94' (Sonoristic expressivity and allegoric symbolism: the Polish symphony 1944–94).[2] They indicated lines for possible discussion on the genre and its developments in Polish music. Many other publications, devoted to single composers, to specific stylistic trends or to the history of the genre both in Poland and abroad were of a great importance for exploring the subject. They are listed in bibliography and also referred to in many places of my discussion. However, I shall indicate here the book *Polish Music since Szymanowski* by the great expert on Polish music, Adrian Thomas, which was an extremely important source of inspiration and reference to my own research.[3]

The vast character of the topic caused some necessary omissions in choosing the pieces to be examined. The most obvious choice was to include works that were called symphonies as, in my opinion, to name a piece a symphony, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, had to be the result of the composer's conscious decision, made in the light of a long and rich tradition (though some composers might deny this view). The other decision was to choose symphonies composed by the most significant Polish composers, not only because of their high position in musical life both at home and abroad, but also for their unquestionable contribution to the genre, marked by important formal and procedural innovations in

their musical languages, as well as for their influence on other composers. In this respect, the conservative symphonies pursuing neo-Classical or post-Romantic idioms, as well as those composed by minor figures, hence neither bringing particularly interesting transformations to the genre nor resonating in Polish (and non-Polish) musical life, were excluded. The other exclusion concerns concertante symphonies which, because of their nature, belong more to the tradition of the concerto than that of the symphony.

The variety of styles and musical languages represented by the symphonies and other orchestral works analysed for the purposes of this book did not permit using a single analytical method, as this was indicated each time by the musical material of a particular piece. Nevertheless, the closest to the author's instinct remain the method of the integral interpretation presented by Mieczysław Tomaszewski and considering the musical work 'from the genesis till its reception'.[4]

To understand the changes and developments of the genre after 1956 in Poland, it is necessary to discuss the evolution of the symphony, as well as its role and functions, both in general and in Polish music. Therefore, Chapter 1 deals briefly with the history and theory of the genre, and its aim is to indicate the most significant definitions of terms and ideas, which are developed or referred to in the later part of the book.

Chapter 2 examines the symphonic tradition in Poland from its appearance on the Polish musical scene until the middle of the 1950s in the context of most important terms pointed out in Chapter 1. The year 1956, when the first International Festival of Contemporary Music 'Warsaw Autumn' was held, provides a significant caesura, as it was then that Polish music entered its avant-garde period, which fruited with many innovative ideas and transformations developed by the composers associated with the so-called 'Polish school of composers' (the term will be discussed in Chapter 3).

Therefore, Chapter 3 explores the transformation of the symphony and symphonic principles in the years of the musical avant-garde, which was a time of great artistic ferment in Polish music, bringing many interesting reinterpretations of symphonic features. The symphony as a genre was almost entirely neglected, particularly in the first decade of musical avant-garde (1956–65), while the elements of symphonic thinking appeared in other orchestral works. Therefore, a considerable amount of space will be devoted to discussing the symphonic music of the period, besides symphonies as such. The avant-garde period is given special attention as the innovations made by Polish composers, both in symphonic form and, even more, in musical language and techniques (particularly sonorism), hugely influenced the later development of symphonic music in Poland.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the trends which spread over the country from the middle of the 1970s, opening the post-avant-garde era, with its recreation of the large-scale symphony, as well as the symphonic poem, referring back to the late-Romantic traditions on the one hand and aiming to synthesise the experiences of the whole century on the other. The indicated trends

and functions of the symphony in this period link back to the categories marked in Chapter 1.

Chapter 5, concluding the book, deals with the last two decades of the symphonic activity in Poland, following the death of Lutosławski in 1994 until the present day. It is examined here how the genre was developed in the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which trends are still continued and what kind of innovations into the genre and symphonic thinking have been introduced by the new generations of Polish composers, active nowadays.

* * *

The present book is based on my doctoral thesis, completed in 2010 at Cardiff University, School of Music. The original version was modified and extended to work better as a book dedicated to more general public interested in Polish music. It was also updated in terms of both reference literature and music itself, as may be seen especially in an entirely new last chapter. I could not have completed this book without the help, support and encouragement of many colleagues and friends, both in the UK and in Poland. I am not able to name them all here, but they all will remain in my grateful memory.

However, I do want to acknowledge Professor Adrian Thomas, the supervisor of my doctoral thesis at Cardiff University. His vast knowledge, profound interest in Polish music and attention to detail have indicated me the right paths to improve both my thesis and my scholarship. He has strongly encouraged my wish to explore the issue of symphony and symphonic thinking in Polish music and it has been a privilege to have him as a supervisor during my research on this subject between 2001 and 2010. I feel even more privileged that since I completed my doctoral studies with Professor Thomas, he has remained my mutual and dear friend, whose advice I always greatly welcome and appreciate.

Also, I would like to acknowledge the support of my late father, Władysław Bolesławski (1939–2008), who deeply supported my scholarly ambitions but was not given time neither to see my doctoral thesis finished, nor this book published. Therefore, I dedicate this book to the memory of him.

Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska
Warsaw
June 2017

Notes

1 Christopher Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1983).

2 Mieczysław Tomaszewski, 'Sonorystyczna ekspresywność i alegoryczny symbolizm: symfonia polska 1944–94', *Muzyka polska 1945–95*, eds. Krzysztof Droba, Teresa Malecka and Krzysztof Szwajgier (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 1996),

pp. 13–40. Since the time I started my research two other extensive studies devoted to the Polish symphony after the Second World War were published: Tomasz Tarnawczyk, *Optymistyczna i monumentalna. Symfonia w muzyce polskiego socrealizmu* (Łódź: Akademia Muzyczna im. Grażyny i Kiejstuta Bacewiczów, 2013) and Kinga Kiwała, *Dzieło symfoniczne w perspektywie polskich koncepcji fenomenologicznych. Lutosławski. Górecki. Penderecki* (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 2013). Although published after the main body of this book was completed, they are considered when necessary.

3 Adrian Thomas, *Polish Music Since Szymanowski* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

4 See: Mieczysław Tomaszewski, *Interpretacja integralna dzieła muzycznego. Rekonesans* (Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna, 2000).

1 Towards the symphony and symphonic thinking

> Twentieth-century composers cannot escape their past – it presses in on them in too many ways. […]. They know that the lost Eden of the tonal common practice can never be regained in its original fullness. In this post-lapsarian world, composition becomes a struggle for priority, a struggle to avoid being overwhelmed by a tradition that seems to gain in strength as it ages.[1]

Joseph Straus was thinking here of the various musical genres taken up by twentieth-century composers from their predecessors. In the case of the long and rich tradition of the symphony, however, the struggle that composers had to face was one of the hardest. It would scarcely be surprising then to find confirmation that during the twentieth century, symphonies were created of great importance and originality, written by composers from various countries and of a different musical orientation. In the second half of the century, for the first time in its history, Polish symphonic music found a worldwide resonance and recognition. How Polish composers with their individual ideas and developments managed to contribute to the genre in the context of both avant-garde (Chapter 3) and post-avant-garde (Chapters 4 and 5) trends and practices will be a matter of further discussion. But before going to the details connected with particular works and composers, some most important information and terms connected with the historical and theoretical aspects of the genre shall be recalled here, as they will create a terminological basis for the discussion on the subject presented in the later parts of this book.

1.1 Symphony: the nature and status of the genre

'A term now normally taken to signify an extended work for orchestra'[2] – this general definition of the symphony, though recalling some of the first impressions the word 'symphony' immediately brings to people's minds, does not at all explain the nature of the genre. In fact, there really is no easy definition of what is 'the symphony', especially considering long and

rich tradition of the genre, with all its historical associations, as well as its twentieth-century transformations and most recent interpretations. However, there is no doubt that the very nature of the symphony is rooted in the orchestra and orchestral thinking. The other feature, crucial for understanding why the symphony gained and maintained its highly prestigious position in the hierarchy of musical genres, is its social, democratic aspect, connected closely with the very beginning of the genre.

It should not be forgotten that the end of the eighteenth century, therefore the period when the symphony had crystallised its style and character, was a time of deep social changes in Europe, symbolised by the French Revolution and the emergence of a new, democratic society.[3] This process found its reflection in philosophy and the arts, and its best exemplification in music became the symphony, seen as the most sophisticated and most democratic of all orchestral genres. The public tone and greater human importance of the symphony were soon recognised as the representation of 'the emotions or ideas not merely of the individual composer but of an entire community, be it a city, a state, or the whole of humanity'.[4] Indeed, many authors emphasise the democratic aspect of the symphony. Christopher Ballantine not only considers it in his book on the twentieth-century symphony but also devotes a separate essay to this specific matter, analysing the connection between democracy, symphony and Hegel's philosophical system.[5] Also, the Polish musicologist Bohdan Pociej, while describing five main aspects of symphonism (the term will be analysed below), put the social one in first place, as the most 'elementary' and 'archaic'.[6] In his opinion, the symphony can be seen as a model of a highly developed society, while the symphony orchestra itself represents the tendency towards social integrity and organisation.[7] The symphony's ability to unite the wide range of instruments in a way in which no one predominates but all contribute to the whole was seen as its main value, exemplifying its democratic character.

As is commonly known, the symphony crystallised in the Classical period, with works by Haydn and Mozart particularly, but the composer who lifted it to the top of instrumental genres was Beethoven. He increased the orchestral forces, the temporal span of the symphony (with *Eroica*), explored alternative formal plans in the Fifth and Sixth symphonies and heightened his expressive potential in all relevant areas, using enriched harmonic vocabulary relying heavily on dissonance and an intensified application of motivic development. He also occasionally incorporated programmatic elements, but the truly 'revolutionary procedures' he used in his Ninth Symphony (1824) were connected with the fact that 'he attacked the very basis of the genre: its abstract, *instrumental*, setting'.[8] As a result, Beethoven's nine symphonies have remained for following generations of composers a kind of elusive ideal of symphonic music. As Robert Layton pointed out, 'Beethoven was to the symphony what Shakespeare was to the English theatre and language. No artist escaped his shadow'.[9]

Indeed, Beethoven's inventions in the form and content of the symphony opened the door for many later transformations of the genre. One of the most important Romantic traces of the genre is connected with initiating the two different practices in symphonic writing. First one, referred to as Classical, pursued the symphony as a purely musical, 'absolute' genre,[10] while the second, considered Romantic, treated the symphony as a genre involving extra-musical elements, feelings and emotions. They both took Beethoven's ideas as their ideals but the latter was regarded as more innovative and more suitable for Romantic developments in both the form and musical content. It also brought to live new symphonic genres, such as symphonic poem and orchestral overture, and was more open for various generic crossbreeding. Nevertheless, both tendencies remained fruitful and with no doubt this dual tradition, seeing the symphony in the context of either Classical or Romantic approaches, not only designed the development of the genre in the nineteenth century but deeply influenced a twentieth-century symphonic thinking as well.

The prestigious status of the symphony, which also included its high ethical position, as seen in Beethoven's works, lost nothing throughout the next century. On the contrary, the special place of the genre was confirmed at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century by Mahler, whose symphonic output might be seen both as a second peak in the history of the genre and as a culmination of many Romantic and late-Romantic innovations on the field. This contains also the perspective of interpreting the symphony as an exemplification of cosmic and mystical ideas, best described in Mahler's much-quoted statement, that 'the symphony must be like the world. It must be all-embracing'.[11] Referring to this view, Mark Evan Bonds comments further:

> A symphony, according to Mahler at the end of the century, must have something cosmic within itself, must be inexhaustible like the world and life, if it is not to make a mockery of its name.[12]

This attitude to the symphony as a genre of a very special significance was adopted by many twentieth-century composers. David Fanning pointed out that 'high ethical aspirations in the symphony did survive the death of Mahler in 1911'[13] and many composers still treated the genre as the best place for expressing the deepest feelings of humanity, as well as carrying a substantial weight of argument. For example, Alexander Ivashkin in his analysis of Shostakovich's symphonies has pointed out the composer's connection with 'the great Romantic tradition, according to which the symphony, like the new-age novel, becomes not simply music but the process of solving particular problems by musical means'.[14] Following this view, Ivashkin observes that

> […] the symphony cannot exist as just a musical composition, but becomes a sort of 'meta-symphony' and is therefore deprived of any

> basis as it were, outgrowing its own logical framework. All the composers are actually 'opening' the symphony to the world, destroying its seemingly unshakeable foundations, demolishing them in any case conventional boundaries between the music which exists primordially in Nature and what for many centuries was usually called 'the work of art'.[15]

In his opinion, especially in the Russian tradition, 'pure art' or 'art for art' have simply not existed, and the musical work was always connected with some symbolic meaning, encoded in music for centuries of its existence.[16] This is clearly present in the twentieth-century Russian music, as the great symphonies of Shostakovich or Schnittke may confirm.

The similar attitude to the genre is also clearly visible in Polish music of the previous century. The important role of the symphony was stressed by Mieczysław Tomaszewski in his essay devoted to the Polish symphony in the years 1944–94.[17] According to him, in the twentieth century in Poland, and especially after the Second World War, the symphony became an important and representative genre because 'if one talks about Lutosławski's Third, Palester's Fifth, Penderecki's Second, about Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* or Panufnik's *Sinfonia Sacra*, it is clear that it concerns pieces of particular weight and significance'.[18] The similar view of the symphony seemed to be confirmed by the composers themselves, including Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933), who – according to his own essays in the genre – stated that he turned to the symphony 'in order to absorb and process the experience of our century' and saw the genre as 'that musical ark which would make it possible to convey to coming generations what is best in our twentieth-century tradition of the composing of sounds'.[19]

1.2 Symphony in the twentieth century: terms and ideas

The twentieth century, with its multiplicity of new stylistic trends, brought also the previously unseen diversity of the symphony and symphonic music. However, only few of them seem to be fully significant for the development of the genre. They include post-Romanticism, seen as a natural continuation of late-Romantic tendencies; neo-Classicism, which stood against Romantic and post-Romantic values; and dodecaphony with its new organisation of sound system. Although they were actively developed in the first half of the century, their impact on the later symphonic writing cannot be denied.

What should also be emphasised is the role of vocal symphony, which after Beethoven's Ninth Symphony assured itself a firm position in the genre. In the twentieth century, the tradition of the vocal symphony was further developed by composers with various stylistic attitudes. They included the symphonies of a highly intense expressive power, although their formal structures hardly fitted into the tradition of the genre. Usually, their expression was connected with some kind of spirituality, whether of

Christian provenance or influenced by other (usually Eastern) religions. One of the best examples of such atypical vocal symphonies, not fitting any traditional formal outlines, but deeply spiritual in character and of an extremely high expressive power, remains Henryk Mikołaj Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* (1976), referring to the Polish Catholic tradition, and particularly to the cult of the Virgin Mary.[20] Similar approach is successfully continued in the present century by Paweł Łukaszewski (b. 1968), who completed his fourth essay in the genre, *Symphony on the Mercy of God*, in 2016. In fact, the role of a vocal symphony, not always connected with any spiritual element, seems to rise in Polish music since the end of the twentieth century and this type of genre may even be considered as dominating the panorama of symphonic music in Poland in the twenty-first century, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

1.2.1 Symphonic principles

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the symphony may be still understood (with some exceptions) as a large-scale piece for orchestra with a clear line of development creating some kind of musical dramaturgy, starting with main idea(s) exposed at the beginning and through various transformations and certain amount of developmental work brought to the final stage. The piece may be goal-directed or recapitulative and has to carry some magnitude and weight of argument. Usually, the symphony refers in some way to the structure of sonata form, the importance of which was emphasised by Rosen:

> The point about sonata form was not that there was anything special about it as a surface pattern, but that it presented a kind of tonal drama.
>
> […] the principle of recapitulation as resolution may be considered the most fundamental and radical innovation of sonata style.[21]

The sonata form witnessed many changes and transformation throughout its history up to the twentieth century, however, as observed by Otto Deri,

> […] the fact that composers find the sonata form suitable in a completely different harmonic climate only demonstrates its deeply rooted, almost archetypal significance. The presentation of contrasting or differing musical ideas, their development, and their eventual return, however tenuous or distorted the return may be, still satisfies some very deep psychological and symbolic need.[22]

Indeed, the symphony and sonata structure have appeared in many different twentieth-century musical trends, taking various facets and being realised in various ways. However, after the decay of the tonal system, the role of the

recapitulation became one of the main dilemmas to solve in the structure of sonata form. With no doubt, the twentieth-century composers stopped treating sonata structure very strictly and preferred to follow dramatic or symbolic expressions, individual for each particular work. Adding also the lack of tonal need to go back to the tonic (which was the main role of the Classical recapitulation), it was logical that, after achieving dramatic climax in the development, the simple recapitulation of main ideas from the exposition could only distract from the drama of the whole movement. Hence, it was better to resolve an accumulated tension in another way. Therefore, the role of the epilogue seems to rise in importance in post-tonal symphonies. In Polish music, the very good example of the symphony concluded with an extended epilogue is Witold Lutosławski's Third Symphony (1983).

In the twentieth century and especially in one-movement symphonies, the model of multi-movement symphony was often mixed into one with the sonata form with its three main parts (exposition, development, and recapitulation), hence the finale of the piece was equal to the recapitulation. The 'principle of recapitulation as resolution' was then very clear and remained valid as an architectural model, even for pieces written in a completely non-tonal language, marked by using most innovative techniques, as may be observed in the strongly recapitulative character of Kazimierz Serocki's sonoristic symphonic works, *Episodes* (1959) and *Symphonic Frescoes* (1964). This example confirms, that for the late twentieth-century symphonic composers, the principle of recapitulation remained valid, notwithstanding the harmonic language of the piece. This is confirmed by Tomaszewski, who, in conversation with Penderecki, indicated the principle of recapitulation as one which indeed has survived to the present day and is also used by Penderecki in his music.[23]

The symphony should also include the principle of integration, whereby 'each element has implications that are to be fully explored and realised in the context of the whole, which is greater than the sum of the parts'.[24] During Classicism, the integration should first deal with tonal structure, while Beethoven started developing the process of thematic integration, which influenced the structure of the symphony and helped to create its inner drama. This process was developed by later generations and was still active in the twentieth century, as may be confirmed by Lutosławski's opinion that each symphonic work (hence not only the symphony itself) should be 'properly shaped into a process with a perceptible *akcja* ["action"]'. By 'action', the composer understood 'a purely musical "plot" – not what is described as programme music […]. That is to say, a chain of interrelated musical events'.[25] The 'plot' implies then the specific, procesual character of the piece, which is strictly connected with using developmental techniques, based on the transformations of thematic material presented in the first stage of the piece (exposition). What is also important is that the orchestral texture is treated as one of the main devices in building the musical structure. This feature played a special role particularly in the second half of the twentieth century when, after the collapse of the tonal system, both texture and sound

colours started to play the main role in creating the formal structure of symphonic pieces, as in case of Polish sonorism, discussed in Chapter 3.

One of the most important principles in creating symphonic structure remained the principle of dualism, originally based on tonal polarity between themes and movements. However, as observed by Rosen, in non-tonal sonata forms, the tonal polarisation and resolution disappeared completely, therefore 'what remains is the thematic structure along with contrasting textures – one contrast between the relative simplicity of the outer section and the more intense centre, and another within the exposition to distinguish first and second themes'.[26] Ballantine went even further in searching for different kinds of procedures, which could help to create the dualistic opposition necessary for symphonic structure in twentieth-century works. He indicated several possibilities for building dialectical tension, which could facilitate the principle of dualism. According to him, then, dualism may be achieved by using opposing tonalities, themes or rhythmic characters, within the course of a single movement as well as over a multi-movement structure.[27]

In non-tonal works, the most popular methods to create symphonic tensions through contrast, as analysed by Ballantine, are, in summary: the conflict developed between contrapuntal lines, the contrast between instrumental groups, the contrast between solo instrument and the orchestra or orchestral groups, the contrast between movements or between sections of the whole work, the contrast between two (or more) groups of divided orchestra (e.g. symphonies for two orchestras), the contrast between form and texture, form and content, movement and stasis, or between symmetry and asymmetry.[28] Each of these oppositions is able to create tension which can be developed in a symphonic way. They all concern orchestral music, as in the vocal symphonies, a tension and sense of drama is often determined by the literary text. When including a solo instrument, on the other hand, the piece usually takes on the character of a concerto, and as such remains beyond the subject of the present discussion.

Thus, a slightly different situation occurs when the composer decides to use selected groups of the orchestra and create a symphonic structure on the opposition of chosen instrumental forces: such as between two separate string orchestras or between more contrasted groups, among others. In Polish music, this approach is presented in such works as Andrzej Panufnik's *Sinfonia Rustica* for two string orchestras and winds (1948) and, over a decade later, in Górecki's First Symphony, Penderecki's *Emanations* (1959) and *Anaklasis* (1960), and Serocki's *Episodes*, all three scored for percussion and strings and using a spatial set-up of orchestral forces. The juxtaposition of such different instrumental groups as strings and percussion may be a good starting point for creating purely symphonic discourse (whether it is realised successfully or not is a different matter, as will be discussed in Chapter 3).

The contrast between orchestral groups may be used on different levels of musical piece and especially in the second half of the twentieth century, in purely atonal harmonic structures, this element became indeed one of the most

important features in creating a work's tension and overall drama. This means that even in completely new musical languages or sound systems, the principle of dualism remained the crucial feature of symphonic structure.

1.2.2 Symphonism

Until the end of the nineteenth century, all kinds of symphonic music, whether the 'absolute' symphony, its combination with other genres, or new symphonic genres (i.e. symphonic poem, orchestral overture), created together a broad stream of symphonism, whose role for nineteenth-century culture is undeniable. As emphasised by Pociej:

> In European culture symphonism is a stream, which could appear, crystallised and matured, only at the high level of purely instrumental musical consciousness, hence not earlier than in the eighteenth century. Its environment is the orchestra. Its golden age is the nineteenth century – a century of artistic, intellectual and spiritual maximalism and an already overwhelming sense of power.[29]

This led to creating the theory of symphonism, which was most elaborately formulated by the Russian musicologist Boris Asaf'yev in his writings from the 1920s. His theory is worth recalling here, as it not only confirmed the prestigious status of symphony and symphonic music among the instrumental genres, but deeply influenced much of the later writings on the subject (particularly in Russia and Poland), including extensive studies by Pociej and Irina Nikolska.[30] Therefore, according to Asaf'ev:

> We have symphonism when every crossed-over boundary [in the music] makes a distinct impression from the preceding, when there occurs a sensation of an unbroken musical current and a tension that pulls onward […]. Thus, we conceive symphonism as an *unbroken stream of musical consciousness*, when no element is either conceived or perceived as independent among the remaining multitude, but when an integral creative entity in motion emerges by means of intuitive contemplation.[31]

Following these ideas, symphonism is seen as 'an artistic achievement and an expression of the world of emotions and ideas in the unbroken continuity of a musical current, in its living intensity', while the symphony (whatever its duration) 'coheres as a single entity that does not sectionalise itself into a patchwork of component tunes or textures'.[32] Asaf'yev sees the best exemplification of symphonism in the works of Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, finding many similarities in their symphonic structures.[33]

Asaf'yev's symphonic theory was enriched by another Russian, Mark Aranovsky, who – as referred by Nikolska[34] – interpreted the four movements of the traditional symphony as the four faces of human activity: *homo agens*

(man acting = allegro sonata), *homo sapiens* (man thinking = slow movement), *homo ludens* (man playing = minuet/scherzo) and *homo communis* (man socialising = finale). Nikolska, however, has argued that in the twentieth century, the elements of *homo ludens* and *homo communis* were reduced and that the symphony concentrated on the two other features, as observed in Shostakovich's symphonies, based mostly on contrasts between large spaces of activity and meditation. This perspective may also be connected with a continuation of late-Romantic idea to emphasise adagio within the symphonic structure, as is represented by many late-Romantic symphonies, including those by Bruckner and Mahler.

Nikolska goes further into the twentieth-century music, observing that both activity and meditation are strongly present in symphonies composed by Polish composers, including Witold Lutosławski (1913–94), Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933), Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (1933–2010), Bolesław Szabelski (1896–1979) and Krzysztof Meyer (b. 1943).[35] However, as she analyses, not all of them managed to create a desirable balance between these elements. While Lutosławski seems to be the best example on this respect, Górecki keeps such a balance only in his Second Symphony (1972), while the Third (1976) is purely contemplative; the symphonies by Penderecki, Szabelski and Meyer are more complex again. In her discussion, however, Nikolska does not mention Andrzej Panufnik (1914–91), who in fact would fit her categorisation most perfectly, as his own aim was to search for perfect balance between impulse and design in his music, and his symphonies (as well as other works) are usually built on strong contrasts between contemplation and activity, hence between *homo sapiens* and *homo agens* precisely.[36]

Nevertheless, from the perspective of symphonic writing, the two types of symphonism are clearly visible in the twentieth-century music. Reflecting the two tendencies permeating the symphony since the nineteenth century, they might be simply described as Classical symphonism and Romantic symphonism. Following that, the Classical symphonism shall be understood as characterised by sharp and strongly contrasted musical ideas, creating dualistic conflict as a basis for further development, with formal structure clearly divided into sections and movements. This type of symphonism, referring to the Classical model of the symphony, can be also named a 'dialectical symphonism' because the principle of dualism is here very obvious and realised through the strong contrast between two main ideas, whether they are of a thematic, textural or harmonic nature. In Polish music, this type of symphonism might be seen in works by Lutosławski, Panufnik, Serocki and Górecki, among others.

In the opposition to Classical symphonism, the Romantic symphonism shall be understood as characterised by looser formal structures and the continuous development of one or more main thematic ideas as a primary compositional procedure. It will be marked by long-breathed passages, slow tempi, extended adagio sections, a contemplative or meditative character and a seriousness of both tone and expression. This tendency in fact

originates in the symphonic poems and programmatic symphonies by Liszt, as well as the late-Romantic symphonies of Mahler and Bruckner. The symphonic pieces following this practice are either single-movement or create some multi-movement structures expanding Classical models. They are often large scale in terms of time-span as well as form, with their structure based on one main musical idea, arising slowly and later continuously developed during the piece. Any type of dualism created is achieved through the developing of the initial material, therefore it often represents what Ballantine calls a 'latent dualism' or 'immanent dualism'.[37] The tensions are revealed during the piece through a continuous developmental work, which also results in constant repetitions of main musical ideas, however transformed. This type of symphonism may be called 'rotational symphonism', following the term introduced by James Hepokoski in his analysis of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony.[38]

According to Hepokoski, 'rotational structure is more of a process than an architectural formula'.[39] In this type of structure, each section of the piece is seen as the next rotation of the main musical theme, resulting in the 'rotational form' of the whole. This view corresponds with the opinion of Tim Howell, who observed that in Sibelius's symphonies and tone poems, the form is treated as 'the product of a thematic continuous development technique rather than of following a predeterminal model.'[40] This way of symphonic thinking and building of musical structure was adopted by some late-twentieth-century composers, especially those who wanted to refer to the late-Romantic symphonic tradition. In Polish symphonies, rotational symphonism is represented in the late symphonies of Penderecki (Nos. 2–5 particularly) and Tadeusz Baird (1928–81).

Slightly different terminology for describing both types of symphonic structure has been used by Ivashkin. While analysing symphonies by Shostakovich and Schnittke, he differentiated between the 'syntactical' and 'morphological' symphony, observing that the latter replaced the former by creating a model 'whose meaning lies in searching for new reserves of the musical material itself, and not in comparing clichéd idioms of the language in already well-known combinations'.[41] The morphological model is therefore determined by the principle of variation, which enables the composer to penetrate 'into the depths of the material itself'.[42] Naturally, the principle of variation may be understood as a synonym for developmental work and the transformation of musical ideas, terms used above in defining the two types of symphonism. Hence, Classical, dialectical symphonism might be also named syntactical, while the Romantic, rotational symphonism is morphological as well. These names refer to the same type of symphonic thinking and symphonic structure. However, in the case of particular contemporary works, especially those based on the twelve-note row, the idea of the morphological development of musical material may explain better the structure of a particular piece, without indicating connections with late-Romantic aesthetics (e.g. Lutosławski's *Funeral Music*, 1958).

* * *