

# *Witold Szalonek*

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## *Seen Through*

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## *His Own Views*

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*The Polish Composers' Union 70th Anniversary events are co-organised  
by the Institute of Music and Dance and co-financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage*



## ABSTRACT

Witold Szalonek (1927–2001) did not limit himself in his artistic activity to composing instrumental, vocal and vocal-instrumental works. He was also very active as a pedagogue, music promotor and musicologist-theorist. His writings reflect the tendency (popular among composers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) to comment on the aesthetic phenomena of historical and contemporary music culture, with particular emphasis on his own works. His views on art and self-commentaries are contained in published and unpublished articles and manifestos. With regard to character and function, the writings that he left behind can be divided into four categories. Among the nearly thirty texts, printed mostly in Poland, we can thus distinguish: 1) essays on general musical subjects, commenting on elements of the European musical heritage important for this composer and on inspirations from non-European cultures; 2) artistic manifestos, in which sonoristic concepts play a major role; 3) self-analyses and self-commentaries on selected works, which are of major value to performers interpreting his pioneering scores; 4) critical texts on current subjects and events, coming from the first years of Witold Szalonek's artistic work, when he was active as a music critic.

**Keywords:** Szalonek, avant-garde, sonorism, combined tones, non-European music

Witold Szalonek was a classic representative of his era. Not only was his work classified as belonging to the progressive school, and the composer himself was referred to as an avant-gardist, an active promoter of music based on sonoristic qualities, but also, because of his particular love for musicological commentary, he was among the composers who theoretically justified their creative actions, a tendency which was widespread in the second half of the twentieth century.

Szalonek willingly spoke of culture, music, and his own work. He was also active as a theoretician of composition, both in his role as composer, teacher and populariser. Witold Szalonek not only shared his aesthetic self-reflection in face-to-face contacts, but also by writing and publishing. And it is to Szalonek's recorded views on music that I dedicate this paper.

On the basis of their nature and function, the texts left behind by the artist can be classified into four types. Among the nearly thirty articles published mainly in Poland, general musicological essays, creative manifestos, self-analyses and commentaries on selected works can be found. In addition, in the first years of his activity, Szalonek was active as a music critic, producing a number of journalistic texts.

## GENERAL MUSICOLOGICAL ESSAYS

Between 1962 and 1999, Szalonek published six articles on general musicological topics in which he addressed the

aesthetic problems which puzzled him, paid homage to composers whom he found important, and analysed the condition of contemporary music. The articles were given a careful literary form, and took a very long time to write, the numerous modifications to typescripts testifying to the fact that Szalonek paid particular attention to clarity of expression and terminological precision. He meticulously prepared each lecture or presentation and each written text, whether it was a short comment, or an extensive essay. Szalonek would refuse to improvise or be less than fully accurate factually, which testifies to the respect he had for his audiences, but also for the matter which he addressed.<sup>1</sup>

These six presentations by Szalonek, belonging to the wide field of the humanities, allow one to identify the motifs which were particularly important for the composer. It is no coincidence that one of the first significant presentations that Szalonek prepared was a lecture entitled "Claude Debussy 1862–1918. On the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Birthday",<sup>2</sup> which was presented on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1962 in the auditorium of the Academy of Music in Katowice, Poland. It was French impressionist music that was at the time one of the main sources of inspiration for the composer (as it had been for Karol Szymanowski, whom Szalonek valued greatly), and an impetus in the search for new sound quality. Szalonek's attitude to Debussy's heritage is reflected in the nature of the text – often eulogistic, a testimony to the composer's fascination with Debussy's achievements in the field of harmony, *melicus*, orchestration, and above all musical timbre. The article is not an objective presentation, but rather a kind of an emotional "profession of faith" in Debussy's achievements.

Szalonek's argument begins with an outline of the context of artistic activities in France at the turn of the twentieth century. It moves on to a description of the circumstances of the premiere of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faun*, citing the names of Symbolists in literature, and invites the audience to an exhibition of the first images of Impressionist paintings. At the same time, it questions the legitimacy of the use of the term "Impressionism" in regard to Debussy's works.

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<sup>1</sup> The information is confirmed by the composer's friends and students, including Lilianna M. Moll.

<sup>2</sup> W. Szalonek, (1962). Claude Debussy 1862–1918. W setną rocznicę urodzin [Claude Debussy 1862–1918. On the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Birthday]. In: *Biblioteka Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Muzycznej w Katowicach. Wykłady i prelekcje* [Library of the State Higher School of Music in Katowice. Lectures and Papers]. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Muzycznej.

The author concludes his detailed discussion of the elements of Debussy's compositional language by claiming that sound is located in space which acts as a resonator, which is according to him a novel and groundbreaking concept for contemporary instrumental technique. The concept concerns not only the shape of the sound source, the instrument itself, but also the space in which it is located. In this connection, Szalonek points to the fact that Debussy's ideas were inspired by exotic musical cultures<sup>3</sup> and justifies the claim by carefully selected musical examples, from, among others the *String Quartet*, *Nocturnes*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Preludes*.

In his article, Szalonek also points out an element which he considers important – the character of the city in which the artist composed and of the milieu with which he was associated. Szalonek considered himself as a citizen of Silesia, and he continued to emphasise his attachment to the region even when in exile. He claimed that such a *genius loci* also shaped Debussy's sensibility. The openness which the Paris of that era showed towards exotic influences agreed with Szalonek's own predilections. The composer was fascinated with non-European cultures from the 1960s, and, thanks to his stay in the multicultural West Berlin in 1973, a close friendship with the Korean composer Isangi Yun, and contacts with students from all over the world, especially from Asia (incl. Toshio Hosokawa), he discovered other cultures and developed a sensitivity to the Other.

I will allow myself a short digression here – as it turns out, the multicultural experience, anticipated at an early age, prevented Szalonek from judging music by the country it was created in. He promoted the notion of the equality of all arts, the free movement of artistic means of expression, a musical globalization, and experimented with combining and confronting different fields at the highly popular “Rainbow Music” festival in Katowice, held in the late 1980s and 1990s, and the musical component of the “Ars Cameralis Silesiae Superioris” arts festival. Thanks to Szalonek, both events presented music of varying provenance – jazz, happening, Latin music, works inspired by oriental culture, Aboriginal music, as well as works of the medieval mystic Hildegard von Bingen.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Szalonek presented non-European cultures during numerous lectures for young audiences.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.183.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. L.M. Moll, (2007). Entry: Witold Szalonek. In: E. Dziębowska (Ed.), *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM [PWM Music Encyclopedia]*. Vol. 10, Kraków: PWM Edition, p. 223.

<sup>5</sup> Witold Szalonek gave, among others, lectures for school students during the “Alkagran” festival in Czechowice in the mid-1990s.

In the inaugural lecture of the academic year 1962/1963, at the State Academy of Music in Katowice, Szalonek further developed ideas presented in the text discussed above. Although his 1962 lecture was only published in 2002, the two presentations were in fact created only a few months apart.

The very title of the lecture – “Contemporary Musical Language as An Expression of Its Time” is noteworthy.<sup>6</sup> It is a response to the issue of aesthetic changes that were taking place in Western Europe, which composers, musicologists and critics debated on, and which provoked certain types of response among local artists, but also audiences. The radical stance presented by composers of the Second Avant-garde in Darmstadt and Donaueschingen,<sup>7</sup> which postulated breaking away from the traditional musical language and the revaluation of aesthetic thinking, opted for the serialist concept of pre-composition, deterministic methods of composing, but, on the other hand, also aleatoricism, and thus expanding the scope of musical means in general, provoked questions about the limits of the contemporary musical language.

Szalonek attempts to not only diagnose the situation of new music as such, but also to investigate the reasons why it was rejected by the society. His lecture fends off criticism addressed at progressive composers by traditionally oriented audiences and critics, and divides them into three categories. They concern the following:

1. the social significance of music in general,
2. its aesthetic impact,
3. its specific language, based on sound and noise material, which is ruled the laws of physics, or to be precise - acoustics.<sup>8</sup>

Szalonek concludes his remarks on his unequivocal opposition to the stereotypes concerning the so-called

<sup>6</sup> W. Szalonek, (2002). *Współczesny język muzyczny – wyrazicielem swej epoki [Contemporary Musical Language as An Expression of Its Time]*. In: L.M. Moll, *Witold Szalonek. Katalog tematyczny dzieł. Teksty o muzyce [Witold Szalonek. A Thematic Catalogue of Works. Texts on Music]*. Katowice: Silesian Music Society, Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice, pp. 190–200. A photocopy of the manuscript is held in the Archive of Silesian Musical Culture at the Main Library of the Academy of Music in Katowice. Folder 1028IK.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. D. Cichy, (2009). *Dzieje, rola i znaczenie Międzynarodowych Kursów Nowej Muzyki w Darmstadtzie w myśli teoretycznej, praktyce kompozytorskiej i życiu muzycznym w drugiej połowie XX wieku [Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music. Their History, Role and Significance for Theoretical Thought and Compositional Practice]*. Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, pp. 53–64.

<sup>8</sup> W. Szalonek, (2002). *Współczesny język muzyczny*, op. cit., p. 191.

contemporary music, the universal aversion to radical experiments, criticism of alleged aesthetic chaos and over-intellectualisation of musical works with these words:

In order to express new ideas, new content, to speak to all people on all continents, we need to create suitable means of transmission. The fruit of the European culture, the functional major-minor system, a splendid form, but narrow in terms of its impact, could not cope with such demands. That is why it had to give way to a more comprehensive system, which could use a language corresponding to the aesthetic criteria of non-European cultures, and would include also other laws or principles of organising sound material, laws which have so far been foreign to the European mind.<sup>9</sup>

To justify the claim concerning the development of musical language, and the openness of composers to non-European music, Szalonek uses a number of sound examples. He juxtaposes fragments of gamelan music from Bali with the opening passage of Claude Debussy's *La cathédrale engloutie* and the instrumental introduction to Pierre Boulez's *Le marteau sans maître* with fragments of a Japanese folk song for flute solo and the Samai instrumental suite by Yoritsuno Matsudaira. The role of the last example is to illustrate the hypothesis that in the 1960s, the holistic approach to sound was adopted by composers rooted in the twelve-tone technique, and more specifically in serialism and pointillism.<sup>10</sup>

Witold Szalonek willingly accepted invitations by young people, often from smaller urban centres and even rural areas. His colourful discourse and engaging personality were appreciated by the young audience. In 1974, he met students in the village of Istebna near Cieszyn. He was known in this area, as the wife of his brother Roman came from the region and the composer liked to spend time with his wife and sons at their home in Cisownica. An outline of the lecture which Szalonek gave there, "The Music of J.S. Bach and F. Chopin: Two Paradigms of Modern European Musical Culture",<sup>11</sup> has been preserved.

In this short presentation, Szalonek puts forward a hypothesis which was already present in his earlier texts, namely – that art reflects social conditions. He claims that:

[...] the spirit of the Baroque era with all its characteristics and achievements is reflected in the field of philosophy and science, and also in the music of that time, most fully in the works of J.S. Bach, just as the spirit of Romanticism with its burgeoning democratic concepts and personalism is reflected in the compositions of Fryderyk Chopin.<sup>12</sup>

Szalonek claims that such a "spirit" (a concept derived from the writings of nineteenth-century theorists) of the two eras, the Baroque and Romanticism, has one element in common in the legacy of both geniuses, namely the medium: the piano, which Szalonek believed to be the most European of instruments. Bach was able to use its properties in an impressive manner, composing, among others, *Die Kunst der Fuge*, the manifesto of absolute music, but it was only Chopin who focused on the inherent quality of the instrument, its sound, and consequently sonorism derived from the archetype of the sound of church bells.

Szalonek develops this idea in the lecture entitled "The Music of Church Bells as the Archetype of Chopin's Piano Sonorism",<sup>13</sup> which he presented at the symposium on the occasion of the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chopin Society in Katowice in 1989. The text is probably the only remnant of the dissertation to be entitled "Die Klanglichkeit des Chopin'schen Klaviers, anhand der harmonischen Structures seiner Werke" ("The Sonority of Chopin's Piano Based on the Harmonic Structure of His Works"), which Szalonek planned to write in the late 1980s. For this purpose, the composer asked his superiors at Berlin's Hochschule der Künste for a sabbatical at the turn of 1988 and 1989.<sup>14</sup>

The author draws attention to the impact which external factors, in particular the musical memories of childhood, have on the result of a composer's artistic activities. The text argues that expressions of creative identity result from the composer's place of origin, and links their formative idiom with tradition and with its potential for shaping the personality of the artist.

Szalonek claims that Chopin's musical language was affected by two factors. The first of those was folk music which the composer was exposed to in his early years and which provided him with a melodic foundation, and a source of harmonic and rhythmic inspirations. Another important element, which few researchers point to, was the sound of church bells, which according to Szalonek is an archetypal phenomenon, characteristic of the Christian culture of Europe.

<sup>13</sup> The text was published under the title *Krajobraz dźwiękowy muzyki Chopina* [The Soundscape of Chopin's Music] in the *Opcje* quarterly, December 1993, pp. 58–59.

<sup>14</sup> In Szalonek's personal file, which is held in the archives of the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin, a document confirming the request can be found with the following justification: "Vergleichsanalyse und statistische Erfassung zeitlicher Abläufe der Funktionen der harmonischen Strukturen als eine der stilistischen Eigenarten in der Behandlung des Klaviers in seiner historischen Entwicklung, in ausgewählten Klavierwerken von: Mozart (01.10.88–23.10.88), L. v. Beethoven (24.10.88–13.11.88), F. Schubert (14.11.88–04.12.88), R. Schumann (05.12.88–21.12.88), F. Chopin (09.01.89–29.01.89), erfolgt die Auswertung gewonnener Erkenntnisse und Ausarbeitung der Dissertation zum o/g Thema (30.01.89–18.02.89)."

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

For Chopin, the music of church bells constituted an important part of the “soundscape”. This led him to develop a specific approach to the sonority of the piano, which, according to Szalonek, is an echo of bells tolling.

The sonoristic value of bells sound is characterized by a sound spectrum in so-called non-harmonic vibrations, rumbling, which result from the shape of bells. In sets of bells, basic tones generated by the strokes of the “clappers” are tuned in intervals which are parts of the pentatonic scale, and therefore generate sounds equivalent to “proto-intervals” (major second and minor third) in a melodic progression as a harmonic phenomenon resulting from the fact that bells do not have a damping mechanism.<sup>15</sup>

Szalonek justifies his thesis by citing musical examples. According to him, Chopin created the “bell-like” spectrum of piano sound thanks to appropriate texture, following the structure of a series of overtones, the use of a low bass foundation and melodic arabesques in the medium and high register, a particular the use of pedals, and the use of “pentatonic scaffolding” in harmony and melody.

The concept of the sound of bells accompanied Szalonek throughout his life. As early as in 1954, he composed a ballad entitled *Dzwon (Bell)* for two choirs to a poem by Federico Garcia Lorca translated by Włodzimierz Słobodnik. The work is rooted in the music of Chopin and Szymanowski, and constitutes an attempt at an arrangement of folk music with a significant “desire to exploit harmonic and sonic originality of the original folk song.”<sup>16</sup> In the 1980s, Szalonek returned to more direct references to the concept of a bell. The composer referred to his *Little Symphony B-A-C-H* for piano and orchestra as the “symphony of bells,” and to its second part, *Largo*, as the “knell”.<sup>17</sup> Elements of the sound of bells can be also found in the *Toccata e Corale* for organ, and *Elegy on the Death of a Friend* for clarinet and piano.

In 1990, Szalonek wrote what follows on the soundscape of the bells in the context of family memories from his native Łagiewniki Bytomskie:

Indeed, the village of Łagiewniki. It is a part of me. I do not know whether it is a bigger part than for others: after all, we all have the landscapes of childhood deeply imbedded in us... My Łagiewniki is also “formulated” as a soundscape. It is located on a hilltop above the city of Bytom, and on the other side, the Piekary Sanctuary of the Holy Mother of God is situated. And the music of bells...

**15** W. Szalonek, (1993). *Krajobraz dźwiękowy muzyki Chopina*, op. cit., p. 59.

**16** M. Dziadek, (2001). *Witolda Szalonka perypetie z sonoryzmem* [Witold Szalonek’s Adventure with Sonorism], *Opcje*. No. 5.

**17** R. Gabryś, (1985). *Little B-A-C-H Symphony*. In: *Programme of a Silesian Philharmonic concert, 19.12.1985*. Katowice: Silesian Philharmonic, p. 149.

When I went on a scholarship to Berlin in 1971 for the first time, I discovered there the bells of my childhood – the Piekary bells.<sup>18</sup>

In the same year, Witold Szalonek was granted an honorary doctorate by the authorities of the Institute for Music Education of the Westphalian-Wilhelminian University of Münster. The laudatio in honour of the artist, entitled “The Second Middle Ages,” was delivered by Detlef Gojowy, a German musicologist and music critic, an expert on Slavic music, and a collaborator of, among others, the “Ruch Muzyczny” journal.<sup>19</sup>

Szalonek’s lecture in its Munster version demonstrates features of an anniversary speech. The composer presents in it general aesthetic reflection, placed in the context of deliberations on the contemporary human condition in general. After the customary acknowledgments, Szalonek expresses his personal bitterness with what he perceived as underestimation of his own work. He talks about the complex of the “cap of invisibility,” which he began to feel after moving to West Berlin,<sup>20</sup> when he lost the status of a composer, and assumed the role of educator, one lecturing abroad, and thus in an even less privileged position.

The list of Szalonek’s general musicological essays and lectures ends with his speech of 1994, published in the *Wieczór* magazine. The text, entitled “Between Spirit and Matter”,<sup>21</sup> is essentially a summary of the views presented in Münster. The composer emphasizes, more forcefully than in his text of 1990, the parallel between the “great mystery of Being” and “music in the absolute form.” In doing so, he recalls the dichotomies, formulated particularly by the thinkers of the nineteenth century, between the Cartesian principle of the rational understanding of music, which assigns to it semantic values, and its spiritual, metaphysical dimension, narrowed to the factor of the emotional reception, which aims at emotion and experience.

Searching at the end of his life for answers to the question of what music is, Witold Szalonek returned to

**18** M. Liszka, (1990). *Piekarskie dzwony w Berlinie* [The Piekary Bells in Berlin], *Trybuna Robotnicza*. 01.06.1990.

**19** Detlef Gojowy delivered the laudatio on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1990. The text was first published in the *Deutsch-Polnische Ansichten Darmstadt* in 1990, and in Poland in the *Options* quarterly in 1994, No. 2, pp.79–83.

**20** W. Szalonek, (2002). *Przemówienie Witolda Szalonka po otrzymaniu tytułu ‘Doctora honoris causa’* [Witold Szalonek’s Speech After Receiving the Title of ‘Doctor Honoris Causa’]. In: L.M. Moll, *Witold Szalonek. Katalog tematyczny dzieł. Teksty o muzyce*, op. cit., p. 243.

**21** W. Szalonek, (1994). *Między duchem a materią* [Between Spirit and Matter], *Wieczór*. No. 73.



the French Symbolists, who recognized “the superiority of music in its ability to express feelings reaching the absolute, feelings which words cannot express.”<sup>22</sup>

### CREATIVE MANIFESTOS

Another group of texts written by Szalonek consists of two articles which can be seen as creative manifestos: the extended essay entitled “On the Unexploited Sonoristic Values of Woodwind Instruments” published in 1972 in the *Res Facta* periodical<sup>23</sup> and the short presentation “Sonorism and Its Form-Shaping Principles.”<sup>24</sup> These determine the main field which Szalonek explored artistically – the search for new sounds.

It is generally believed that Szalonek was the discoverer of combined tones on woodwind instruments.<sup>25</sup> The Silesian composer was certainly a pioneer of the use of new means of articulation on wind instruments. He was also the first to attempt to codify the newly discovered resources in the Polish context.<sup>26</sup> It is important to remember that in the 1960s, many composers conducted experiments involving traditional instruments – e.g. Krzysztof Penderecki in the string instrument group.

“On the Unexploited Sonoristic Values of Woodwind Instruments” is a result of painstaking research work, carried out with fellow musicians, who helped the composer get acquainted with wind instruments and their sonoristic capabilities. However, the text is important not only because it offers a synthetic presentation of manners of articulation, serving as a catalogue of composing solutions and a lexicon of performance guidelines, but above all, because it proposes a notation of combined sounds.

Szalonek begins the essay with a short introduction, in which he refers to the lively discussion that creators and consumers of new music engaged in after the birth of electronic and concrete music. On the one hand, there was talk of the impending end of traditional instruments and the musical medium being replaced with studio apparatus, which some saw as a means of creating

illustrative music, and others as a tool for creating autonomous works. On the other hand, the extension of the articulatory possibilities of known orchestral instruments was discussed.

The author argues that these disputes are unnecessary. Regardless of what the source generating acoustic waves is, the building material of music remains the same: the phenomenon of sound. He also associates the acoustic phenomenon with the vehicle of content, a component of the code through which animals and people can communicate.<sup>27</sup>

A feature shared by Szalonek’s contemporaries was their tendency to study the sound, or to use his own term, “tracking” it. The composer perceives this trend as natural, and appropriate in an era in which striving for universality is the dominant longing. As a promoter of doing away with the Eurocentric view of music, Szalonek welcomes the fact that some composing techniques are a result of adapting musical ideas proper to non-European cultures. Next, the author reveals what inspired him to deal with unconventional articulation techniques, and pays homage to Severino Gazzeloni, a renowned flutist specialising in performing contemporary music, with whom he collaborated on the occasion of the first performance of *Concertino* during the “Warsaw Autumn” Festival in 1963.<sup>28</sup> Finally, he discusses in detail the manners of producing combined sounds and sounds with an indefinite pitch and proposes a precise system for their notation.

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**27** This view was openly preached in the 1960s, by, among others, the American composer Lejaren A. Hiller. In 1963, during the Summer Course for New Music in Darmstadt, Hiller presented the assumptions of the information theory, which attempts to define, among others, what minimum means are necessary to communicate a maximally understandable message. Applying the theory to art, Hiller compared a musical form to written and spoken language, which are also specific ways of expression. In his *Informationstheorie und Computermusik*, he wrote: “On the following basis, information theory can be used both in the analysis of music, and composition: if we agree on the assumption that music constitutes an important form of information in interpersonal communication, it must have certain features in common with other types of information, such as spoken and written language, as well as a system of codes and encrypted information. Although each communication system has its own easily recognizable characteristics, particular applicability, and a specific system of signs, we can attempt to formulate a universally valid theory which would include quantified measures that would contribute to an understanding of not only the core of all the information in general, but also an understanding of music in particular.” L.A. Hiller, (1964). *Informationstheorie und Computermusik*. In: E. Thomas (Ed.), *Darmstädter Beiträge zur Neuen Musik*, Vol. 8. Mainz: Schott & Söhne.

**28** In the composer’s wife’s archive, his correspondence with Severino Gazzeloni has been preserved.

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**22** *Ibid.*

**23** W. Szalonek, (1972). O nie wykorzystanych walorach sonorystycznych instrumentów dętych drewnianych [On the Unexploited Sonoristic Values of Woodwind Instruments], *Res Facta* 1972. No. 7, pp. 111–119.

**24** W. Szalonek, (1999). Sonorystyka i jej siły formotwórcze. Tezy [Sonorism and Its Form-Shaping Principles. Theses], *Dysonanse*. No. 5/6, p. 22.

**25** Cf. L.M. Moll (2002). Entry: Witold Szalonek, op. cit.

**26** Similar issues are addressed in Bruno Bartolozzi’s work *New Sounds of the Woodwind Instruments*, London 1967.

The article discussed above begs comparison with Bruno Bartolozzi's *New Sounds of the Woodwind Instruments*, published in London in 1967.<sup>29</sup> This Italian composer and violinist (1911–1980), a collaborator of Luigi Dallapiccola, conducted in the 1960s experiments in new articulation techniques on woodwind instruments. In cooperation with the bassoonist Sergio Penazzi, he prepared a textbook for performers and composers, which was also published in German in 1971.<sup>30</sup>

Szalonek's text "Sonorism and Its Form-Shaping Principles" is the composer's most famous and best defined text: it was presented during numerous lectures and talks,<sup>31</sup> and the composer implemented its theses in his musical work. Although this creative manifesto was written in 1976, it only appeared in print in 1999.

Due to the fact that the composer frequently indulged in theoretical analysis in his explorations of sound and in his musical compositions, and placed particular emphasis on sonoristic values, Szalonek's work is usually associated with this experimental musical tendency. Although in his manifesto "Sonorism and Its Form-Shaping Principles," the composer focuses on the issue of tone colour and its influence on the form of a musical work, the text also addresses other issues. Owing to the importance of this text in Szalonek's theoretical legacy, I am quoting it here in full:

1. Music is a phenomenon which belongs to the field of communication.
2. Music is an asemantic language (code), through which man – a social being on an evolutionary path, endowed with reflective consciousness - transmits and receives content which is essential to his being and can only be expressed through what is audible (acoustic phenomena).
3. **Forms** [emphasis W. Szalonek] of **musical expression** created through this language, subject to the specific function and structure of man's perception apparatus (the central nervous system) and the sense of hearing that it serves, are **the consequences of sound stimuli constructed in time in an anti-adaptive manner** (anti-adaptive structures of sound stimuli functioning in time)
4. The perception of the various forms of these sound structures is made possible by the (*sine qua non*) principle of repeating hidden

structural elements of sound material, its parameters, used in their construction:

- a. colour, which consists of:
    - i. the characteristic features of the sound generator
    - ii. sound articulation
    - iii. the so-called called pitch, acting individually in horizontal systems (melic), or combined sound complexes (harmony)
  - b. sound volume (as a category):
    - i. physical
    - ii. psychological
  - c. Time element present in:
    - i. rhythmic form (having structural features)
    - ii. non-rhythmic form (space-time)
5. Regardless of the complexity of the various sound parameters (e.g. colour), the stronger their mutual structural relationships and their degree of integration are, the more disciplined and clear the form of the piece and its expression become.
  6. That degree of interconnectedness, references, relationships, and structural qualities of all the sound parameters which form the structure (macro-form) of a musical work is observed to an equal degree in the listener's realm of consciousness and subconsciousness.
  7. Since both a) sound stimuli (as an acoustic, or physical phenomenon), and b) their generators (the sound apparatus) and receptors (human central nervous system equipped with the sense of hearing) are subject to the Laws of Nature, the development of the musical language, which results from their mutual relations, is determined by these Laws and proceeds from simple to complex forms. This development also reflects, among others, the historical process of discovering these Laws by man, bearing witness to the attained spiritual and material-technical level of the cultures and civilizations created by man. This development only concerns the technical aspect of musical language as a tool of expression, while the content communicated by it preserves the possibility of it achieving universal and timeless values in man's evolutionary process (which occurs in temporal macro-dimension).
  8. The musical language of contemporary music – the music of the "white culture" – has (since Debussy) been determined by universalist global trends, integrating, on the one hand, the creations of non-European cultural spirit and, on the other, the technical achievements in the field of electro-acoustic music. The characteristic features of my works: consequences of sound stimuli constructed in time in an anti-adaptive manner, with particular focus (emphasis) on the forces (the interaction of forces) occurring between tonal values present in my works in autonomised form as well as in synthesis with traditional elements).<sup>32</sup>

In a footnote to the title of this manifesto, Szalonek provides his own definition of the term "sonorism": "Sonorism is one of the creative tendencies in twentieth-century music, in which the primary means of expression are sound values appearing in the musical work in autonomised form."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> B. Bartolozzi, (1967). *New Sounds of the Woodwind Instruments*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>30</sup> B. Bartolozzi, (1971). *Neue Klänge für Holzblasinstrumente*, Mainz: Schott & Söhne.

<sup>31</sup> In Szalonek's personal file stored in the archives of the Hochschule der Künste, a request can be found, among others, for permission to deliver a series of lectures entitled "Sonorität und ihre Formgestaltungskräfte" during the winter semester of 1990/1991 at the University of Hildesheim. In addition, in the previous years, the composer acquainted the audience with this issue during guest lectures and conducted composition classes, among others, in Berlin (1975), Helsinki (1980), and Bratislava (1994).

<sup>32</sup> W. Szalonek, (1999). *Sonorystyka i jej siły formotwórcze*, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

The composer further developed this definition in an interview with Iwona Szafrńska, pointing to the “communicative” quality of colour.

Sonorism strikes me as a logical manifestation of the structuring of musical thought through the use of absolutely unique characteristics of a given sound generator or a given instrument, regardless of whether it is the human voice, one of the classical European instruments, a generator of electronic sounds, or noises, humming, kettle drums, cymbals... The idea is that the intended content can only be communicated by what is audible, what our sense of hearing can perceive, and that it is transferred in an absolutely adequate manner by the colour of a given sound. The colour is in fact the identity signal of each instrument. Sonorism is the soul of the instrument revealed through music.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, Szalonek assumed that the colour element is the vehicle of content and emotional expression, and that music has the characteristics of a quasi-linguistic structure. The composer emphasised these communicative qualities of music in the first two points of his manifesto. These assumptions imply another, perhaps most important argument, which distinguishes Szalonek’s view of sonorism from other theoretical concepts. As a consequence of perceiving colour as the primary factor in music, sound colour is defined as a form-shaping element.

In this manner, Szalonek developed the concept of the structural role of “sonoristic regulation”<sup>35</sup> which Józef M. Chomiński wrote about.<sup>36</sup> The composer’s

original contribution consists in pointing to perceptual characteristics of man, who will perceive the form of a musical work as “consequences of sound stimuli constructed in time in an anti-adaptive manner.”<sup>37</sup> To make the structure of the work perceptible to senses, Szalonek suggests repeating its structural elements – the sound forms. These include the tone colour, which is determined by the properties of the sound generator (the instrument), the articulation and pitch of a single sound in a horizontal and vertical setting. The second parameter of sound form is the sound volume – both the measurable, physical, and the psychological one, perceived by the listener. The last characteristic of the material is the “time element,” understood as its rhythmic value, and space-time.

In the theses that follow, Szalonek argues that the most clear, disciplined, and therefore the most noble form of artistic expression may only be ensured by a close structural relationship among all the parameters of the sound. When this condition is met, the listener will be able to perceive the musical work both consciously and subconsciously. The composer also assumed the existence of the “Laws of Nature,” to which sound stimuli (from simple forms to complex ones), their generators and receptors are subject.<sup>38</sup>

The primary importance of colour in the process of forming a sound progression is therefore not limited to experimentation. It is not a goal, but a means, and the search for new sound effects and for mutual relations

**34** I. Szafrńska, (1994). Wokół sonorizmu. Z Witoldem Szalonkiem rozmawia Iwona Szafrńska [On Sonorism. Iwona Szafrńska’s Interview with Witold Szalonek], *Opcje*. No. 2.

**35** According to Józef M. Chomiński, sonoristic regulation consists in “the use of purely tonal properties of the sound material. Equivalent value is granted to material with fixed and unknown pitch. It is the latter category which often plays a much bigger role. Traditional instruments are used in sonoristic regulation in a new manner. Ways of inducing sound are enriched by applying various hitherto unused, and even unforeseeable articulation manners. In addition to traditional instruments, electric and electronic devices are introduced, extending the scope of sound material to an almost unlimited extent. [...] In sonoristic regulation, the focus is radically shifted towards technological aspects of the form-organising process.” J.M. Chomiński, K. Wilkowska-Chomińska, (1983). *Formy muzyczne [Musical Forms]*. Vol.1, Kraków: PWM Edition, p. 126.

**36** A detailed analysis of Szalonek’s theoretical and musicological output justifies the thesis that the issue of sonorism was the dominant topic most frequently taken up by the artist. The large number of lectures and speeches covering the theoretical foundations of the trend testifies not only to the composer’s ambition to become one of the main proponents of sonorism, but also to a special sense of responsibility for popularising the ideas of Józef M. Chomiński. This is testified to by an intended seminar on sonorism in Germany, dedicated to the memory of the Polish musicologist. Work on the symposium was probably carried out after Chomiński’s death in 1994. In the composer’s home archive, there exists a sketch of

a plan for a *Symposion zu Ehren von Prof. Dr. Józef Chomiński – Sonorität und ihre Idee. Im neues Paradigma der Musiktheorie*, which, however, was never organised. The range of planned topics was broad – from music theory, to issues related to the history of music, the phenomenon of folk art, also outside Europe, reflection on language, translation, and humanistic reflection. The conference was to be inaugurated with a lecture by Szalonek, placing sonorism in the context of theoretical thought. The list of invited guests was to include: Max Peter Baumann (“Die Klanglichkeit des Instrumentariums der außereuropäischen Musikkulturen anhand ausgewählter Beispiele”), Roman Berger (“Die philosophischen Aspekte der Musik”), Karl Dedecius (“Der Übersetzer und die Musikelemente der deutschen und polnischen Sprache”), Ryszard Gabrys (“Die Entwicklung der europäischen Musiksprache und ihre Beziehung zu den Erkenntnissen über die Natur der Dinge”), Maciej Gołąb (“Józef Chomiński und seine Theorie der Sonorität”), Folkmar Hein (“Die elektroakustische Musik und ihre Problematik”), Michał Heller (“Die Welt und wie sie jeweils der Mensch begreift, erlebt und dies in den Kunstwerken kodiert”), Tadeusz Slawek (“Die Musikelemente in der Begriffssprache”), Brunhilda Sonntag (“Der Ziet-Raum-Klang Aspekt der Musik”), Jan Stęszewski (“Die Klanglichkeit des polnischen Volksmusik-instrumentariums”), and Krystyna Tarnawska (“Das Paradigma der klassischen Musiktheorie”).

**37** W. Szalonek, (1999). *Sonorystyka i jej sity formotwórcze*, op. cit., p. 22.

**38** *Ibid.*.



between them serves to create a clear structure and to enable the creation of a space of communication between author and the audience. Carl Humphries said that Szalonek:

[...] made sound subject to itself, not only to make the sound quality itself more prominent, but also to provoke an overall formal process following its laws. Thus sound becomes a fundamental musical element and attracts the listener's attention through the use of individualised ways of producing sounds, showcasing the unique character of musical instruments.<sup>39</sup>

Szalonek confirmed this perception in an interview with Marta Ługowska:

The expression "pure sound exploration" is, of course, an easily adaptable concept. The creator looks for new building material under the influence of various factors, for example, out of curiosity. But first of all, it is because he feels that the possibilities of expression discovered so far as the artistic basis of social communication have lost their value. When, however, we stop at "pure sound," we see that this is just a starting point. Its energy is released when a form is constructed through a stimulating network of connections and relationships. The shape of this form depends on what the composer wants to say and how he does so.

[...] Because of its naturalness, colour is a much more complex phenomenon than the interval. To perceive the mutual relationships and dependencies between elements derived from colour, one needs to "approve" of them during their decomposition (the word "approve" is a kind of metaphor - I do not know what I should call this new concept of time). Unless this condition is met, colour will not be able to unleash its energy, and thus it will not reach the chain of emotional states. As a consequence, the result will be that the habit of listening will accept it as an addition to something that does not exist, as the sound of a sound, an empty effect without substance.<sup>40</sup>

An additional source that allowed Szalonek to formulate his own concept of sonorism was the inspiration with non-European music.<sup>41</sup> In an interview with Iwona Szafrńska, the composer confessed that the first impulse that had influenced his creative attitude in terms of the understanding of form was reading Lech Niemojowski's *Seven Wonders of the World*.<sup>42</sup> The second inspiration was:

[...] my first encounter with non-European music, which has opened my European world to the whole magnificent rest of our globe. It was then that I encountered for the first time new sound realities that caused a revolution in my way of thinking, providing answers to the many questions which I asked, and solving some of the problems which had troubled me earlier. [...] Broadly speaking, as a result, this non-European music had a great influence on shaping my concept of sonorism.<sup>43</sup>

As Szalonek's concept of the role of colour in the creative and perceptual process diverged from that adopted by the other composers of the Polish School of Composition, his sonoristic compositions are based on different ideas. For most composers, as demonstrated by the work of Krzysztof Penderecki, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, or Kazimierz Serocki, it was appropriate to construct a musical form with sounds of homogeneous or polygenous nature, usually combined by assembling contrasting elements.<sup>44</sup> Such composers obtained specific sound effects through the selection of instruments, means of articulation and rhythmic configurations.

Witold Szalonek shaped the sound narration in a different manner and used different means to obtain sonoristic effects. The composer defined himself as a "linearist":

According to the classification of creative predispositions, I correspond to the type of linearist. These predispositions explain my desire to go beyond the so-called "appropriate voice development," even in symphonic works with a homophonic texture, and move towards individualising them to a maximum extent, while maintaining a close relationship with the exposed primary sound material - the exponent of the main musical thought - through the use of various forms of imitation and a wide variety of transformation techniques, such as the variation technique and motivic elements involving structuralism.<sup>45</sup>

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*doskonała, wieczność i chwila, względność wielkości, trochę teorii* [*Seven Wonders of the World: In the Shadow of Greatness, Art And Technology, Perfect Banality, Eternity And The Moment, Relativity of Greatness, Some Theory*]. Warsaw: Ex Libris.

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**39** C. Humphries, (1998). Perspektywy rozwoju badań nad muzyką na przykładzie twórczości Witolda Szalonek [Perspectives for the Development of Research on Music on the Example of Witold Szalonek's Oeuvre], *Dysonanse*. No.1, p. 32.

**40** M. Ługowska, (1988). Klang und Form, *Polish Music/Polnische Musik*. No. 11.

**41** "Szalonek's music reveals the significant form-shaping potential of sound as such - the strength, the operation of which is present and felt throughout all aspects of the composition process. This concept makes us realise its close relation to non-European ways of participating in music." C. Humphries, (1998). *Perspektywy rozwoju badań*, op. cit.

**42** This probably refers to Lech Niemojowski's (1948). *Siedem cudów świata: w cieniu wielkości, sztuka i technika, banalność*

**43** I. Szafrńska, (1994). *Wokół sonoryzmu*, op. cit.

**44** Krzysztof Baculewski distinguished homogeneous sounds of continuous and discontinuous type, and classified polygenous figures in a similar manner. A musical progression, in turn, was to be differentiated by the transformation of the sound masses, appropriate dynamics, volume, syntactic and morphological formal relations. Cf. K. Baculewski, (1996). *Współczesność, część 1: 1939-1974* [Contemporary Music, Part I]. In: S. Sutkowski (ed.), *Historia muzyki polskiej*, Vol. 7. Warsaw: Sutkowski Edition, pp. 269-296.

**45** W. Szalonek, (1974). Budowa formalna i założenia materiałowe "Concertina" na flet i orkiestrę kameralną [The Formal Construction and Material Assumptions of the "Concertino" for Flute and Chamber Orchestra], *Zeszyty Naukowe PWSM*. No.11, p. 38.

This self-description by the artist who embedded sonoristic effects at the macro-form level in a strictly composed sound structure with strong expressive values, and, at the micro-form level, in the network of relationships between tonal forms, is confirmed by Bożena Gieburowska, who wrote in the *Ruch Muzyczny* journal:

From the very beginning, naturally, internally, Szalonek chose for his work a texture with a polyphonic value, or rather, a type of linear creation whose ideal is a work composed of autonomous yet cohesive layers. Each of the individual layers has a maximally individualised shape; however, they all have a common determinant which binds together the whole work in terms of form, energy and expression. The dominant function of these components, their importance in the composition, is obvious in Szalonek's work, and the fundamental evolution of his work takes place where the composer's most penetrating inquiry, concerning the essence of sound, its tone, colour, and duration, takes place.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, it is only the use of certain artistic means, individualising the sound, soloist approach to instruments, the use of small ensembles, and above all, the multi-layered structure of simultaneously occurring sound figures, closely interlinked or co-existing by way of contrast, that contribute to the heterogeneous sonoristic structure. Therefore, unlike, e.g. in Krzysztof Penderecki's work, in Szalonek's music there is less correlation between the auditory impression and the notation in the score, which the known research methods find difficult to detect. This is due to the fact that traditional analysis takes into account, on the one hand, only the existing notation and abstract relationships between signs, and, on the other – sonological methods, which focus on the acoustic shape and the actual sound and completely ignore the structural relationships.<sup>47</sup>

### SELF-ANALYSES AND COMMENTS

A sizable group of Szalonek's texts consists of original analyses of selected compositions and short comments on various works. These represent a collection of over twenty articles, three of which are detailed discussions of the composition methods applied in four musical works: the *Concertino*, *Diptichon II*, *Gerard Hoffnung's Six Unpublished Drawings* and *Toccata e corale*.

The composer's most complete self-reflection is provided by the text entitled "The Formal Construction

and Material Assumptions of the *Concertino* for Flute and Chamber Orchestra."<sup>48</sup> This lengthy article is divided into eleven parts, in which the author reveals the inspirations behind his work, presents the use of instruments and their disposition on the stage and deals with the technical aspects of the work – its architectonics, serial organisation of sound material, melody, harmony, time values, aleatoricism, colours, stereophonic sound and dynamics. The text not only offers valuable clues for musicians performing the *Concertino*, but also allows a closer look at Szalonek's composition technique and his creative process.

At the request of the *Ardesa* journal of the Union of German Saxophonists, Szalonek wrote an article which was published in *Sax Info* under the title "*Diptichon II* and *Gerard Hoffnung's Six Unpublished Drawings*".<sup>49</sup> It is a kind of guide to two works of the Polish composer which are significant from the perspective of contemporary saxophone literature. In contrast to the analysis of the *Concertino*, the article provides less detailed information on the composition technique, and more general reflection on contemporary music and the role that modern art should play in the society. The text also points to the aspect of aesthetic pluralism in music which was of interest to Szalonek, and to the possibility of artistic and folk creations from the culture of Mediterranean and non-European regions coexisting on an equal footing. The composer justifies the view by addressing the arguments formulated in the works of Carl Dahlhaus and Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht<sup>50</sup>:

Szalonek notes:

In fact, concerning the assertion formulated by Dahlhaus and Eggebrecht, among others, in the book entitled *Was ist Musik*, that there is not one, but on the contrary, many Musics ("many musics – many creators of music – many parts of the phrases of these music creations, and so on, and so forth), so that by using this "method of splitting", in the vein of a German proverb – "you can't see the forest for the pile of chopped splinters", I am convinced that there is such a thing as one Music created by Man, which, like all Matter, takes on different forms and shapes depending on the existing conditions, as a result of the fact that man – as a social being on a path of development designated to him by the evolution – codes in all art he creates his **perception of the State of Existence** and his knowledge of external and internal reality.

In describing this "something" that is a special indispensable constant which elevates to the rank of music both the sound of the

<sup>48</sup> W. Szalonek, (1974). *Budowa formalna i założenia materiałowe "Concertina"*, op. cit., pp. 38–54.

<sup>49</sup> W. Szalonek, (1996). *Diptichon II and Gerard Hoffnung's Six Unpublished Drawings*, *Sax Info*. No. 24 and W. Szalonek, (1999). *Diptichon II and Gerard Hoffnung's Six Unpublished Drawings*, *Dysonanse*. No. 5/6, pp. 15–16.

<sup>50</sup> C. Dahlhaus, H.H. Eggebrecht, (1985). *Was ist Musik?*. Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen.

<sup>46</sup> B. Gieburowska, (1978). *25 lat twórczości Witolda Szaloneka [25 Years of Witold Szalonek's Artistic Activity]*, *Ruch Muzyczny*. No. 1, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> C. Humphries, (2008). *Sonorism and Sonoristics in the Music of Witold Szalonek*, *Muzyka*. No. 1, pp. 93–105.

“primitive” Australian didgeridoo and that generated by synthesizers in electroacoustic studios, I cannot think of a better term than “musicality.”

This concept includes (as common denominator) the phenomenon that must be the inherent component of all Musics, both existing, created at the moment and that composed in the future.<sup>51</sup>

In discussing the composition techniques used in the work, selective dodecaphony and aleatorism, Szalonek uses terminology derived from science. In this manner, the artist subscribes to the trend found in analyses of the composition techniques of artists from the second half of the twentieth century, who, in analysing musical works, evoked physical and mathematical concepts. An example of this is comparing the aleatory techniques to quantum mechanics:

In turn, many scorn the aleatory technique, due to the mistaken view that by using it, the composer delegates the responsibility for the quality of his music to the performing musician, while in fact it is a deliberate composing act which provides general, formal assumptions for the sound material, and prevents the interpreter from creating diverse formal constellations from the same matter. Does not this method of creating different musical forms from the same material in fact resemble certain specific types of behaviour of matter, such as those described by quantum mechanics? The model states that – depending on existing conditions – elementary particles combine into specific bundles called quanta, which choose and adopt a specific form by themselves, and spontaneously disband as they see fit, and hence do not have temporal continuity.<sup>52</sup>

Szalonek ends his article with a call for a paradigm shift in musical reflection.

Similar examples of projecting our knowledge of external reality on the sound matter, of contemporary music worlds and their method of composing them – can be multiplied endlessly. I have provided just a few of them. One thing is essential, though: work on creating a paradigm which is appropriate for our times should finally begin, because, just as we cannot describe the forms and behaviour of the quanta by means of Newton’s laws, the methods developed for and by the European classical music are today insufficient as analytic tools. For the Music of our time – a music in which, as I have already said, we encode our knowledge of the external and internal reality and our current perception of the state of being – it becomes essential to create a suitable paradigm. If we fail to do so, its true nature and the multiplicity of forms and shapes in which it appears will remain undiagnosed, misunderstood in the sense of “unfelt” – and consequently, as we observe almost every day, for the first time in the history of our culture, also **unwanted** from the socio-psychologic point of view, which speaks ill of the state of the Spirit of our “white civilisation of consumption” and does not bode well for the future.<sup>53</sup>

Apart from these two extensive articles which have the character of the composer’s introductions to selected works, Szalonek is also the author of more than twenty comments on his own compositions. With the exception of the introduction to the *Toccata e corale* published in the program of the “Polnische Komponisten in Berlin” event,<sup>54</sup> all of them were prepared on the occasion of the performance of his works or publishing the scores in print. Most of the comments were published in the programme books of the “Warsaw Autumn” Festival, during which twelve of Szalonek’s works were performed for the first time (including *Les Sons, 1+1+1+1*, *The Symphony of Rituals*, and *Medusa’s Dream of Pegasus*).

All these texts contain basic information about the works – the date of creation, the persons they were inspired by and to whom they were dedicated. Most of the notes also include a brief description of the sound language, a discussion of the formal concept, and a few sentences about the creative assumptions or a description of the non-musical “programme” of the work. Examples of this include commentaries on the *Mutazioni*,<sup>55</sup> *Mutanza*,<sup>56</sup> and *Poseidon and Medusa*.<sup>57</sup> Some, on the other hand – e.g. *Piernikiana*,<sup>58</sup> *Hautbois mon amour*<sup>59</sup> – are limited to a single sentence providing the basic facts.

### MUSIC JOURNALISM

Szalonek’s writings were not limited to the publication of theoretical-aesthetic texts. The sense of a critical judgment of reality led the composer to journalism. Between 1954 and 1962, the Silesian artist was active as a music critic. His reviews of concerts and reports on musical events were published in newspapers:

<sup>54</sup> W. Szalonek, (1993). *Toccata e corale*. In: the “Warsaw Autumn” Programme Book, Warsaw: Polish Composers’ Union, (Polish version pp. 33–34, English version pp. 33–34).

<sup>55</sup> Idem, (1970). *Mutazioni*. In: the “Warsaw Autumn” Programme Book. Warsaw: Polish Composers’ Union, (Polish version pp. 14–15, French version pp. 15–16).

<sup>56</sup> Idem, (1978). *Mutanza*. In: the “Warsaw Autumn” Programme Book. Warsaw: Polish Composers’ Union, (Polish version pp. 157–158, English version pp. 155–156).

<sup>57</sup> Idem (2001), *Posejdon i Meduza*. In: the “Warsaw Autumn” Programme Book. Warsaw: Polish Composers’ Union, (Polish version pp. 137–138, English version pp. 131–132).

<sup>58</sup> Idem (1979), *Piernikiana*. In: the “Warsaw Autumn” Programme Book. Warsaw: Polish Composers’ Union, (Polish version p. 141, English version p. 139).

<sup>59</sup> Idem, (1999). *Hautbois mon amour*. In: the “Warsaw Autumn” Programme Book. Warsaw: Polish Composers’ Union, (Polish version, p. 60, English version p. 64).

<sup>51</sup> L.M. Moll, *Witold Szalonek. Katalog tematyczny dzieł*, op. cit., p. 226.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 258–259.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

“Trybuna Robotnicza”, “Dziennik Zachodni” and “Echo Bytomskie”. These texts show literary skills, a hint of irony and subtle mockery, and present a detailed and competent description of the artistic skills of musicians.

In addition to reviewing concerts and opera performances, Szalonek published essays on general-cultural subjects. An example of this is “Moje trzy grosze” (“My Two Cents’ Worth”)<sup>60</sup> which was his contribution to the debate on the condition of the artistic milieu in Silesia printed in “Trybuna Robotnicza”. Both his diagnosis of the situation of musicians in Poland and his suggestions aimed at improving the artists’ working conditions are still valid today, and Szalonek’s statement should be considered in this case as the voice of the whole milieu of composers. At that time, the composer was the Vice-President of the Silesian branch of the Polish Composers’ Union.

A separate chapter of Szalonek’s activities as a music journalist were his broadcast in the Silesian branch of the Polish Radio. Although never published in print, the music popularising programs which he hosted in 1956 and 1957 were a significant contribution to the popularization of in classical music. Among the issues discussed were stereotypes surrounding classical music, film music, jazz, dance forms, and the rudiments of knowledge about the fundamental elements of music.

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A systematic analysis of Szalonek’s theoretical presentations allows to identify the issues that the composer was interested in. The first of those concerns sonorism and reflection on contemporary music, its values and expressions in the musical life. The second group consists of articles on Europe’s cultural heritage – the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, Fryderyk Chopin and Claude Debussy. The third group consists of self-analytic texts. Some of them, theoretical-musicological in nature, are intended for musicologists and performers. They include analyses of musical works and specialized texts on performance techniques. In Szalonek’s writings, also comments on composition can be found, which are journalistic in nature and addressed to music lovers. Most frequently, these texts were published in the programmes of festivals, including the “Warsaw Autumn” programme books.

The diversity of subjects that Szalonek dealt with in his writings, as well as the different groups of intended readers, place the composer among those twentieth-century artists who – in addition to creative work in

the strict sense – also had the ambition of formulating theoretical concepts and publishing commentaries that facilitated the understanding of art, including their own works.

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