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Polyphonic Self or Idiomatic Label? Mapping Polish Composers Born

Between 1970 and 1980: Marcin Stańczyk, Aleksander Nowak, Jagoda Szmytka

Musical self and musical identity Drawing on concepts in psychology, philosophy and sociology, the notions of “musical self” and “musical identity” entered the musicological lexicon in the twenty-first century. As Maria Spychiger writes:

“The self-aware person is capable of looking at him- or herself from an outside perspective, making him- or herself the object of reflection [...]. In doing so, individuals can conceive of ideas about who they are, and perceive a sense of continuity in this: the latter is defined as *identity* by many theorists.”

Starting from the new millennium, research on the musical self and identity has been developing intensively, gaining in-depth scope and a multidisciplinary character. Explaining the concept of musical self, Spychiger states: “Musical self-concept summarizes a person’s answers to his or her inquiries into ‘who-I-am’ and ‘what-I-can-do’ questions with regards to music.”¹ Music sociologist Tia DeNora refers to these inquiries as “technology of self”, pointing to the fact that music can be used to nurture memories, regulate mood or reflect on the temporal course of social processes. She sums up her empirical research thus:

“In this chapter, music has been portrayed as a temporal structure, as offering semiotic particles, as a medium with attendant conventional or biographical associations – in action as a device for ordering the self as an agent, and as an object known and accountable to oneself and others. Music may be understood as providing a container for feeling and, in this sense, its specific properties contribute to the shape and quality of feeling to the extent that feeling – to be sustained, and made known to oneself and others – must be established on a public or intersubjective plane. Music is a material that actors use to elaborate, to fill out and fill in, to themselves and to others, modes of aesthetic agency and, with it, subjective stances and identities.”²

The author deliberately talks about identities in the plural, and she also emphasises that they are fluid, plastic, hybrid and even tradable and stealable.³ The editors of the *Handbook*

- 1 Maria B. Spychiger: From Musical Experience to Musical Identity. Musical Self-Concept as a Mediating Psychological Structure, in: *Handbook of Musical Identities*, ed. by Raymond MacDonald, David J. Hargreaves and Dorothy Miell, Oxford 2017, pp. 267–287, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199679485.003.0015>, here pp. 281 and 268.
- 2 Tia DeNora: *Music in Everyday Life*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 73 f.
- 3 See also Tia DeNora: Music-Ecology and Everyday Action. Creating, Changing, and Contesting Identities, in: *Handbook of Musical Identities*, pp. 46–62, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199679485.003.0003>, here pp. 47 f.

of *Musical Identities* also use the word “identities” in the plural and separate “identities in music” (IIM) and “music in identities” (MI) to show that music not only defines the social roles of people associated with it professionally, but it also influences our perception of ourselves, even if we are not music-makers. Similarly to DeNora, who emphasises “action” and “agent”, David Hargreaves, Raymond MacDonald and Dorothy Miell stress that identity is not fixed but is rather performative: “[M]usical identities are performative and social – they represent something that we do, rather than something that we have, namely, the ways in which we jointly engage with music in everyday life.”⁴

1. The composer’s self Questions about “technology of self” and “performative musical identities” also allow us to look at contemporary composers from a different perspective, distancing ourselves both from the artist’s romantic myth and the later modernist perspective of an autonomous, individual creator. As Charles Wilson states, “[C]omposers’ self-representations often serve a function that is as much performative as constative.”⁵ Constant (re)definition and strengthening of identity and image in the public space are the basic tasks of artists at a time when verbal discourse is often an aesthetic arbitrator.⁶

The modern knowledge of subjectivity, understood in the context of constructivism and performativity, has also inspired a generation of artists brought up in the spirit of modernist autonomy and the cult of the author’s individualism. A significant example of this is found in Jonathan Harvey’s essay “Who is the Composer?”,⁷ in which he theorises that the inner core of the composer’s self consists of borrowed elements that resemble DeNora’s “stealable” identities. Their only authorial task is to establish the hierarchy between the borrowed elements.⁸ Harvey uses the concept of “polyphonic personality”, arguing that it is a cause for pride rather than shame. He recalls – and at the same time criticises – the deconstructionist idea of the absence of the author or of his/her

4 David J. Hargreaves/Raymond MacDonald/Dorothy Miell: *The Changing Identity of Musical Identities*, in: *Handbook of Musical Identities*, pp. 3–23, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199679485.003.0001>, here pp. 4f.

5 Charles Wilson: György Ligeti and the Rhetoric of Autonomy, in: *Twentieth-Century Music* 1/1 (2004), pp. 5–28, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478572204000040>, here p. 6.

6 See Ian Pace: *Verbal Discourse as Aesthetic Arbitrator in Contemporary Music*, in: *The Modernist Legacy. Essays on New Music*, ed. by Björn Heile, Farnham 2009, pp. 81–99.

7 I discuss this issue in more detail in my article “Polyphonic Personalities”. The Identity of a Modern Composer in the Self-Reflection of György Ligeti and Jonathan Harvey, in: *Music as Cultural Heritage and Novelty*, ed. by Oana Andreica, Cham 2022 (*Numanities – Arts and Humanities in Progress*, Vol. 24), pp. 215–239, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-11146-4_11.

8 The above-mentioned “borrowed elements” in the case of creative process include specific sources of inspiration (both conscious and unconscious), intended pastiche of various musical styles and more general ideas such as structural coherence.

(metaphorical) death, arguing that it is based on the false belief that there is a prior, coherent self. Influenced by his Buddhist views, Harvey even speaks of the illusion of personality: “We talk ourselves into an ‘as-if’ heuristic personality, an ego patched together out of scraps and fragments, ultimately unimportant; but we persuade others to take it seriously.”⁹ The composer also discusses the illusory ego and the illusion of personality with Matthew Jenkins:

JH: The ego is illusory, but the illusory ego certainly plays a role in a lot of musical experiences. [...] Of course we think it is real.

[...]

MJ: Is the composer a complex set of cultural constructs and any distinct voice perceived is just an illusion of personality?

[...]

JH: Fundamentally, the voice as a bundle of stuff that has been collected from our histories, environments, and karma is a good description.”¹⁰

It is worth noting that, in Harvey’s statements cited above, the “we” and “our” refer primarily to the community of composers, but his reflection on the illusory ego has other contexts as well. It can refer to the experience of music by listeners, and more broadly, musical experience is just a particular case study of human experience in general. The “we” form so often used by the composer also expresses his fascination with the experience of community and “being part of communal expression”.¹¹ When he explored the process of inspiration in his PhD thesis, Harvey was looking for “a kernel of shared experience that unites all the composers”.¹² In interviews, he emphasised how important his youthful experience of singing in a choir was for him to understand “how all the parts were vulnerable and subject to refinement in rehearsal – not just our own – and had to work together”.¹³ He also noticed the collective nature of the creative act itself and admitted that “[n]early all music is a collaboration of some sort”¹⁴ as composers must often engage with others, including directors, computer-music designers and choreographers.

9 Jonathan Harvey: Who is the Composer?, in: id.: *In Quest of Spirit. Thoughts on Music*, Berkeley 1999, pp. 1–22, here p. 15.

10 Matthew Jenkins/Jonathan Harvey: A Search for Emptiness. An Interview with Jonathan Harvey, in: *Perspectives of New Music* 44/2 (2006), pp. 220–231, here pp. 226 and 228.

11 Arnold Whittall: *Jonathan Harvey*, London 1999, p. 16.

12 Jonathan Harvey: *Music and Inspiration*, London 1999, p. xv. The prototype of the book was the doctoral dissertation completed by Harvey in 1964 at the University of Glasgow.

13 John Palmer: An Interview with Jonathan Harvey, in: *19th Century Music* 5/8 (1998), pp. 1–8; reprinted in: *SAN Journal of Electroacoustic Music* 13 (2000), and online under: http://econtact.ca/z_2/Harvey.htm (all weblinks in this article last consulted 22 July 2024, unless otherwise indicated).

14 Ed Hughes: Jonathan Harvey, 21 April 2010, online under: <http://musicandcollaboration.blogspot.com/2010/04/wed-21-april-2010-jonathan-harvey.html>.

In this way, the experience of community and cooperation fosters an awareness of what we owe each other and provides a counterbalance to the excessive focus on the individual and his/her illusory ego.

According to Charles Wilson, the paradox of today's times is that, while the image of an individual, autonomous artist still functions in the music market and is even desirable as a promotional tool, it has lost much of its former critical potential: it was supposed to be a sign of resistance by romantic and modernist artists against the mass market but has instead become part of the postmodern paradigm of pluralism.¹⁵ This is also confirmed by the ethnographic research conducted by Hettie Malcomson in the United Kingdom in 2004. The author focused on a group of young composers promoted under the name "New Voices" by the British Music Information Centre. These individuals, often teaching composition at universities and active within the new-music network, attracted far less attention in the public sphere than the established British new-music composers who were regarded as so-called "great artists". Summing up her research, including observation, informal discussion and semi-structured interviews with the composers at the beginning of their careers, Malcomson states that "unique personality", "distinctiveness" and "individuality" became forms of capital (i.e. forms of economic, social and cultural recognition) as understood by Pierre Bourdieu and elements in the exchange of (symbolic) goods. "Individuality, enacted within a context of individualism, emerged as key to assessments of whether music was interesting." Equally important is the pursuit of integrity of personality, understood as consistency between the verbal, artistic and lifestyle spheres as an expression of "being true to the self". Interestingly, when describing the creative process, the composers Malcomson interviewed usually did not emphasise their individuality, reflecting Harvey's notion of polyphonic self. Malcomson notes: "It was as if conscious agency had to be suspended to allow space for the transcendent, intuitive self to emerge. And to some extent, these composers were rejecting a notion of the expressive self in favour of a plurality of selves."¹⁶ One can conclude from this that, while individuality is valued in the music market, it plays a lesser role in the private experience of composers. After all, the creative process, taking place in solitude, does not strengthen the sense of individuality but instead triggers a sense of a "plurality of selves".

¹⁵ See Wilson: György Ligeti and the Rhetoric of Autonomy, p. 6.

¹⁶ Hettie Malcomson: Composing Individuals. Ethnographic Reflections on Success and Prestige in the British New Music Network, in: *Twentieth-Century Music* 10/1 (2013), pp. 115–136, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478572212000436>, here pp. 117, 134, 125, and 131.

2. “Mapping” of Polish(-based) composers With all these questions in mind, I would like to examine several examples of Polish¹⁷ composers born in the 1970s and 1980s and discuss the social strategies of their self-presentation within the musical community.

It is still debatable whether one can speak of a generational bond between these artists.¹⁸ Their academic education took place in the years after the breakthrough of 1989,¹⁹ which gave them the opportunity to study abroad. Their style was influenced by pluralism of attitudes and the use of new technologies, and in social terms, free access to the Internet, education in foreign centres and the possibility for them to choose to live in other countries.²⁰ Many of them experienced a fascination with spectral music in their youth.²¹ The beginning of their creative activity also coincided with the creation of *Glissando* magazine, where the first discussions about their music and creative profiles took place.

It is worth mentioning that many of them are still counted among the “digital immigrants” who gradually gained access to and became accustomed to new technologies. Thus, theirs was a different experience than the Polish “digital natives”, described by Monika Pasiecznik as composers 10 years younger than their Western colleagues and born between 1985 and 1995. The digital natives use and aestheticise new technologies on an unprecedented scale, and the author counts Internet recycling (the free selection and use of content available on the Internet, such as sounds, videos and memes), affirmation of pop culture, interactivity, performativity and relationality among the characteristics of

- 17 The term “Polish composer” can be debatable in the context of the mobility and actual environment of these composers. This is especially true of Jagoda Szmytka. While Aleksander Nowak and Marcin Stańczyk reside permanently in Poland, Jagoda Szmytka describes herself as a “Polish-German artist, composer and curator”. ZKM: Jagoda Szmytka, 2020, <https://zkm.de/en/jagoda-szmytka>.
- 18 The first attempts of this type were made in the magazine *Glissando*. See Daniel Cichy/Michał Mendyk/Ewa Schreiber/Jan Topolski: *Pokolenie? Dyskusja*, in: *Glissando* 3 (2005), pp. 97–99, <https://glissando.pl/tekst/pokolenie-dyskusja/>.
- 19 The year 1989 brought not only the end of communist rule in Poland but also the fall of the Berlin Wall. These events contributed to global changes such as the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the end of the Cold War. According to Tim Rutherford-Johnson, it was 1989 and the socio-economic changes that have taken place since then that also represent an important caesura for musical culture. See Tim Rutherford-Johnson: *Music after the Fall. Modern Composition and Culture since 1989*, Oakland 2017.
- 20 See Daniel Cichy: *Muzyka polska. Bogactwo różnorodności*, in: 10. *Festiwal Sacrum Profanum*, ed. by Daniel Cichy, Kraków 2012, pp. 9–23.
- 21 See Ewa Schreiber: *Elementy spektralne w twórczości młodych polskich kompozytorów. Idee i techniki*, in: *Muzyka* 3 (2013), pp. 155–175; Jan Topolski: *Spektrale Spuren in Werken der jungen polnischen Komponisten*, in: *Les espaces sonores. Stimmungen, Klanganalysen, spektrale Musiken*, ed. by Michael Kunkel, Bünden 2016, pp. 159–175.

their work. However, these elements sometimes also inspire the digital immigrants, and not all those who gained access to new technologies early on make use of them in their art. For this reason, the generational boundary is only approximate and conventional.²²

Now well into the middle of their careers, each of the composers born in the late 1970s and early 1980s has already developed their own individual artistic image. The promotion of their work was already taking place under the conditions of political and economic transformation in Poland. As noted by Paweł Szymański, one of the leading Polish composers born in the 1950s: “When we talk about the economic dimension, all the things, the essence of which can be effectively verbalised, break through the democratic structures.”²³ The need for effective verbalisation and its constant updating was also emphasised by the long-time director of the Warsaw Autumn Festival, Tadeusz Wielecki:

“Notions and words change. And that all translates into the programme, concept, setting and promotion of concerts, into what is presented and how. [...] We can't forget that we live in Poland [...] and we have to invite people to the festival, convince them, win over the audience. We are constantly in a state of struggle: for the audience, for taste, for the interest of the media, officials, politicians”.²⁴

In recent decades, the festival formulas and methods of promotion have changed, and the pressure of online presence and social networking has become increasingly stronger. Attempts at comprehensive archiving of Polish music on the Internet, carried out by both cultural institutions and non-governmental organisations, has followed suit.²⁵

The celebration of the centenary of independence in 2018 brought many projects summarising Polish works of the last century. One of them was the project of Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne (PWM),²⁶ 100 for 100. *Musical decades of freedom*, which focused

22 See Monika Pasiecznik: *Pokolenie cyfrowe*, in: *Glissando* 42 (2022), pp. 45–48.

23 “Mówiąc o wymiarze ekonomicznym, bardzo dobrze przebijają się w strukturach demokratycznych wszystkie rzeczy, których istotę da się efektownie zwerbalizować.” Natalia Szwab: *Surkonwencjonalizm Pawła Szymańskiego. Idee i muzyka*, Kraków 2020, pp. 313f. If not otherwise stated, all translations are by the present writer.

24 “Zmieniają się pojęcia i słowa. I wszystko to przekłada się na program, koncepcję, oprawę, promocję koncertów, na to, co i jak się prezentuje. [...] Nie można zapominać, że żyjemy w Polsce [...] i trzeba do festiwalu zapraszać, przekonywać, zdobywać publiczność. Jesteśmy ciągle w stanie jakiejś walki: o audytorium, o gust, o zainteresowanie mediów, urzędników, polityków”. Michał Mendyk/Jan Topolski: *Wywiad z Tadeuszem Wieleckim*, in: *Glissando* 8 (2006), pp. 118–121, here p. 121.

25 See <http://musicfrompoland.eu/kompozytorzy-70-80> (last direct access 5 October 2022). The website being under reconstruction, it may be accessed since only via Internet Archive Wayback Machine, see <https://web.archive.org>.

26 PWM Edition (Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne) was established in 1945 and specialises in publishing scores and books about classical music, jazz, and now, more frequently, film music. In the years 1946 to 2001 and then again from 2016, it functioned as a national cultural institution.

on the presentation of selected works, each of which represented one year of the last century.²⁷ Another such commemoration was the creation of a bilingual Map of Polish Composers.

On the website of the project powered by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the leading institution promoting Polish music abroad, we can read:

"Map of Polish Composers is the most comprehensive resource ever dedicated to Polish music[,] giving users instant access to biographies, extracts from recordings and a carefully charted map providing a rich global cultural context for every artist highlighting their influences and inspirations."²⁸

The website consists of a timeline, individual names as well as terms and groups. The map, which allows the user to discover networks between composers, reveals the advantages but also the risks inherent in this type of project. Composers are placed in a constellation of numerous concepts ("-isms", such as "serialism", "aleatorism", "sonorism", "constructivism", "repetitivism", "folkloricism") that position them in relation to each other, i.e. closer to some and at a greater distance from others. Terms such as "modernist", "postmodernist-experimentalist" and "postmodernist-traditionalist" also appear on the map, indicating the proximity of each composer to these approaches. Apart from the complex discussion on the transformations of modernism and its legacies,²⁹ the aforementioned terms testify to a tendency towards binary divisions ("modernist"/"postmodernist") on the one hand and internal differentiation ("postmodernist-traditionalist"/"postmodernist-experimentalist") on the other. The result seems somewhat confusing as the terms that were supposed to be opposed to each other turn out to be closely related.³⁰

More diversified "mind maps" characterising individual composers had appeared a few years earlier in a series of articles dedicated to composers born in the 1970s and 1980s

27 See [PWM Edition]: *Sto na sto*, [no date], online under: <http://stonasto.pl/>.

28 [Anon.]: *About*, [no date] online under: <https://mapofcomposers.pl/en/about-page>. Among the authors of the texts were: Adriana Borowska, Marta Dziewanowska-Pachowska, Filip Lech, Monika Pasiecznik, Krzysztof Stefański, Jan Topolski, and Joanna Zabłocka. Supervision was provided by Iwona Lindstedt.

29 See *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, ed. by Björn Heile and Charles Wilson, London/New York 2019.

30 This can be seen in the similar definitions of "modernist" ("A composer who aims to create new means of expression, while nonetheless retaining [...] an essential part of musical achievements from the past") and "postmodernist-experimentalist" ("A composer who takes a certain distance to the Modernist paradigm, who utilizes and develops strictly avant-garde means while, at the same time, utilizing elements typical of the music of very different eras, traditions and cultural formations"), <https://mapofcomposers.pl/en/terminy/terms/orientacje-estetyczne/modernist> and <https://mapofcomposers.pl/en/terminy/terms/orientacje-estetyczne/postmodernist-experimentalist>, respectively.

published first in the magazine *meakultura.pl* (2013) and then on the website *Music from Poland* (2014) created by the Meakultura Foundation. These mind maps synthesise the concepts drawn mainly from the declarations of the artists themselves and the insights of the music critics and musicologists who authored the articles. The maps thus became more individual but at the same time less systematic and more unique than their equivalents on the *Map of Polish Composers*. The concepts, formulated both with single words and whole phrases, often come from different contexts (such as the creative process, artistic current, aesthetics, reception, et cetera) and are rarely shared by more than one composer.

Both the *Map of Polish Composers* and *Music from Poland* show how composers' identities are represented in the public space.

In the context of the multidimensional mapping of composers by musicologists or critics, it seems all the more significant that the composers themselves still strive for verbal labels that will present their individual idioms and make them recognisable. The following case studies illustrate how such attempts are made and what results they produce. Most often, they involve the search for a single synthetic formula (sometimes in the form of a neologism) that will be associated with the composer and become, as it were, his or her idiomatic label.

3. Idioms – labels 3.1 Marcin Stańczyk's acousmatic instrumental music Marcin Stańczyk's (*1977) location on the *Map of Polish Composers* is marked by multiple coordinates and described by terms such as "sound art", "multimedia", "concept music", "expanded performance techniques", "spectralism", "microtonality", "spatiality", "performativity", et cetera.³¹ The composer is also included in the modernist current.³²

The mind map that characterises Marcin Stańczyk on the *Music from Poland* website is equally rich. It includes "total performance", a category that can be associated with performativity or expanded performance techniques, and "search for timbre", which is a characteristic of sound art or spectralism. The author, Anna Domańska, points to the intermediality of Stańczyk's works rather than multimedia ("from afterimages to after-sounds") and to the suspension between aesthetic oppositions, which makes some of the terms ambiguous ("simplicity of complexity", "between intuition and intellect", "between narrative and music of the moment").³³

31 [Anon.]: Marcin Stańczyk, [no date], online under: <https://mapofcomposers.pl/en/composers/stanczyk-marcin/>.

32 Anna Wójcikowska also points out that Stańczyk belongs to the modernist trend. It is proved by, inter alia, elements of futurism and instrumental theatre. Anna Wójcikowska: *Aktualność awangardy. Tendencje modernistyczne w twórczości Marcina Stańczyka i Artura Zagajewskiego*, Łódź 2019.

33 <http://musicfrompoland.eu/artykul/marcin-stanczyk-ro/3> [archive]. First print: Anna Domańska:



ILLUSTRATION 1 Marcin Stańczyk's location on the Map of Polish Composers



ILLUSTRATION 2 Marcin Stańczyk's mind map on the Music from Poland website

The large number of terms applied to Stańczyk's work situate it within a wide field, which proves its "polyphonic" nature and openness to a multitude of interpretations. Yet the composer himself created the idiomatic concept of "acousmatic instrumental music", which is strongly promoted on his latest monographic CD released by PWM Edition. Using this concept, Stańczyk emphasises the paradox of invisible sound sources interacting with live music. Jan Topolski states in the CD booklet:

"Stańczyk, like other most intriguing contemporary composers, works with perception itself. He is interested not only in the material, its penetration, extension and bending, but also in our ways of listening, in how we form mental maps and spaces of music performed live rather than played back in the form of multi-channel sound projection using dozens of speakers."³⁴

Wizytówka Marcina Stańczyka, in: *meakultura*, 21 November 2013, online under: <https://meakultura.pl/artykul/wizytowka-marcina-stanczyka-757/>.

34 Jan Topolski: What do we see when we are listening?, in: Marcin Stańczyk: *Acousmatic Music* [CD booklet], ANA 015, Anaklasis 2021, pp. 5–12, here p. 10.

The composer himself says:

“I think the most important thing is to understand what the piece is about. It is not always about sounds, and in my case it is never about sounds. These sounds exist as a material, I work in them, but they are not the most important.”³⁵

As Topolski writes, there is a harmonious marriage between the concrete and the symbolic, the visible and the audible. Various solutions serve this purpose in Stańczyk’s works. For example, in *Blind Walk* (2015), the audience wears blindfolds, and the instrumentalists move around the space, using, among others, sheets of cardboard, dry leaves or foil to generate sounds and create a specific sonic aura. In *Sursounds* (2018), “a half-real, half-virtual orchestra”³⁶ is created using nine mobile musicians and twelve speakers broadcasting the transformed versions of the instrumental parts.

Noteworthy is Stańczyk’s attempt to differentiate himself from his peers while at the same time emphasising his artistic genealogy. His lineage stems from Helmut Lachenmann’s “concrete instrumental music” and from Pierre Schaeffer’s “*musique concrète*”, later called “*musique acousmatique*”. From *musique acousmatique* comes Stańczyk’s passion for field recording, such as sounds of the sea or sounds from cornfields. Stańczyk explains: “I try to look for musical structures in the recordings. They themselves are a piece of music for me. I am interested in their sound, timbre [...]. Besides, the emotions contained in them inspire me to write music.”³⁷ In this way, Stańczyk creates instrumental music inspired by field recordings, although he does not incorporate them directly into his works.

The second recognisable feature of his music, emphasised by Stańczyk himself, is related to the paintings of Władysław Strzemiński (1893–1952). The Polish painter developed the theory of afterimages, an optical phenomenon in which a visual impression continues to appear vividly on the retina after the external stimulus that created the impression is no longer operative, such as visual phenomena that appear after exposure to a light source such as the sun. In analogy to this phenomenon, Stańczyk describes “aftersounds”, which he coined, as

35 “Myślę, że najważniejsze jest, by zrozumieć, o co chodzi w utworze. Nie zawsze bowiem chodzi o dźwięki, u mnie zresztą o dźwięki nie chodzi nigdy. Te dźwięki istnieją, jako tworzywo, pracuję w nich, ale nie one są najważniejsze.” Agnieszka Lewandowska-Kąkol: *Dźwięki, szepty, zgrzyty. Wywiady z kompozytorami*, Warszawa 2012, p. 233.

36 Topolski: *What do we see*, p. 7.

37 “Staram się w nagraniach szukać struktur muzycznych. Już same one są bowiem dla mnie utworem muzycznym. Interesuje mnie ich brzmienie, barwa [...]. Poza tym emocje w nich zawarte są dla mnie inspiracją do pisanie muzyki.” Lewandowska-Kąkol: *Dźwięki, szepty, zgrzyty*, p. 230.

“something that remains after the sound. They can be understood in two aspects: acoustic – when we hear a decay after the sound, mechanical hum, it is known that every action with a bow begins and ends with some scratch, noise, so these are sounds as if on the fringes of this main sound, and psychological – music gives an impulse that is reflected in the psyche, that is, by means of short acoustic signals it provokes the recipient’s psychological impressions.”³⁸

In *Mystery of Chopin* (2010), created together with Łukasz Leszczyński on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the composer’s birth, Stańczyk makes a distant reference to Chopin’s *Preludes* op. 28 using the organ pedals: by disengaging the pedal register of the organ, the player uses the pedals only for the percussive effect, imitating the rhythms of selected passages from the preludes on the pedals.

In Marcin Stańczyk’s work, the idea of “aftersounds” not only reveals his interest in the marginalised aspects of sound, but also extends to the visual sphere.

“Afterimages in my music take many forms. Sometimes they are reflections of musical events, other times they anticipate them. They often have their visual expression, related to the theatrical performance of a musical piece, performers’ gestures or visuality in general.”³⁹

In *Three Afterimages* for double bass (2008–2010), the overtones serve as reflections of sounds, and the score of the work includes Strzemiński’s painting *Afterimage of light. Landscape* from 1948. The painting served as a source of inspiration for the composer and may also inspire the performers, but the audience does not see it.

The composer shares this fascination with Strzemiński’s paintings with his teacher, Zygmunt Krauze. Drawing on Strzemiński’s idea of “unism” – uniform abstract composition in painting –, Krauze created compositions that could be associated with minimalism.⁴⁰ Similarly, in Stańczyk’s case, the idea of aftersounds could be tied to currents such as microtonality and spectralism. Thus, both composers found more individual names for phenomena that could otherwise be associated with well-known “isms”.

Stańczyk emphasises that he got to know Strzemiński’s paintings thanks to Krauze; however, he ascribes to himself the idea of aftersounds and emphasises its original

38 “[...] coś, co pozostaje po dźwięku. Można je pojmować w dwóch aspektach: akustycznym – kiedy po dźwięku słyszymy wybrzmienie, przydźwięk mechaniczny, wiadomo, że każda akcja ze smyczkiem rozpoczyna się i kończy jakimś zgrzytem, szumem, a więc są to dźwięki jakby na obrzeżach tego głównego dźwięku, i psychologicznym – muzyka daje impuls, który odbija się w psychice, czyli za pomocą krótkich sygnałów akustycznych prowokuje się u odbiorcy wrażenia psychiczne.” Ibid., pp. 237f.

39 “Powidoki w mojej muzyce przybierają różne formy. Raz są odbiciami, refleksami muzycznych zdarzeń, innym razem je antycypują. Często mają swój wizualny wyraz, związany z teatralizacją wykonania utworu muzycznego, gestami wykonawców lub wizualnością w ogóle.” Filip Lech: Stańczyk. Powidoki w mojej muzyce przybierają różne formy, 13 January 2017, online under: <https://culture.pl/pl/artykul/stanczyk-powidoki-w-mojey-muzyce-przybieraja-rozne-formy-wywiad>.

40 Joanna Miklaszewska: *Minimalizm w muzyce polskiej*, Kraków 2003.

character: “I haven’t heard anyone else talking about it. That is why I am attracted to it and I want to develop it.”⁴¹

Krauze himself acknowledges this: “Of course, his current inspirations with Strzemiński’s *Afterimages* have nothing to do with my musical unism.”⁴² These words can be interpreted as a gesture of recognition for his former student, an affirmation of his independence and self-determination. On the other hand, Krauze clearly wants to preserve unism as his intellectual property; he does not give up competing or asserting his dominance.

The idea of acousmatic instrumental music includes many elements, such as microtonality, intermediality, extended instrumental techniques or instrumental theatre. While Stańczyk’s kinship with Strzemiński emphasises his relationship with Krauze, Stańczyk also takes care to point out how he uses Strzemiński’s influence in his own individual way.

3.2 Aleksander Nowak’s life-writing Aleksander Nowak’s (*1979) music has a modest representation on the map because it is associated with relatively few terms. He is considered to be a “postmodernist-experimentalist”, representing styles and techniques such as polystylism and multimedia.⁴³

Aleksander Nowak’s mind map on the Music from Poland website includes terms for musical trends such as “postmodernism”, “the idiom of ‘popular’ music” and “minimalism”. It also refers to more general notions such as “emotions in music”, “communication”, “observation of reality”, “diversity of inspiration and creative ideas”, “self-irony and a sense of humour”.⁴⁴

However, a unique element of the map constructed by Agnieszka Nowok is “life-writing”, the idiomatic term very often associated with Nowak’s works⁴⁵ that refers to the personal and autobiographical character of his compositions. The term was introduced by the eminent Polish music critic Andrzej Chłopecki, who described life-writing as

41 “Nie słyszałem, żeby ktoś inny o tym mówił. Dlatego mnie to pociąga i chcę ją rozwijać.” Lewandowska-Kąkol: *Dźwięki, szepty, zgrzyty*, p. 238.

42 “Oczywiście jego obecne inspiracje Powidokami Strzemińskiego nie mają nic wspólnego z moim unizmem muzycznym.” Michał Mendyk/Zygmunt Krauze: *Wywiad o niczym*, Kraków 2021, p. 122.

43 [Anon.]: Aleksander Nowak, [no date], online under: <https://mapofcomposers.pl/kompozytorzy/nowak-aleksander>.

44 <http://musicfrompoland.eu/artykul/aleksander-nowak-7/3> [archive]. First print: Agnieszka Nowok: *Wizytówka Aleksandra Nowaka*, in: *meakultura*, 27 November 2013, online under: <https://meakultura.pl/artykul/wizytowka-aleksandra-nowaka-771/>

45 See e.g. Paulina Zgliniecka: “Life-writing” in Aleksander Nowak’s Operas. *Sudden Rain and Space Opera*, in: *Kwartalnik Młodych Muzykologów* UJ 38/3 (2018), pp. 79–103.



ILLUSTRATION 3 Aleksander Nowak’s location on the Map of Polish Composers

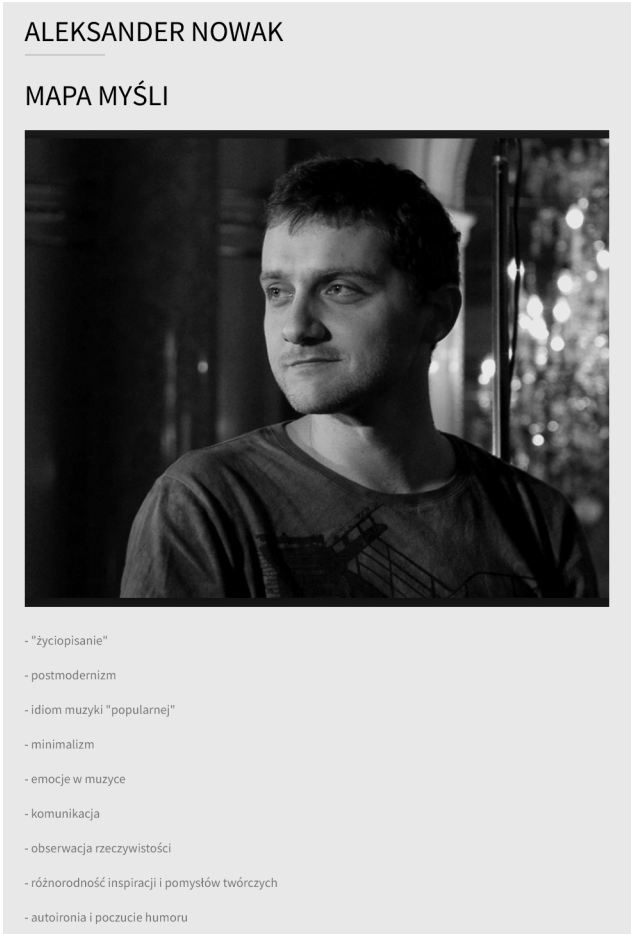


ILLUSTRATION 4 Aleksander Nowak’s mind map on the Music from Poland website

“narrative gesticulation, anecdotal compositional persuasion strategy”,⁴⁶ but in fact it has a longer history. This neologism was used for the first time several decades earlier by a literary critic, Henryk Bereza, in the context of the poems of Edward Stachura (1937–

46 “I ta narracyjna gestykulacja, anegdotyczna strategia perswazji kompozytorskiej”. Andrzej Chłopecki: Muzyka 2.1. Aleksander Nowak, in: Dwutygodnik 30 (2010), www.dwutygodnik.com/artukul/1116-muzyka-21-aleksander-nowak.html.

1979),⁴⁷ a rebellious poet and idol of youth subcultures, to underline the close connection between his life and artistic output.

In the case of Aleksander Nowak, life-writing implies both inspirations and creative method.⁴⁸ It is reflected in the titles, programme notes, musical quotations – including the allusions to popular music – and self-quotations. The composer states:

“While writing a piece, I am in the circle of emotions associated with these quotes. They come from songs, pieces or styles that were important to me at some point in my life. And when I refer to my memories, the writing process becomes more intense. I hope that since this is the case at the stage of creation, then also at the stage of reception it will somehow find its reflection, even though the listener does not have the key identifying all the quotes.”⁴⁹

Nowak also stresses that the focus on personal experiences, “self-concentration”, allowed him to overcome his youthful creative crisis.⁵⁰ His instrumental works are often accompanied by programme notes that are brief and aphoristic but also ambiguous and metaphorical. In his commentaries to the works, the composer introduces various characters from his own life, including Grandma Wanda in *Last Days of Wanda B.* (2006), his grandfather in *Dziennik wypełniony w połowie* [Half-filled Diary] (2013), a girl he met by chance in *Ciemnowłosa dziewczyna w czarnym sportowym samochodzie* [Dark-haired Girl in a Black Sports Car] (2009) or a classmate in *Król Kosmosu znika. Koncert na orkiestrę, nici i fortepian* [King of the Cosmos Disappears. Concerto for orchestra, threads and piano] (2009). As Magdalena Stochniol writes:

“Uncovering part of his world, Nowak draws the listener into the realm of his personal experiences. Ostensibly forgoing grand themes, he pursues intimate, rather nostalgic, narratives, which the listener is able to read on the emotional level, where the composer seeks an understanding with his audience.”

Consequently, “words constitute an independent layer of a work and fire the composer’s imagination just as strongly as the world of sounds.”⁵¹ Since 2020, the composer’s life-

47 Henryk Bereza: *Życiopisanie*, in: Edward Stachura: *Poezja i proza*, Vol. 5, ed. by Henryk Bereza and Krzysztof Rutkowski, Warszawa 1984, pp. 445–465.

48 Nowok: *Wizytówka Aleksandra Nowaka*.

49 “Pisząc utwór, znajduję się w kręgu emocji, z którymi się te cytaty wiążą. Pochodzą z piosenek, utworów czy stylów, które w pewnym momencie życia były dla mnie istotne. A kiedy odwołuję się do wspomnień, proces pisania staje się intensywniejszy. Mam nadzieję, że skoro tak jest na etapie tworzenia, to również na etapie odbioru w jakiś sposób znajdzie to swe odbicie, mimo że słuchacz nie ma klucza identyfikującego wszystkie cytaty.” Marcin Trzęsiok: *Rozmowa z Aleksandrem Nowakiem*, in: *Kwarta. Magazyn o polskiej muzyce współczesnej* 1/16 (2011), pp. 1–4, here p. 2.

50 See Nowok: *Wizytówka Aleksandra Nowaka*.

51 Magdalena Stochniol: *In Search of a Meaning to the World. The Operas of Aleksander Nowak*, in: *Interdisciplinary Studies in Musicology* 16 (2016), pp. 67–94, here p. 68.

writing has manifested itself more thanks to his personal blog,⁵² which he names *log*, with concise entries such as “Edge”, “Mists”, “Time”, “Heart rate”, “Chord”, “Change”, “Transgression”, et cetera. The entries include childhood memories, philosophically coloured reflections, and above all, records of experiences and reflections on works in progress. *Log* is written in Polish and English, and the name itself refers to a ship’s log. In the first entry, available only in Polish, the composer mentions his cruises on sailing yachts and points out that for him the sea (and sailing) is an exceptionally “capacious and informative metaphor for life”⁵³ that at the same time offers its own rhythm, pulse and melodies.

Nowak’s fascination with the narrative aspect of music and musical storytelling led to collaborations with writers Georgi Gospodinov, Szczepan Twardoch and Polish Nobel Prize Winner Olga Tokarczuk, who provided libretti to be set to music. The works created in cooperation with them refer to Baroque and Classical operas both in the subtitles of the pieces (*dramma per musica*, *melodrama aeterna*, *dramma giocoso*, et cetera) and in terms of stylistic conventions. According to Dorota Kosińska, Nowak is able to reveal the operatic potential hidden in contemporary literature. Although some cooperation proposals were initially rejected (as was the case with *Drach*), Nowak was able to convince these writers to collaborate in this genre, even if some of them were sceptical of it.⁵⁴ The librettos are often the result of long negotiations and differ significantly from the literary sources that inspired them.

Nowak mentions that what captured him about Gospodinov’s writing was “the portrayal of ordinary, everyday life and its dramas in an unpretentious way, without clear-cut conclusions or morals, and the delicate blend of irony and sadness”⁵⁵ as well as multi-dimensional narrative composed of fragmented, scattered threads. In the case of *Space Opera* (2015), the composer and writer collaborated to create a libretto set in three temporal planes presenting three small stories told in parallel. As Maria Majewska writes:

“Each of them is independent but they complete each other. It is difficult to settle which should be given priority. There are Adam and Eve, the first human couple, who are to spend 500 days in the space, closed in a cramped capsule. [...] Another story is the animals’ tragedy; they are sacrificed in the name of fulfilling people’s dreams to conquer the universe. [...] The third level is a reality show set, a space ‘Big Brother’, a kind of a theatre in theatre.”⁵⁶

52 Aleksander Nowak: *Log*, [various dates], online under: www.aleknowak.com/log.

53 “[...] pojemną i pouczającą metaforą życia”. Aleksander Nowak: 1. *Syrena*, in: id.: *Log*, 3 May 2020, online under: www.aleknowak.com/log/v/1-syrena.

54 Dorota Kosińska: *Drach Sempiternal Seed*, in: Aleksander Nowak/Szczepan Twardoch: *Drach. Dramma per musica* [CD booklet], ANA 012, Anaklasis 2020, pp. 4–10, here p. 6.

55 Stochniol: *In Search of a Meaning*, p. 73.

56 Maria Majewska: *Little Stories Between Science and Fiction*, in: *Space Opera* [programme book], Poznań 2015, pp. 27f.

In the opera *Ahat il̩* – sister of gods (2017/18), based on the novel by Olga Tokarczuk, *Anna In w grobowcach świata* [Anna In in the Tombs of the World], the story was simplified due to the fact that the pace of sung text is naturally slower than spoken text, the character hierarchy has been changed, different languages (mostly ancient) were assigned to the characters, and the story was theatricalised.⁵⁷

In his cooperation with Szczepan Twardoch, their shared Silesian identity plays an important role. For example, in *Drach*, Nowak even reaches for the Silesian dialect:

“The memory of a place, ethnic and cultural group is encoded in the sound of the language; [...] Silesian has its own very individual character, which is musically risky because it is often interpreted as funny. But that was definitely not what *Drach* was about. It was about treating this language as an autonomous one, functioning in its own right, having a distinct individuality, making it possible to talk about serious things.”⁵⁸

Significantly the concept of life-writing in Nowak's work marginalises questions of style or artistic genealogy that are so important to Marcin Stańczyk. Life-writing inspires crossover, use of quotes and intermediality. At the same time, it directs attention to the narrative aspects of music and emphasises local identity, roots, memory and myth. Nowak's relentless commentary on the creative process in his public Log enables him to link art to his everyday life and show that the two are inextricably intertwined.

3.3 Jagoda Szmytka's social composing Composer Jagoda Szmytka employs a very different strategy, exploring the topics of communication, virtual reality, identity and body.⁵⁹ Szmytka is also the only one of the composers discussed here to be counted among the “digital natives”; one could even say that she pioneered a fully digital approach to music among Polish composers. The two previously mentioned composers are intensively promoted by PWM Edition, and their music is published on CDs. Szmytka, on the other hand, presents her work mainly in live multimedia performances. She is repre-

57 See Kozińska: *Drach Sempiternal Seed*, p. 6, and Marcin Gmys: *Prawych umysłów złączenie. O operze Ahat il̩ – siostra bogów Aleksandra Nowaka i Olgi Tokarczuk*, in: *Antagonizmy kontrolowane. Rozmowy i eseje o muzyce współczesnej*, Kraków 2018, pp. 28–41, here p. 34.

58 “W brzmieniu języka zakodowana jest pamięć miejsca, grupy etnicznej, kulturowej; [...] śląski ma swój bardzo indywidualny charakter, który muzycznie jest ryzykowny, ponieważ często bywa interpretowany jako śmieszny. W ‘Drachu’ jednak zdecydowanie nie o to chodziło. Chodziło o potraktowanie tego języka jako autonomicznego, funkcjonującego na własnych prawach, mającego wyrazistą indywidualność, pozwalającego mówić o rzeczach poważnych.” Olga Łozińska/Aleksander Nowak: *W brzmieniu języka zakodowana jest pamięć miejsca*, in: *e-teatr.pl*, 9 November 2020, online under: <https://e-teatr.pl/aleksander-nowak-w-brzmieniu-jezyka-zakodowana-jest-pamiec-miejsca-5414>.

59 Barbara Bogunia: *Wizytówka Jagody Szmytki*, in: *meakultura*, 9 December 2013, online under: <http://meakultura.pl/artukul/wizytowka-jagody-szmytki-798>; reprint on the Music from Poland website: <http://musicfrompoland.eu/artukul/jagoda-szmytka-11/2> [archive].

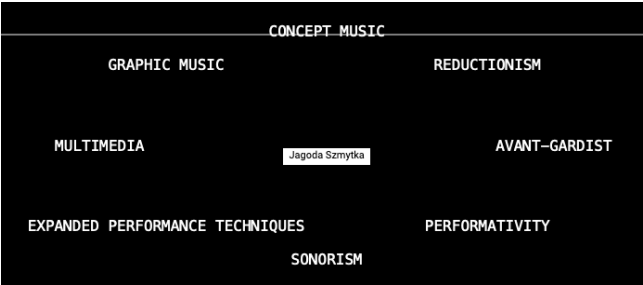


ILLUSTRATION 5 Jagoda Szmytka’s location on the Map of Polish Composers



ILLUSTRATION 6 Jagoda Szmytka’s mind map on the Music from Poland website

sented on the Map of Polish Composers with the terms “concept music”, “reductionism”, “avant-gardist”, “performativity”, “sonorism”, “expanded performance techniques”, “multimedia”, and “graphic music”.⁶⁰

Jagoda Szmytka’s mind map on the Music from Poland website includes concepts such as body, touch, perception, aestheticisation of everyday life, authenticity, real versus virtual reality, identity, communication, gesture, symbol, anti-academicism, staging and context. The author, Barbara Bogunia, uses general cultural concepts rather than sharply defined artistic currents to situate Szmytka in the musical landscape.⁶¹

Bogunia’s approach is apt for characterising the composer’s versatile artistic profile. As Bogunia writes:

“The term ‘composer’ is imprecise in her case, as the artist, having extensive humanistic education, combines visual, auditory and kinetic media in her activities in order to create works of art that appeal to a new type of integrated perception of the recipient, and also enable real communication between performers themselves and the audience.”⁶²

The Zentrum für Musik und Medien Karlsruhe speaks of her self-creation and her own involvement as a performer:

“Jagoda Szmytka herself is present at the ‘stage of life’ as an ‘art figure’. Her creation process and performance practice is inseparable from her life – she makes a constant play between ‘living on the stage’ and ‘staging her life’ integrating daily life situations into her performances or appearing as different avatars ‘on and off the stage’.”⁶³

Szmytka’s music incorporates intermediality, the fluidity of transformation, translation and decontextualisation, which are important manifestations of the digital age.⁶⁴ She also counts herself among the composer-performers, often taking to the stage and going beyond the usual competences associated with composition. Pasiecznik considers this

60 [Anon.]: Jagoda Szmytka, [no date], online under: <https://mapofcomposers.pl/en/composers/szmytka-jagoda>.

61 <http://musicfrompoland.eu/artykul/jagoda-szmytka-11/3> [archive].

62 “Określenie ‘kompozytorka’ jest w jej przypadku o tyle nieprecyzyjne, że posiadająca rozległe wykształcenie humanistyczne artystka w swej działalności łączy media wizualne, słuchowe i kinetyczne w celu stworzenia dzieł sztuki przemawiających do nowego typu, zintegrowanej percepcji odbiorcy, a także umożliwiających prawdziwą komunikację między samymi wykonawcami oraz publicznością.” Bogunia: Wizytówka Jagody Szmytka.

63 “Jagoda Szmytka ist auf der ‘Bühne des Lebens’ selbst als ‘Kunstfigur’ präsent. Ihr Schaffensprozess und ihre Aufführungspraxis sind untrennbar mit ihrem Leben verbunden – sie spielt ständig zwischen ‘auf der Bühne leben’ und ‘ihr Leben inszenieren’, indem sie Alltagssituationen in ihre Performances integriert oder als verschiedene Avatare ‘auf und abseits der Bühne’ auftritt.” Zentrum für Kunst und Medien Karlsruhe (ZKM): Jagoda Szmytka. *Feminale der Musik*, [2020], online under: <https://zkm.de/de/jagoda-szmytka>. English translation: <https://zkm.de/en/jagoda-szmytka>.

64 See Rutherford-Johnson: *Music after the Fall*, p. 88.

model to be typical of the digital generation in Poland,⁶⁵ and Rutherford-Johnson reminds us that the role of the composer-performer is inextricably linked to the mobility of artists and challenges the existing economic model. Instead of “property rights and commodifiable works”, we get a model “based on performance, presence, and experience”.⁶⁶ In Szmytka’s case, performativity is accompanied by an integration of art and life, which Bogunia calls the “aestheticisation of everyday life”.

Both these aspects – the transmediality and the integration of art with life – are reflected in Szmytka’s original concepts. She uses the term “contextual music” in order to describe a complex system of references between sound, words and images as well as overloaded multi-sensory perception.⁶⁷ In her work, she uses the specificity of the media and their convergence. Various formats (film, the Internet, performance and the literary arts) collide with each other and create transmedial storytelling, a phenomenon known from pop music.⁶⁸ She also considers her activity to be “social composing”: a way of creating music with people, for people, about people.⁶⁹ For this purpose, she uses not only traditional concert halls but also urban space, sites specifically linked to certain works and social media. The roles of the composer, performer and listener intertwine in her works. Her work often addresses fluid, nomadic identities in the era of social media and virtual reality and traditional binary splits (such as the physical and the virtual, the real and the illusory, the natural and the artificial, the off-stage and on-stage) become blurred.⁷⁰ As Bogunia observes, identity in Szmytka’s work is attributed not only to the composer and performer but also to the instrument.⁷¹ In particular, the identity of an instrument may be called into question if it is disassembled, deformed or used in an unusual way. Szmytka’s works on fluid identities include: *sky-me, type-me* (2011), *for hand and voices* (2013), *gameboy* (2014), *limbo lander* (2014) and *empty sounds* (2014).

“Social composing” manifests itself in the fact that social media often serve both as a topic and a medium in her compositions. Szmytka is also involved in community projects and compositions that require group work. In *Pores open wide shut* (2013), she

65 See Pasiecznik: *Pokolenie cyfrowe*, p. 48.

66 Rutherford-Johnson: *Music after the Fall*, p. 138.

67 Jagoda Szmytka: Video wykład. *Muzyka kontekstualna*, in: *meakultura*, 3 November 2016, online under: <http://meakultura.pl/artykul/video-wyklad-muzyka-kontekstualna-1660>.

68 Weronika Nowak analyses *Lost Play* in this respect. Weronika Nowak: “Social Composing” and “Contextual Music”. *Transmedial Relations Through New Media in Jagoda Szmytka’s Lost Play*, in: *Youtube and Music. Online Culture and Everyday Life*, ed. by Holly Rogers, Joanna Freitas and João Francisco Porfirio, New York 2023, pp. 90–107.

69 Jagoda Szmytka: Video wykład. *Spółecznościowe komponowanie*, in: *meakultura*, 29 October 2016, online under: <http://meakultura.pl/artykul/video-wyklad-spolecznosciowe-komponowanie-1659>.

70 Nowak: “Social Composing” and “Contextual Music”, p. 92.

71 <http://musicfrompoland.eu/artykul/jagoda-szmytka-11/2> [archive].

explores a border between group members who are open to collaboration through their discussion and evaluation of the results of joint work. According to Dirk Wieschollek, *DIY OR DIE* (2017) also strikes a balance between isolation caused by media, a personal perspective, and the utopia of the collective that accompanies getting rid of the ego.⁷²

Like Stańczyk, Szmytka also works with perception and takes into account numerous meanings projected by the audience. Szmytka thematises the fluidity of contemporary identity, which is why she achieves integrity of artistic personality here not so much by a specific identity (as in the case of Aleksander Nowak) but by the totality of the creative process.

Conclusion The artists mentioned above represent very different artistic profiles and aesthetics. They react differently to the world around them and to the same phenomena, such as mediatisation or the interpenetration of private and public spheres. Despite these differences, each of them shows a strong tendency to self-define and shape individual concepts that will serve as their hallmark.

Each of them also aims at integrating a way of life, discourse and music. This is true even within those attitudes that deliberately emphasise the fluidity of identity. In the case of all three composers, their chosen verbal labels proved successful and became established in music criticism and the publishing market as well as in musicological research. The interest in their music is matched by an interest in their personalities and their oft-quoted statements. The answer to the question of who needs labels (the composers? the marketplace? the listeners?) is certainly complex. Idiomatic labels are created or adopted by composers but are strengthened by the publishing market and made familiar by the audience.

Comparing the structured, analytical Map of Polish composers and the more individualised mind map with idiomatic concepts on the Music from Poland website leads to the conclusion that the main advantages of idiomatic labels are their synthetic nature and the abandonment of binary oppositions. In the context of the music market, these labels prove to be simple and convenient; furthermore, they are often repeated and spread rapidly. At the same time, they direct attention to certain aspects of creativity while marginalising others. In particular, due to their uniqueness, they make it more difficult to map connections between artists.

In light of the case studies traced above, however, the opposition between the polyphonic and idiomatic self seems less clear and obvious. The polyphonic personality is best represented through a network of interdependencies between the composers while

72 Dirk Wieschollek: Ego-Shooter mit Achillesferse. Eine neue (weibliche) Komponistengeneration am ECLAT – Festival Neue Musik Stuttgart, in: *Dissonance* 138 (2017), pp. 13–18, here pp. 14 f.

the idiomatic self is best expressed through individual labels. And yet, despite their idiomatic nature, the individual labels are also intrinsically complex. They indicate artistic genealogies that composers want to emphasise (“acousmatic instrumental music”), they refer to other media (“contextual music”) or include social dimension and collaboration (“social composing”). In terms of originality, the labels often adapt and recycle already existing categories even if they are arranged in individual configurations.

In this sense, even the labels are polyphonic. In choosing and crafting their labels, the composers skilfully bring together various phenomena as if through a lens, and their search to describe themselves and their music is also a kind of creative work on concepts, an indispensable part of artistic work.

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MUSICKING COLLECTIVE

Codierungen kollektiver Identität in der
zeitgenössischen Musikpraxis der Schweiz
und ihrer Nachbarländer • Herausgegeben von
Leo Dick, Noémie Favennec und Katelyn Rose King
unter redaktioneller Mitarbeit von Daniel Allenbach



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