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Introduction

This doctoral dissertation focuses on the chamber music of Polish composers, with particular emphasis on the oeuvre of Grażyna Bacewicz, one of the most distinguished figures in Polish musical history. Through a comprehensive review of the literature and in-depth engagement with Polish musical culture, the research aims not only to develop the author's academic and artistic competence, but also to contribute to the promotion of Polish chamber music in China and to foster long-term artistic and cultural exchange between the two countries.

Polish music remains only marginally represented in the curricula of Chinese conservatories and music institutions. Awareness of Polish musical culture in China is still limited, with Frédéric Chopin continuing to serve as the main symbol of Polish musical identity. However, with the intensification of Sino-Polish cultural exchange, public interest in Polish classical music is gradually increasing, accompanied by a growing demand for a more diversified repertoire. Within this context, the music of Grażyna Bacewicz—one of the most important female composers of the 20th century—has the potential to become a valuable vehicle for the dissemination of Polish musical heritage.

The relatively limited recognition of Bacewicz's compositions in Chinese music education is largely due to cultural and pedagogical differences. Nevertheless, increasing access to information, academic exchange programmes, and growing interest in her distinctive compositional language have led to a rising awareness of her music among students at Chinese conservatories.

Through an analytical study of selected chamber works by Bacewicz, this dissertation highlights the most representative features of her neoclassical idiom. The stylistic richness and genre diversity of these works serve as a point of entry into broader developments in twentieth-century Polish music. The author sincerely hopes that the present study will not only contribute to current research in music

historiography, but also inspire further reflection on the role of women composers and the modernist traditions of Central and Eastern Europe, while offering a methodological foundation for future in-depth analyses of Bacewicz's chamber output.

Based on the need to comprehensively understand the current state of research on Grażyna Bacewicz's chamber music works, this literature review is not limited to Bacewicz's compositions. Rather, it summarises and analyses existing scholarly works on related composers at home and abroad using resources from the National Library of Warsaw, the Oxford University Library, the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (including CNKI, VIP, Zhixing Search, SCIE & SSCI databases, SpringerLink and JSTOR archives). This overview is divided into three main dimensions: the general development of Polish music in the 20th century, the compositional style of Grażyna Bacewicz, and detailed analyses of her specific works.

A key contribution to the field has been made by the work of Małgorzata Gąsiorowska[1], Adrian Thomas[2], and Judith Rosen[3]. Gąsiorowska's monograph *Bacewicz* (1999) combines biographical narrative with an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the composer's works and their socio-political context. Adrian Thomas, in his books *Grażyna Bacewicz: Chamber and Orchestral Music* (1985) and *Polish Music since Szymanowski* (2005), offers a systematic periodisation of Bacewicz's stylistic evolution, with particular attention to her neoclassical phase and the period of Socialist Realism. These studies situate her string quartets and concertos within the broader current of European music. The English-language monograph by Judith Rosen, *Grażyna Bacewicz: Her Life and Works* (1984), remains groundbreaking,

[1] Małgorzata Gąsiorowska – polska muzykolog i krytyk muzyczny, specjalizująca się w muzyce polskiej XX wieku, autorka monografii Bacewicz (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1999).
[2] Adrian Thomas – brytyjski muzykolog, były profesor Uniwersytetu w Cardiff, specjalista w dziedzinie muzyki polskiej XX wieku, autor Grażyna Bacewicz: *Chamber and Orchestral Music* (Los Angeles: Friends of Polish Music, 1985).
[3] Judith Rosen – amerykańska badaczka historii muzyki, związana z Polish Music Center Uniwersytetu Południowej Kalifornii, autorka pracy Grażyna Bacewicz: Her Life and Works (Los Angeles: Friends of Polish Music, University of Southern California, 1984).

providing a comprehensive overview of her biography and major orchestral and chamber works, supported by invaluable archival materials.

Publications focusing specifically with Bacewicz's Fourth Violin Sonata concentrates primarily on its musical structure, stylistic characteristics, and performance practice. Scholars such as Anna. Czerniak[4] and Stefania Łobaczewska[5] have analyzed the innovative rhythmic and modal features of the sonata, highlighting its synthesis of Bartókian rhythmic dynamics and Polish folk-dance elements within the conventional sonata framework. Judith Rosen and Adrian Thomas have similarly assessed the importance and place of the work within Bacewicz's oeuvre. However, independent and comprehensive analytical studies of the piano part are still relatively underdeveloped, limiting a full understanding of the complex and significant role the piano plays in her chamber works.

In the field of Bacewicz's vocal music, there are comparatively few scholarly works that focus mainly on the relationship between text and music in specific case studies (e.g. Anna Nowak[6], Maryla Renat[7]). These analyses examine the aesthetic realization of literary texts in vocal-instrumental compositions and the musical expression of poetic images. However, these studies provide an initial insight into the poetic dimensions of Bacewicz's songs, and a systematic and comprehensive scholarly investigation is still pending.

Outside of Poland, research on the works of Grażyna Bacewicz has also been gradually expanding, particularly within academic circles in Anglophone countries. In-depth analyses of selected aspects of Bacewicz's compositional technique can be

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[4] Anna Czerniak – skrzypaczka i badaczka, doktorantka Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, autorka pracy doktorskiej Form and Performance: A Guide to Sonata No. 4 for Violin and Piano by Grażyna Bacewicz (2022).

[5] Stefania Łobaczewska – polska muzykolożka i krytyczka muzyczna aktywna w połowie XX wieku, autorka artykułu „IV Sonata na fortepian i skrzypce Grażyny Bacewiczówny", Muzyka nr 11 (1951).

[6] Anna Nowak – polska muzykolożka, uczestniczka konferencji poświęconej twórczości Bacewicz, autorka artykułu „Pieśni solowe Grażyny Bacewicz" w tomie pokonferencyjnym *Grażyna Bacewicz – człowiek i dzieło* (Warszawa, 1989).

[7] Maryla Renat – polska teoretyczka muzyki, badająca twórczość wokalną i instrumentalną Bacewicz, autorka artykułu „Poetyka słowno-dźwiękowa pieśni solowych Grażyny Bacewicz", Edukacja Muzyczna nr 7 (2012): 83–103.

found in a number of English-language doctoral dissertations, which explore topics such as her pianistic idiom (Mary Elizabeth Hellmann[8], William Andrew Hudson[9], Charlotte Rae Mills[10]), the relationship between her music and the socio-political context of Socialist Realism (Ned Charles Kiek[11]), as well as performance-related issues in her violin works (Hui-Yun Chung[12]).

In addition, Bacewicz's autobiographical collection of essays, *Znak szczególny*[13], although not explicitly addressing compositional techniques, indirectly conveys her creative philosophy and sincere artistic approach through personal reflections and accounts of her experiences.

To summarise, despite the fundamental contributions of existing international and national research, there are still considerable research gaps. These include, in particular, in-depth analyses of the piano parts, comprehensive poetic studies of her vocal compositions, an obvious backlog in Chinese-language research, and insufficient exploration of Bacewicz's identity as a composer and her interactions with contemporary composers. These areas need further exploration to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Bacewicz's role and her significant contributions to 20th-century Polish music.

This study aims to bridge the seemingly distant worlds of musical practice and theoretical inquiry. The first part comprises the performance and recording of selected works by Grażyna Bacewicz, namely the *Violin Sonata No. IV* and the Songs for Voice

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[8] Mary Elizabeth Hellmann – pianistka i badaczka, doktorantka University of Alabama, autorka rozprawy doktorskiej *Grażyna Bacewicz's Ten Concert Etudes, 1956: An Examination of Etudes Nos. I, II, IV, and VIII* (2005) .

[9] William Andrew Hudson – muzykolog i pianista, doktorant University of Texas at Austin, autor rozprawy *Stylistic Evolution Through Chromaticism in the Piano Compositions of Grażyna Bacewicz* (1998) .

[10] Charlotte Rae Mills – pianistka i analityczka, doktorantka University of Northern Colorado, autorka rozprawy *Grażyna Bacewicz: A Stylistic Analysis and Evaluation of Selected Keyboard Works* (1986) .

[11] Ned Charles Kiek – badacz muzyki XX wieku, doktorant University of Washington, autor pracy *Grażyna Bacewicz and Social Realism* (2001) .

[12] Hui-Yun (Yi-Chen) Chung – skrzypaczka i badaczka, doktorantka Florida State University College of Music, autorka rozprawy *Grażyna Bacewicz and Her Violin Compositions: From a Perspective of Music Performance* (2011) .

[13] Grażyna Bacewicz –autorka zbioru opowiadań autobiograficznych Znak szczególny, wydanego pośmiertnie przez Czytelnik w 1974 roku. Książka ukazuje jej refleksje na temat życia i sztuki, ujawniając osobowość artystki.

and Piano. The second part focuses on the theoretical exploration of this repertoire through formal and harmonic analyses, with particular attention given to the most distinctive features of Bacewicz's musical style. The research applies a multifaceted analytical approach that includes formal analysis, tonal-harmonic examination, and comparative stylistic analysis, focusing on structural organisation, harmonic language, thematic development, and the relationship between the piano part and the other voices.

The section devoted to performance integrates a performative perspective by analysing interpretative approaches through reference to both historical and contemporary recordings. Particular attention is paid to performers' treatment of tempo, articulation, and timbral colouration. In parallel, based on the author's own performance experience, conclusions are drawn regarding the key technical and expressive challenges involved, which contribute to a deeper understanding of the internal logic of the works. This synergy between practice and theory constitutes an important methodological asset of the present study.

In a further research dimension, the dissertation addresses the reception of Bacewicz's works within China's system of music education. Drawing on archival research and interviews with educators, the study analyses the presence of her compositions in teaching curricula, concert repertoire, and dissemination channels. Based on the author's experience during her academic studies in Poland, a set of methodological and promotional recommendations has been formulated. While these proposals extend beyond the boundaries of traditional analytical paradigms, they offer a valuable complement to the core focus of the dissertation.

In conclusion, the dissertation integrates three research perspectives – theoretical analysis, performative practice, and educational-pedagogical insight – in order to present a comprehensive view of both the internal structure and practical significance of Bacewicz's works. This integration of theory and practice may also serve as a useful model for further studies on the reception of twentieth-century music beyond the European context.

Chapter 1 The Musical Environment in Poland in the Years 1900-1970

1.1 From the Crisis of Nationalism to the Quest for Modernity

At the beginning of the 20th century, Polish musical culture was in a state of profound stagnation. Nearly half a century after the death of Chopin, Polish music remained entrenched in nostalgia for its former glory, having failed to produce significant breakthroughs in the language of modern composition. Under both political and cultural pressures, musical creativity had become rigid and inert. As Karol Szymanowski later reflected with striking clarity: "*We are drowning in its depths, yet we are afraid to step beyond the enchanted circle of superhuman heroism*," and as a result, "*this evolution proceeded almost a rebours: beginning on the unattainable peaks of Chopin's genius and gradually descending—step by step—into grey, sorrowful lowlands.*"[14] Szymanowski also emphasised that, although the figure of Chopin had been surrounded for decades by an "*uncritical, almost religious cult*" as a national symbol, this very cult not only failed to foster a modern transformation of Polish music but in fact pushed his legacy "*to the margins of further Polish musical creativity*."[15]

This profound statement aptly reflects the sense of anxiety that gripped young Polish composers associated with the Young Poland movement. Confronted with the pressures exerted by the three partitioning empires—Russia, Germany, and Austria—Polish music faced a profound crisis of identity: on the one hand, it risked a rupture with tradition; on the other, it was compelled to seek a modern musical language through which it could be reborn. Among the composers striving to redefine Polish music were Karol Szymanowski and Mieczysław Karłowicz, whose ambition

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[14] Karol Szymanowski, *Fryderyk Chopin*, w: Karol Szymanowski: Pisma, red. Teresa Chylińska, Kraków: PWM 1984, s. 89.*„Toniemy w jego głębi, a boimy się przestąpić poza zaklęty krąg nadczłowieczego heroizmu"*, przez co *„ewolucja ta odbywała się niejako a rebours: zaczynając się na niedościgłych szczytach geniuszu Chopina i schodząc zwolna — krok za krokiem — w szare, smutne niziny…*"

[15] Tamże, s. 90. *„bezkrytycznym, religijnym prawie kulcie" and „na margines niejako dalszej polskiej twórczości muzycznej*"

was to move beyond the dominant aesthetics of late German Romanticism and to explore the creative potential inherent in Poland's native folk traditions.

Szymanowski, as a leading representative of this movement, advocated for a synthesis of national elements with the modern musical language of both the Western and Eastern traditions. In works such as *Symphony No. 3 "Song of the Night"* (1914–1916), one can observe an attempt to incorporate Polish idiomatic features into the broader context of contemporary European art music. Following the restoration of Polish independence in 1918, the question of the "national character" of music once again became a central cultural issue. Artists reengaged with their heritage, and Szymanowski played a key role in this discourse. Fascinated by the music of the Podhale region, he combined original highlander motifs with modernist compositional techniques, resulting in works such as the ballet *Harnasie* (1923–1931).

Szymanowski also emphasised the importance of international education for young Polish composers as a means of avoiding the limitations of narrow nationalism. In this context, Paris—Europe's cultural capital—played a pivotal role in the modernisation of Polish music. During the 1920s and 1930s, numerous Polish composers pursued studies in France, most often under the guidance of Nadia Boulanger, whose clear aesthetic principles, analytical insight, and inspiring pedagogical methods had a significant impact on an entire generation of Polish musicians. Importantly, these ties with French culture later proved to be an invaluable source of inspiration during the period of postwar cultural isolation in Poland.[16]

1.2 Artistic Creation in the Shadow of War and Ideology

The outbreak of World War II brought catastrophic consequences for Polish musical culture. The German occupiers imposed strict prohibitions on the performance

[16] Por. Adrian Thomas, *Grażyna Bacewicz: Chamber and Orchestral Music*, Polish Music History Series, s. 16.

and publication of Polish music in an attempt to obliterate the nation's cultural identity. Despite these extreme conditions, composers continued their activities through secret concerts and underground teaching, striving to maintain the continuity of musical traditions. Although many compositions were lost—particularly during the Warsaw Uprising—some works have survived, reflecting both the trauma of war and the spirit of resistance. Notable examples include Andrzej Panufnik's *Tragic Overture* (1942, reconstructed in 1945) and Witold Lutosławski's *Variations on a Theme of Paganini* (1941).

Following the end of World War II, the desire to return to normal life initially outweighed political tensions. In the context of a new and untested political reality, the reconstruction of Poland's musical culture advanced rapidly. Already in 1945, key institutions such as Polish Radio, symphony and radio orchestras in major cities, and the Polish Composers' Union (ZKP) were re-established. In the same year, the Polish Music Publishers (PWM) was founded to support the publication and distribution of musical works. However, Poland soon found itself within the Soviet sphere of influence, which decisively shaped the future of the arts. The years 1945–1949, marked by vibrant public debates on the role of music, gave way in 1950–1954 to the dominance of Socialist Realism, transforming the postwar decade into a period of increasing isolation and artistic repression, during which creative freedom was subordinated to ideological imperatives.

It is worth noting that the first postwar years (1945–1948) brought a short period of relative creative freedom, sometimes referred to as a "honeymoon phase." During this time, when cultural policy had not yet been fully Sovietised, artists enjoyed a degree of autonomy. A symbolic turning point came with the first postwar Festival of Polish Music, held in Kraków in September 1945, exactly six years after the German invasion. The festival presented works composed during the occupation, including Grażyna Bacewicz's *Overture* (1943) and Roman Palester's *Symphony No. II* (1942). The critic Stefan Kisielewski aptly noted the dual character of Polish music at the time –

balancing between "works rooted in the past" and those "looking to the future" – and encouraged a spirit of optimism in the development of musical culture.[17] In addition, the government supported composers' studies abroad, including Andrzej Panufnik, Kazimierz Serocki, and Stanisław Skrowaczewski, who in 1947 studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, thus temporarily maintaining ties with the Western avant-garde.

This fleeting liberal interlude succumbed abruptly to shifting political imperatives. As early as the inaugural 1945 issue of *Ruch Muzyczny* (Musical Movement), critics propagated the doctrine that "new realities demand composers service to the people," urging the subordination of individual artistic aspirations to the needs of mass culture.[18] This rhetoric foreshadowed the ideological rigidity that culminated at the pivotal 1949 Łagów Congress of Polish Composers — an event that marked the formal imposition of Socialist Realist orthodoxy. During the congress, state cultural authorities condemned modernist aesthetics, resulting in the banning of works such as Witold Lutosławski's *Symphony No. 1* and Andrzej Panufnik's *Pastoral Symphony.*

Under Socialist Realist dictates, Polish musical creation was compelled to adopt "nationalised, popularised" aesthetics privileging accessibility, simplicity, and romantic lyricism. Conversely, any stylistic experimentation deemed formalist – particularly avant-garde techniques or structural complexity – faced categorical prohibition. Official policies encouraged the appropriation of folkloric motifs to craft accessible compositions infused with revolutionary optimism.[19] Oratorios and cantatas glorifying the socialist regime became favoured genres, transforming music into an instrument of political propaganda.

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[17] Por. Stefan Kisielewski, „*Festival Polskiej Muzyki Współczesnej w Krakowie* (1–4 XI 1945)", Ruch Muzyczny 1, nr 1 (1 października 1945), s. 24.

[18] Por. Witold Rudziński, „*Nowe czasy – nowe zadania*", Ruch Muzyczny 1, nr 1 (1 października 1945), s. 8.

[19] Zob. Adrian Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), rozdział „Socialist Realism I: its onset and genres", s. 40–60. Autor szerzej omawia tam kwestię opery socrealistycznej.

Confronted with ideological coercion, composers sought strategic compromises. Many resorted to neoclassical pastiche and pseudo-folk adaptations, or reinterpreted historical Polish forms, thereby conforming outwardly to the prescribed "national form" while covertly preserving artistic integrity. This form of creative escapism, though limited in scope, served as a crucial mechanism of survival. Although this era produced a substantial body of works, it is remembered less for aesthetic innovation than for exposing the destructive effects of ideological intervention on artistic expression. For dissenting figures such as Roman Palester (who later settled abroad) and Andrzej Panufnik (who defected in 1954), emigration became the only viable recourse. Thus, the high Stalinist period in Polish music remains not a monument to artistic triumph, but a testament to the resilience of composers navigating a repressive cultural apparatus.

1.3 The Thaw and the Birth of the "Polish School"

These ideological constraints persisted until 1953, when Stalin's death initiated a political thaw across the Eastern Bloc. In Poland, this process intensified between 1955 and 1956, though signs of change had already emerged in 1954. That year, the Polish Composers' Union (ZKP), under the new leadership of Kazimierz Sikorski as president and Tadeusz Baird and Kazimierz Serocki as vice-presidents, began efforts to break cultural isolation. One of their key initiatives was a proposal to establish an international festival of contemporary music, which received preliminary government approval. The breakthrough came in 1956: following the Poznań protests and the political "October Thaw," the founding of the "Warsaw Autumn" festival symbolised Poland's musical re-engagement with the international avant-garde.

The International Festival of Contemporary Music "Warsaw Autumn," which continues to this day, played a crucial role in opening Polish culture to global contemporary music. Its stage presented numerous Western works that had previously been subject to ideological bans, including compositions using the latest compositional

techniques and avant-garde trends. A breakthrough moment came in 1957 with the establishment of the Polish Radio Experimental Studio by Józef Patkowski, which provided broad access to the music of Schönberg, Webern, and Cage, as well as the postwar avant-garde. At the same time, it promoted Polish compositions internationally. These transnational connections created a bridge between East and West, enabling direct artistic dialogue and strengthening Poland's position on the map of contemporary world music.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, as the political climate gradually liberalised, Polish music boldly entered the avant-garde. Freed from ideological constraints, composers quickly bridged the gap with Western trends, forming what became known as the Polish School of Composition. The breakthrough came with the adoption of previously prohibited modernist techniques, particularly dodecaphony. In *Musique funèbre* (1958), Witold Lutosławski employed serial pitch organisation, signalling a new direction in Polish compositional language. However, most composers avoided dogmatic serialism, favouring expressive exploration of sound. The emergence of sonorism, a trend focused on colour, texture, and dynamics as structural elements, became a defining feature of Polish musical modernism. Krzysztof Penderecki's *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960), with its innovative use of clusters and string glissandi, secured international recognition. In parallel, aleatoric techniques gained prominence. Lutosławski's *Jeux vénitiens* (1961) developed the concept of controlled aleatoricism, combining rigorous structural design with elements of performer freedom and expanding the expressive vocabulary of Polish avant-garde music.

Despite its experimental orientation, the Polish avant-garde remained deeply rooted in national tradition and emotional expressiveness. In the works of Penderecki, Górecki, and their contemporaries, radical sound innovations coexisted with a humanistic message and metaphysical depth, lending the Polish School a distinct identity in contrast to Western European modernism. This synthesis of artistic

experimentation and ethical engagement continues to define the Polish compositional tradition within global musicological discourse.

By the mid-1960s, the "Polish School of Composition" had emerged as a recognised phenomenon on the international stage. Composers such as Lutosławski, Penderecki, Baird, Serocki, and Górecki were regularly featured at major European festivals, while their works were performed by leading orchestras, recorded, and studied in academic publications. Poland's reputation as a "laboratory of contemporary music" was firmly established during this period.[20]

Tracing the evolution of Polish musical life from the early twentieth century to the 1970s reveals a dynamic trajectory: from nationalist Romanticism, through wartime destruction, postwar reconstruction, and Soviet-imposed constraints, to the emergence of avant-garde innovation and renewed international presence. Each phase contributed new impulses, shaping the multilayered identity of Polish music. Grażyna Bacewicz, present at every critical juncture of this history, bears witness to these transformations through her creative work, which reflects and embodies the most vital artistic currents of the era.

[20] Zob. Adrian Thomas, *Polish Music since Szymanowski* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), rozdziały „Music and Symbolism I" oraz „Sonorism and Experimentalism", s. 187–188, 261–263 — analiza duchowego wymiaru twórczości Góreckiego oraz znaczenia „polskiej szkoły kompozytorskiej" w kontekście powojennej awangardy.

Chapter 2 Grażyna Bacewicz: Life and Works

Family Background and Early Education

Grażyna Bacewicz was born on 5 February 1909 in Łódź into an intellectual family of Polish-Lithuanian origin. Her father, Vincas Bacevičius, a Lithuanian teacher forced into exile due to Tsarist repression, married Maria Modlińska, a descendant of Polish nobility. This multicultural background, combined with a strict musical education led by her father, shaped her early artistic development. She studied both piano and violin from a young age and gave her first public performance at the age of seven. At thirteen, she composed her *Prelude for Piano* (1922), indicating an early maturity in composition.

In 1919, Bacewicz began her education at the Humanist Secondary School in Łódź and the Helena Kijeńska-Dobkiewiczowa Music Conservatory. From 1921, she studied musical form and music history under Professor Kazimierz Sikorski. In a 1964 interview, she recalled: "*Even from those early attempts, I already knew that my main goal in life would be to compose music.*"[21] Her early works include *Four Preludes for Piano* (1924), *Prelude and Fugue for Piano* (1927), and *Song for Violin and Piano* (1927). However, the composer later judged these pieces as lacking artistic maturity; some remained unpublished, and others were destroyed by Bacewicz herself.

In 1928, Grażyna Bacewicz enrolled at the Warsaw State Conservatoire, where she studied composition with Kazimierz Sikorski, violin with Józef Jarzębski, and piano with Józef Turczyński. At the same time, she briefly pursued philosophy at the University of Warsaw, though she ultimately chose to focus on music. Most of her early works were written for violin and piano, reflecting her dual performance background.

[21] Grażyna Bacewicz, wypowiedź dla radiowej Redakcji Współpracy z Zagranicą, 1964, cyt. za: „Ruch Muzyczny", 1989, nr 3, s. 7. „*Od tych pierwszych prób, już wtedy — wiedziałam, że dążeniem moim, głównym celem życia, będzie pisanie muzyki.*"

While she was primarily recognised as a violinist at the time, her advanced piano skills significantly shaped the textural idiom of her compositions.

She graduated with distinction in 1932. Her early works include, among others, a *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, a *Sinfonietta*, and two string quartets that already point to her emerging individual style.

Parisian Studies and Early Career Development

Karol Szymanowski played a key role during this stage of Bacewicz's development. As a professor at the Warsaw Conservatoire, he encouraged young composers to study abroad, believing that international exposure was essential to express what he called the "emotionalism of the Polish soul."[22] Following his advice, Bacewicz travelled to Paris in 1932, financially supported by her family. In the French capital, she studied composition with Nadia Boulanger and violin with Henri Touret, while also engaging with the Association of Polish Composers in Paris. The liberal artistic climate, combined with Boulanger's rigorous pedagogy, shaped her neoclassical idiom – formally balanced and clear in expression. During this period, she composed several chamber works marked by stylistic clarity, including the *Sonatina for Piano*, the *Children's Suite*, and most notably the *Wind Quintet*, which received first prize at the 1933 Women's Independent Professions competition and stands as a model of neoclassical transparency.

After a brief pedagogical episode in Łódź (1934), Bacewicz returned to Paris to refine her violin technique under the renowned Carl Flesch. Upon repatriation, she intensified her parallel pursuits as composer and performer. Between 1936 and 1938, she served as concertmaster of the Polish Radio Orchestra, which afforded her the rare opportunity to hear her own compositions – such as the *Violin Concerto No. 1* and *Three Songs for Tenor and Orchestra* – performed live, an experience that further anchored her reputation within the Polish musical milieu.

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[22] Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1999), s. 43.

In 1936, she married physician Andrzej Biernacki, successfully balancing family life with an increasingly international artistic profile. In the spring of 1939, the École Normale de Musique in Paris organised a monographic concert of her works – a gesture of recognition for the thirty-year-old composer's growing stature. The outbreak of World War II found Bacewicz at the height of her early career, already established as both a leading violinist and a prominent representative of Poland's younger generation of composers.

Wartime and Postwar Period

The outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 plunged Poland into turmoil, radically altering Grażyna Bacewicz's life and career. During the initial bombardments of Warsaw, she and her family were repeatedly forced to flee—first to the Pruszków transit camp, later to Lublin. With public musical life all but suspended under Nazi occupation, Bacewicz joined fellow artists in the underground cultural resistance, a form of intellectual defiance. Despite limited performance opportunities, she continued to compose, producing pivotal works such as the *String Quartet No. 2*, *Symphony No. 1*, and *Overture* (1943).

After the war, Bacewicz took up a teaching post at the State Higher School of Music in Łódź and actively contributed to the restoration of artistic life. The years 1945–1954 marked a period of creative flourishing: works such as the *Concerto for String Orchestra* (1948) and *String Quartet No. 4* (1951), awarded at international competitions, entered the core canon of modern Polish music. Even following the imposition of Socialist Realist doctrine in 1949, Bacewicz managed to maintain a balance between ideological demands and artistic autonomy, preserving both creative freedom and broad public recognition.

Artistic Maturity and Stylistic Transformation

A serious car accident in 1954 forced Bacewicz to end her performing career, redirecting her focus entirely to composition. The political thaw of 1956 and the accompanying liberalisation of cultural life made her a regular participant at the Warsaw Autumn Festival, where her music entered a phase of bold modernisation. The *String Quartet No. 5* (1955) reveals a clear departure from traditional major-minor harmonic structures, while the *Violin Concerto No. 6* (1957) and *Symphonic Variations* (1957) display intensified colouristic experimentation and complex rhythmic organisation.

The 1960s, marking the final stage of her output, brought full avant-garde emancipation. Bacewicz assimilated serial and aleatoric techniques, as evidenced in *Pensieri Notturni* (1961) for chamber orchestra and the *String Quartet No. 7* (1965), works that masterfully balance textural exploration with structural control. Her music, synthesising intellectual discipline and emotional intensity, embodied a dialectic between rational construction and expressive impulse.

In parallel with her stylistic evolution, Bacewicz served as Vice-President of the Polish Composers' Union (1955–1957, 1960–1969) – the first woman to hold this position – and from 1966 led a composition class at the State Higher School of Music in Warsaw, shaping a new generation of composers. Her role evolved from that of a composer-performer to a key figure in cultural policy, combining artistic expertise with institutional leadership.

As a female composer in a male-dominated field, Bacewicz held a pioneering position. She was the first Polish woman composer since Maria Szymanowska in the early 19th century to gain international recognition. Her sudden death in Warsaw on 17 January 1969, at the age of 59, interrupted a remarkable creative trajectory. Rooted in Polish national and Romantic traditions yet open to contemporary techniques, her music forged a synthetic artistic idiom that enriched the landscape of 20th-century music. Her lasting legacy is honoured, among other ways, by the naming of the Łódź Academy of

Music after her and her brother Kiejstut – a tribute to the siblings' contribution to musical education and creation.

Chapter 3 The Evolution of Grażyna Bacewicz's Compositional Style through the Prism of Piano Works

3.1 Theoretical Sources and Key Features of Neoclassicism

The concept of neoclassicism, first articulated in the early 20th century by Ferruccio Busoni, emerged as an intellectual reaction against the excessive emotionalism of 19th-century Romanticism. His vision, termed *Junge Klassizität*[23] ("young classicism"), advocated a return to rationalism and the structural discipline of classical forms, charting a path from individualist subjectivity toward universal and objective aesthetic standards. This idea gained particular vitality in Parisian circles, where growing fatigue with stylistic emotionalism led artists to seek order grounded in reason. In the aftermath of World War I, French composers turned to the classical tradition as a spiritual and structural foundation for the modernist renewal of the arts.

To understand the genesis of neoclassicism as a musical trend, it is necessary to consider the historical ideological dispute between classicism and romanticism—a dialectic that shaped the evolution of art from the 19th to the 20th century. Classicism, which emphasised values such as order, moderation, formal unity, and expressive universality, stood in opposition to the Romantic exaltation of individualism, emotional intensity, and subjective experience. For the Romantics, art was a medium of personal expression, whereas classicists regarded it as a vehicle of objective order transcending the individual. This ideological polarisation, which reached its apogee in the 19th century, resurfaced with renewed force in the interwar period, inspiring artists to critically reassess the legacy of the past.[24]

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[23] „Junge Klassizität" – „młoda klasyczność" lub „nowa klasyczność". Ferruccio Busoni, *Von der Einheit der Musik* (Berlin: Max Hesse, 1922), s. 275–279, dostęp: Internet Archive, https://archive.org/details/vondereinheitder00buso (dostęp 22 stycznia 2025).

[24] Zob. szerzej: Zofia Helman, *Neoklasycyzm w muzyce polskiej XX wieku* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1985), s. 17–23, rozdział „Opozycja klasycyzm–romantyzm w XX-wiecznej myśli o sztuce".

It was within this intellectual polarity that neoclassicism underwent its crystallisation. The 1920s in Paris became the principal arena for neoclassicism's maturation, as it emerged in deliberate opposition to late Romanticism, Impressionism, and Expressionism. From a compositional perspective, neoclassicism forged a universal musical language, drawing upon classical-era forms (sonata, suite, concerto) yet transforming them through modernist harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation. Its essence lay not in an archaising replication of historical models, but in their creative transposition into a modern artistic context. As critics such as Constant Lambert observed, this formalist obsession—while restoring intellectual discipline—risked academic rigidity, often pejoratively labelled as "cold formalism" or "a deficit of emotional depth".[25] Nevertheless, neoclassicism remains an undeniable phenomenon that shaped the face of 20th-century music.

To systematise the stylistic features of neoclassicism, Maria Piotrowska proposed the following model indicators:

1. *The use of instrumental forms from the pre-Romantic era (e.g. symphony, sonata, divertimento, toccata, concerto grosso, etc.);*
2. *A departure from post-Wagnerian chromaticism in favour of "pandiatonicism," a term denoting "a new type of freedom in which all seven diatonic scale degrees are combined both harmonically and contrapuntally";*
3. *Linearity – in opposition to the full chordal textures characteristic of Romanticism and Impressionism;*
4. *A distinctive neoclassical idiom realised through animated dissonant counterpoint, clarity and freshness of texture, and rhythm marked by flexibility and motoric drive.*[26]

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[25] Constant Lambert, *Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline: A Psychological Cul-de-Sac* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934), s. 280, dostęp: Project Gutenberg Canada, https://gutenberg.ca/ebooks/lambert-music/lambert-music-00-h.html#Psychological (dostęp 22 stycznia 2025).

[26] Cechy neoklasycyzmu sformułowane przez J. Machlisa, podane za Marią Piotrowską (*Neoklasycyzm w muzyce polskiej XX wieku*, s. 9), cyt. za: Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1999), s. 67. Por. również: Maria Piotrowska, *Neoklasycyzm w muzyce XX*

Although this model does not fully encompass the diversity of neoclassical phenomena, it serves as a valuable analytical framework for identifying common stylistic features in the works of composers such as Igor Stravinsky, Paul Hindemith, and the group *Les Six*. A particularly significant role in disseminating neoclassical ideals was played by Nadia Boulanger – the pedagogical mentor of a generation, whose Parisian composition class became a crucible for avant-garde talent and a key conduit for transmitting Stravinsky's legacy within modern musical education.

3.2 1932–1944

"[…]From Nadia Boulanger's school, young Polish composers absorbed a reverence for compositional craftsmanship, for classical formal models, and a tendency to highlight purely musical values, unburdened by literary or ideological baggage."[27]

The early oeuvre of Grażyna Bacewicz bears distinct traces of neoclassical inspiration, though—unlike Igor Stravinsky's radical formalism[28]—it reveals a preference for tempered expressivity and ascetic clarity. Her Parisian period yielded two pivotal compositions: the *Wind Quintet* (1932) and the *Children's Suite* for piano (1933). The former, awarded first prize at the 1933 "Independent Professional Women Artists" competition, stands as an emblematic expression of Bacewicz's early neoclassical phase, balancing formal discipline with harmonic innovation.

The *Children's Suite* illustrates the particular role of the piano in this phase of Bacewicz's output. According to Stefan Kisielewski, it represents "*the first signs of stylistic and technical crystallisation within the narrow, 'French' strand of her*

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wieku (Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1982); Zofia Helman, *Neoklasycyzm w muzyce polskiej XX wieku* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1985).

[27] Zofia Helman, *Muzycy i muzyka polska w Paryzu w okresie migdzywojennym*, Muzyka, 1972, nr 2(65), s. 93 *„[…]Ze szkoły Nadii Boulanger wynieśli młodzi Polacy kult rzemiosła kompozytorskiego, kult klasycznych wzorów formalnych, skłonność do podkreślania walorów czysto muzycznych nie obciążonych bagażem literacko-ideowym."*

[28] Zob. szerzej: Ji, Lu, *Badania nad neoklasycznymi poglądami muzycznymi Igora Strawińskiego*, praca doktorska, Centralne Konserwatorium Muzyczne w Pekinie. Praca zawiera pogłębioną analizę neoklasycystycznych koncepcji Strawińskiego.

music."[29] The cycle consists of eight miniatures — *Prelude*, *March*, *Waltz*, *Lullaby*, *Grotesque*, *Minuet*, *Gavotte*, and *Scherzo* — all characterised by transparent ABA structures and motivic precision. As Tadeusz A. Zieliński observes, "[...] *in the Children's Suite for piano, the composer freely employs harmonic 'acridities' worthy of Milhaud,*"[30] synthesising diatonic simplicity with chromatic tension. In the stylised *Gavotte*, the juxtaposition of whole-tone and semitone scales, articulated through tetrachordal clusters, produces a quasi-cubist sonic effect. This technique reflects both Bacewicz's absorption of neoclassical idioms — particularly in terms of timbral 'geometrisation' — and her early attempts to transcend conventional form.

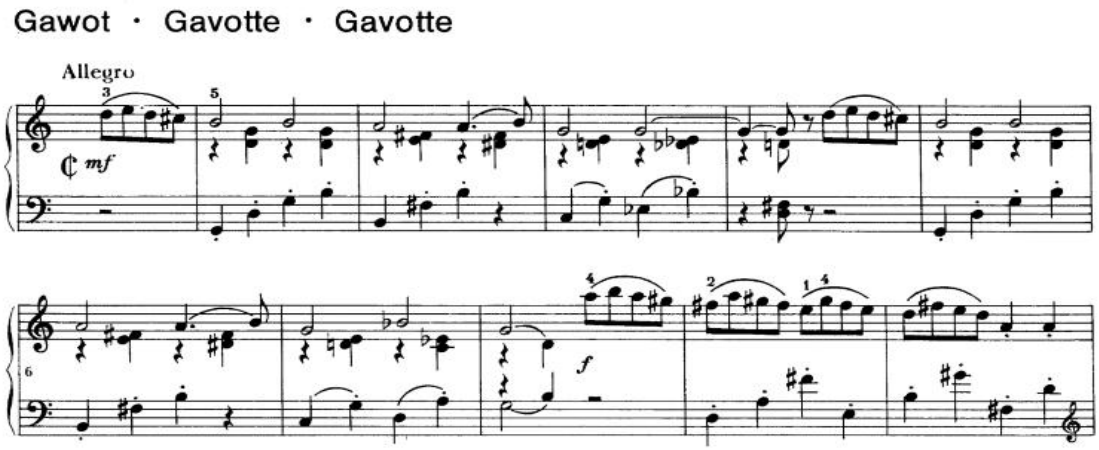


Fig. 3-1. *Suita dziecięca*, "Gavotte", measures 1–11.

In addition to her composition studies with Nadia Boulanger, Bacewicz refined her violin technique under the guidance of André Touret (1932–1933). This dual cultivation of compositional and instrumental skills gave rise to a series of works for violin and piano. Among them, *Witraż* (1932) for violin and piano stands out as a miniature of merely thirty bars, whose delicate, ornamental melodic line reveals a nostalgic echo of Impressionism and the style of Karol Szymanowski. As Małgorzata

[29] Stefan Kisielewski, *Grażyna Bacewicz i jej czasy*, Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1964, s. 14. *„pierwsze przejawy krystalizacji stylistyczno-technicznej wąskiego, ‚francuskiego' gatunku jej muzyki"*

[30] Zieliński, Tadeusz. *Walor szlachetnego rzemiosła (o twórczości G. Bacewicz)*, Ruch Muzyczny R.5 nr.8 (1961), s. 1. *„[….] W Suicie dziecięcej na fortepian kompozytorka swobodnie operuje ‚ostrościami' harmonicznymi godnymi Milhauda"*

Gąsiorowska observes, Bacewicz, a representative of a generation deeply marked by the legacy of the *King Roger* composer, engaged in a selective adaptation of Romantic and Expressionist elements, treating them more as sonic material than as an ideological inheritance. In this context, the descending minor second that opens the piece is of particular significance—a gesture "so Romantic (Expressionist?) in spirit," also heard at the beginning of the final mazurka from Szymanowski's *Op. 62*.[31] This motif may be interpreted as a conscious intergenerational dialogue and a subtle continuation of the musical tradition.



Fig. 3–2. *Witraż* for violin and piano, bars 1–5.

Upon her return to Poland, Bacewicz continued her formal experiments in piano composition, creating works such as *Three Grotesques* for solo piano and *Scherzo*. At the same time, she extended the expressive potential of the piano into the realm of vocal

[31] Por. Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1999), s. 84–85.

music, as demonstrated by the art songs *Róże* (1934) and *Mów do mnie, o miły* (1936), where the piano part functions as an autonomous commentary on the poetic text.

This phase of her output developed within a broader cultural context in which Polish musical life navigated a tension between folkloric nationalism and neoclassicism. As Zofia Helman aptly observes: "*In the Polish music of the late 1920s and early 1930s, it was not neoclassicism but rather the folkloric-national current that defined its character—a continuation of the programme initiated by Szymanowski, fulfilling in its own way the anti-Romantic postulates*."[32]

Influenced by her father's Lithuanian heritage, Bacewicz drew heavily on the musical traditions of the borderlands. This is evidenced not only by frequent allusions to Lithuanian folk idioms in her early works but also by her active concert presence in Lithuania. Particularly representative of this inspiration are *Pieśń litewska* (*Lithuanian Song*) for violin and piano and the *Variations on a Lithuanian Folk Song*. Despite the violin's dominant role, the piano part in both pieces reveals the formal precision and textural inventiveness that would become hallmarks of her early style.

Grażyna Bacewicz's early piano works, both solo and chamber, are characterised by remarkable formal diversity. During this period, the young composer explored nearly all musical genres rooted in the European tradition: from preludes, fugues and sonatas, through toccatas, variations, études, suites, cycles of miniatures, stylised dances, bipartite slow–fast forms, to programmatic lyrical pieces and transcriptions. The formal structures included ABA schemes, single-movement developmental forms, rondos, fugue-based constructions, as well as adaptive solutions and hybrid genre forms. While respecting fundamental genre conventions, Bacewicz gave them an individual character through bold variation.

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[32] Zofia Helman, *Neoklasycyzm w muzyce polskiej XX wieku* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1985), s. 57. *„W twórczości przełomu lat dwudziestych i trzydziestych nie neoklasycyzm określał charakter polskiej muzyki, lecz kierunek folklorystyczno-narodowy, będący kontynuacją programu postawionego przez Szymanowskiego i spełniający – na swój sposób – antyromantyczne założenia"*.

Although these compositions bear the marks of experimentation, they already reveal a persistent tension between structural discipline, economy of material, and a clearly defined stylistic identity. This may be interpreted as a foreshadowing of the composer's mature idiom.

During this phase of experimentation, Bacewicz clearly demonstrated a preference for classical paradigms while simultaneously reworking assimilated compositional techniques in a creative and individualised manner. Although her formal language aligns closely with neoclassical principles, it would be premature to assign her entire output from this period definitively to that stylistic current. As Małgorzata Gąsiorowska argues in her article *Grażyna Bacewicz — neoklasyk?* (*Grażyna Bacewicz – A Neoclassicist?*):

"Bacewicz's oeuvre passed through two phases that were, to some extent, associated with neoclassicism. The first, described as 'brillant', includes works from her Paris and Warsaw periods in the 1930s. The second, beginning around 1943 and extending into the mid-1950s, is marked by both 'intensive' and 'extensive' development of her musical language."[33]

As succinctly synthesised by Ludomir Stawowy: *"Remaining faithful to her innate artistic disposition and capabilities, as well as to an aesthetic ideal that uniquely fused Baroque and Romantic categories with classical and contemporary elements, Bacewicz represented a stage in the evolution of new music in which expressive content was combined with near-classical rigour and a modern understanding of compositional craft."*[34]

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[33] Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Grażyna Bacewicz——neoklusyk?,* „Ruch Muzyczny", 1989, nr 3, s. 5. *„Twórczość Grażyny Bacewicz przeszła […] przez dwie fazy wiążące się w jakiejś mierze z neoklasycyzmem. Okres pierwszy, który można określić jako ‚brillant', obejmuje utwory okresu paryskiego i warszawskiego, więc powstałe w latach trzydziestych. Okres drugi, datujący się mniej więcej od roku 1943. […] sięga połowy lat pięćdziesiątych i charakteryzuje się zarówno ‚intensywnym', jak i ‚ekstensywnym' rozwojem języka dźwiękowego."*

[34] Ludomira Stawowy, Bacewicz Grażyna, [w:] Encyklopedia muzyczna PИM. Część biograficzna a b, red. E. Dziębowska, Kraków 1979, s. 109.*"Pozostając wierną swoim naturalnym dyspozycjom i możliwościom, a także raz wytkniętemu ideałowi stylu muzycznego, wiążącego w bardzo indywidualny sposób kategorie barokowe z romantycznymi i klasyczne ze współczesnymi, Bacewiczówna*

3.3 1945–1955

The end of World War II marked the beginning of a new chapter in Polish musical culture, characterised by a renewed focus on order, structure and rationality in artistic creation. This tendency reflected the broader need to rebuild artistic institutions and the educational system. In this context, neoclassicism, which in Poland was described as "*virtually the only trend representing modern music*"[35], regained its position as the leading stylistic direction, integrating pre-war heritage with the realities of the post-war period.

After returning to the ruined city of Warsaw in 1945, Grażyna Bacewicz became intensely engaged in compositional work, producing numerous pedagogical pieces and instrumental cycles. The violin and piano remained her primary media of expression, as exemplified by the *Concertino* and *Legenda*, the latter serving as a tribute to the virtuosic tradition of Henryk Wieniawski. At the same time, she created works of greater intellectual weight, such as the *Sonata da camera* and *Violin Concerto No. 2*, which signalled the maturation of her compositional language.

The *Sonata da camera* (the first of Bacewicz's five violin sonatas, with the fourth becoming a milestone in her oeuvre) exemplifies the modernist stylisation of classical forms. In contrast to Stravinsky's neoclassicism, which deconstructed formal schemes through parodic tonal collage and structural subversion, and to sonoristic neoclassicism grounded in stylistic eclecticism, Bacewicz revised the Baroque formal framework by retaining its architectural logic while introducing modern harmonic language and colouristic refinement. Her approach yields an organic synthesis in which

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reprezentowała ten etap rozwoju nowej muzyki, który ekspresję łączy z niemal klasycznym rygorem i ze współcześnie pojętym rzemiosłem."

[35] Józef M. Chomiński, *Muzyka Polski Ludowej*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1968, s. 87–88. *„był w Polsce niemal jedynym kierunkiem reprezentującym muzykę nowoczesną"*

historical models are reinterpreted through a contemporary lens without undermining their internal coherence.

Following a brief postwar "honeymoon" period marked by relative cultural liberalisation, growing ideological pressure led to the gradual marginalisation of modernist language, personal stylistic choices, and formal innovation. The authorities promoted a nationalist-folkloric orientation, favouring folk-inspired idioms and a simplified expressive code suited to the demands of socialist realist art. Although Bacewicz—unlike Lutosławski or Panufnik—avoided direct political criticism, her position as an established composer closely associated with institutional structures required her to navigate a careful balance between artistic autonomy and the expectations of "art for the people".

In response, she increasingly focused on instrumental genres, whose abstract nature and formal flexibility rendered them less susceptible to ideological appropriation. This shift resulted in a particularly fruitful creative period, during which she composed sixteen works for violin and piano (including sonatas, dances, and miniatures), seven solo piano pieces, eight chamber works, seven concertos, and fourteen scores for chamber or orchestral ensembles. Despite this focus on instrumental music, Bacewicz also continued writing vocal compositions, as evidenced by songs from the years 1947–1949 such as *Oto jest noc*, *Smuga cienia*, and *Rozstanie*, in which the piano assumes the role of an equal partner in dialogue with the vocal line.

For Bacewicz, folkloric engagement transcended mere socialist mandates, as it was rooted in Poland's national heritage, the violin's historical symbiosis with vernacular dance, and her own identity as a virtuoso performer. This synthesis found quintessential expression in two seminal folk-dance works: *Oberek No. 1* and *Oberek No. 2*.

Against the backdrop of the increasing predominance of instrumental music in Bacewicz's output, her piano compositions acquired particular importance. Following the phase of equal dialogic interplay between violin and piano in her *Violin Sonata No.*

4, the *Piano Sonata No. 2* (1953) marked a significant advancement in her pianistic idiom and formal ambition.

This sonata combines structural precision with timbral imagination, exemplifying Bacewicz's notion of "intensive and extensive development of sonic language."[36] Since its 1953 premiere, it has come to be regarded as a pinnacle of twentieth-century piano literature and a bridge between tradition and postwar modernism in Poland.

In the postwar decade, Bacewicz's neoclassical language crystallised through the systematic adaptation of Baroque and Classical paradigms as structural models. She explored the sonata genre across various configurations, from piano solos to violin–piano duos, all marked by condensed formal construction. Representative works from this period include the five violin sonatas, two piano sonatas, the piano quintet, and numerous folk-inspired miniatures. These works often employ ternary or sonata forms, with dual thematic material undergoing precise and methodical development. Introductory motivic materials frequently permeate later sections, generating strong motivic cohesion. Her textures emphasise rhythmic drive, featuring compact figuration and structural tightness, particularly in fast movements and dance stylisations.

Bacewicz cultivated a compositional idiom characterised by registral balance, rhythmic precision, and structural clarity – a mature style that allowed for transparent layering and formal coherence.

This prolific phase garnered critical acclaim, yet stylistic pluralism remained Bacewicz's hallmark. As Małgorzata Gąsiorowska elucidates: *"Over time, this neoclassical model underwent profound transformation in both technical means and expressive intent. [...] The composer's language evolved continuously, ultimately*

[36] Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Grażyna Bacewicz——neoklasyk?,* „Ruch Muzyczny", (1989) nr 3, s. 5.

embodying a creative synthesis of diverse stylistic threads. [...] This synthesis permeated every level of the musical work's structure."[37]

Although the postwar Polish artistic scene resembled an "aesthetic vacuum" and progressed more slowly than its Western counterparts, it nevertheless gave rise to outstanding works – with Bacewicz's output occupying a central place. By the time of the 1956 political thaw, Bacewicz had already established herself as a fully formed composer with a distinct musical language. This period of constrained creativity paradoxically honed her capacity for innovation under ideological pressure, as evidenced by the extraordinary volume and consistent artistic excellence of her output, which stands as a dual testament to her exceptional talent and unyielding creative will.

3.4 1955–1960

Bacewicz's inherently conservative artistic disposition initially restrained her from embracing the radical avant-garde currents that emerged with the first signs of cultural liberalisation.[38] Scholars unanimously identify the 1955 *Partita*—composed in two versions, for violin and piano, and for orchestra—as a pivotal milestone in her stylistic evolution. The chamber version, in contrast to the orchestral one, is marked by greater material conciseness, rhythmic intensity, and textural clarity.[39]

Though the work's title evokes the Baroque suite tradition (*Preludium–Toccata–Intermezzo–Rondo*), it conceals a modernist approach to form, evident in the expressive freedom and structural fluidity of its contrasts.

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[37] Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Grażyna Bacewicz——neoklasyk?,* „Ruch Muzyczny", (1989) nr 3, s. 5. *W miarę upływu lat ów neoklasyczny model uległ daleko idącej transformacji, za- równo w zakresie środków, jak i wyrazu. [...] język kompozytorki stale się rozwijał. stając się z czasem obrazem twórczej syntezy rozmaitych wątków. [...] Owa synteza dokonała się na wszystkich piętrach istnienia dzieła muzycznego.*

[38] Adrian Thomas, *Grażyna Bacewicz: Chamber and Orchestral Music*, Polish Music History Series, s. 42. "Bacewicz's innate conservatism precluded any radical departure during the first years of artistic freedom."

[39] Por. m.in.: Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, Bacewicz (Kraków: PWM, 1999), s. 252; Adrian Thomas, Grażyna Bacewicz: Chamber and Orchestral Music, Polish Music History Series, s. 42.

Though Bacewicz remained committed to traditional formal principles, her *Partita* (1955) already signalled an expansion of polyphonic and harmonic idioms—both a personal reinterpretation of historical models and a bridge towards later stylistic emancipation. After 1955, she gradually abandoned the violin-piano duo in favour of genres offering greater textural and structural complexity: string quartets, a piano quintet, and orchestral works. This transition reflected both an internal drive to explore denser textures and heightened formal tension, and an external cultural shift—as the inauguration of the "Warsaw Autumn" festival in 1956 marked the growing dominance of avant-garde techniques, gradually sidelining traditional chamber forms. Without aligning herself with the radical avant-garde, Bacewicz nonetheless enacted a subtle revolution within the established musical syntax, revealing a remarkable responsiveness to the evolving artistic climate.

Within this historical framework, *Ten Piano Études* (1956) solidified Bacewicz's position as a central figure in twentieth-century Polish pianism, simultaneously entering the core repertoire she herself frequently performed.

Combining technical virtuosity with expressive sophistication, the cycle continues the Chopin–Szymanowski lineage, while reinterpreting it through the pianistic idioms of Liszt, Debussy, and Bartók.[40] Each étude isolates a specific technical–expressive issue: from rapid scalar passages and double-note configurations, through broken chords and extended arpeggiation, to multilayered polyphonic textures. Despite the use of traditional notation and ternary-based forms, the cycle achieves structural cohesion, with Études VI and X functioning as climactic centres, and Nos. V and VIII providing lyrical interludes that articulate formal contrast and expressive relief.

Scholars consistently identify this collection as a pivotal moment in Bacewicz's stylistic evolution. Its rhythmic organisation—based on syncopation, shifting metres,

[40] Więcej na ten temat zob. https://bacewicz.polmic.pl/10-etiud-na-fortepian/, (dostęp: 29.08.2024).

displaced accents, and sharp dynamic contrasts—generates what Teresa Świercz[41] terms a refined "structural energy." In her analysis, she emphasises that each étude is constructed around a dominant rhythmic value and a recurring motoric scheme. Through consistent rhythmic formulas and varied accentuation, Bacewicz achieves a cohesive yet dynamically differentiated formal structure.

As Tadeusz Zieliński[42] notes, these études—"brilliant and relentlessly motoric"—reveal "remarkable discipline in the developmental treatment of selected figures." In his view, although they do not aim at overt emotional expression and may even convey a degree of emotional restraint, it is precisely this restraint that underscores Bacewicz's pursuit of clarity and precision in musical thought.

Concurrently, Bacewicz composed the *Two Études for Double Notes* and the *Sonatina*, conceived as a counterbalance to her virtuosic piano cycles. The former, focusing on parallel interval technique, combine a concise form with high demands for precision and control. The *Sonatina*, aimed at younger pianists, preserves classical sonata structure while introducing accessible melodic writing and moderate technical difficulty, thereby responding to the postwar need for pedagogical repertoire in Poland. This duality—of composer and educator—is also reflected in her later vocal miniatures, including *Nad wodą wielką i czystą* (By the Great and Pure Water), *Dzwon i dzwonki* (The Bell and the Little Bells), *Boli mnie głowa* (My Head Hurts), and *Sroczka* (The Little Magpie).

A decisive turning point came with *Muzyka na smyczki, trąbki i perkusję* (*Music for Strings, Trumpets, and Percussion*, 1958), widely recognised as marking the "internal transformation of Bacewicz's musical language." Compared to her earlier works, this composition—with its innovative instrumentation, rhythmic drive, and bold explorations of colour—signals a move away from neoclassical conventions towards an

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[41] Teresa Świercz*, Problemy rytmu w 10 etiudach na fortepian Grażyny Bacewicz,* Gdańsk 1975, cyt. za: https://bacewicz.polmic.pl/... (dostęp: 27.08.2024).
[42] Tadeusz A. Zieliński, *Spotkania z muzyką współczesną. Artykuły* (Kraków: PWM, 1975), s. 15.

individual idiom, one that fuses structural discipline with modernist inventiveness. At this moment, Bacewicz definitively moved beyond academic orthodoxy, opening herself to the pursuit of a personal voice within the polyphonic labyrinth of 20th-century musical modernism.

A review of her creative output from 1945 to 1959 reveals that Bacewicz did not confine herself to a single stylistic language. Instead, she carried out multi-level explorations within traditional forms. In this light, the conventional label of "neoclassicism" appears reductive. Her music eludes narrow stylistic classification; it is rooted less in any strict artistic doctrine than in a broader notion of *classical objectivity*, which integrates historical awareness with modernist invention. As Adrian Thomas observes, this objectivity—shaped during her studies and first manifested as "Parisian neoclassicism" before the war—evolved after 1945 into a universal aesthetic matrix, capable of encompassing "*It could embrace Baroque pastiche in 1945 and 1951, Szymanowskian idioms in 1948 and 1954, and folk-dance miniatures and symphonic grandiloquence in the early 1950s."*[43]

It is no surprise that Bacewicz herself consistently distanced herself from the "neoclassicism" label—aware that this term, by attempting to reduce the complexity of her musical language, overlooked the evolution of her individual rhythmic, timbral, and formal grammar. As Adrian Thomas aptly observes: *"In the most outstanding works—the three string quartets,the Concerto for String Orchestra and the Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion—they contribute not as neoclassical relics but as integral components in a stylistic amalgam that is very much Bacewicz's own. She warrants the neoclassical label no more than does Bartók or Shostakovich."*[44]

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[43] Adrian Thomas, *Grażyna Bacewicz: Chamber and Orchestral Music*, Polish Music History Series, s. 46.
[44] Tamże, s. 46.

3.5 1960–1969

Building upon the structural and timbral experiments of the late 1950s, Bacewicz turned increasingly towards large-scale instrumental and orchestral forms, which came to dominate her output in the 1960s. Although the piano ceased to occupy the centre of her compositional focus, it retained a crucial role as a vehicle for concentrated form and radical material economy. During this period, Bacewicz assimilated avant-garde techniques—including serialism, aleatoricism, and timbral exploration—but refracted them through the lens of a deeply individualised musical poetics. By any standard, 1965 marked an exceptionally prolific year, yielding major works such as the *Divertimento* for strings, *Violin Concerto No. 7*, the tripartite *Musica sinfonica*, *Ricercar* for horn and chamber ensemble, *Piano Quintet No. 2*, *String Quartet No. 7*, *Trio* for oboe, harp and percussion, and *Mały tryptyk* ("Little Triptych") — her final solo piano composition.

Mały tryptyk, composed of three stylistically diverse miniatures, employs a loose ABA structure in each movement, with irregular phrase lengths and unpredictable motivic organisation. Melodic material is almost entirely replaced by brief, discrete figures and autonomous sound units, emancipated from tonal control.

Thanks to the remarks of Regina Smendzianka, a distinguished Polish pianist, we gain insight into the unique sound matter of the work. As she emphasised: *"This piece, which takes a little over two minutes has some fascinating dynamic and aural effects due to the most interesting use of the sustaining pedal."*[45] This bold exploration of sound – including resonances, overlapping overtones, and effects resembling clusters or fading reverberations – was novel in the context of traditional piano literature. These innovations align with Bacewicz's late-period explorations, focused on the emancipation of timbre and texture. Despite its concise form, *Mały tryptyk* condenses key traits of her mature musical language: weakened harmonic frameworks, fragmented

[45] Regina Smendzianka, cytowana w: B.M. Maciejewski, *Twelve Polish Composers*, London: Allegro Press, 1976, s. 73.

melodic lines, and free, collage-like logic in combining autonomous sound planes. Although similar devices appeared in 20th-century avant-garde, Bacewicz gave them a personal character – rather than abandoning traditional notation, she used it to precisely convey new effects, ensuring faithful realisation of her compositional intentions.[46]

In the mid-1960s, Bacewicz composed other important works involving the piano: the *Piano Quintet No.2* and the *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra*. In the Piano *Quintet No.2* (1965), the piano, freed from its role as harmonic foundation, collaborates with the string quartet in creating a polyphonic sound texture, acting as an equal partner in shaping timbre and texture.

Although Bacewicz's final creative years yielded a relatively small number of compositions, each was crafted with Benedictine precision as a study in form and sound. Even shortly before her death in January 1969, despite deteriorating health, she continued working on new projects, demonstrating her unwavering creative drive.

Bacewicz[47] herself periodised her musical evolution thus: *"I. Youthful – highly experimental; II. Erroneously termed neoclassical here, though fundamentally atonal; III. My current phase, still evolving."*

This tripartite division finds its clearest reflection in her piano works. In the early phase, they combine Polish late-Romantic pathos with Impressionist sensitivity and neoclassical rationalism. From the 1940s onward, her musical language undergoes progressive condensation and growing individualisation, eventually incorporating serial techniques and sonoristic experiments in the 1960s.

One may argue that the evolution of Bacewicz's piano output forms a microcosm of her stylistic development. Always maintaining a balance between

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[46] Grażyna Bacewicz, *Według szkiców odpowiedzi na nieznaną ankietę – lata 60-te*, cyt. za: https://bacewicz.polmic.pl/... (dostęp: 28.08.2024).

[47] Grażyna Bacewicz, *Według szkiców odpowiedzi na nieznaną ankietę – lata 60-te*, cyt. za: https://bacewicz.polmic.pl/... (dostęp: 29.08.2024). *"I młodzieńczy – bardzo eksperymentalny, II — zwany u nas niesłusznie neoklasycznym, a będący w gruncie rzeczy atonalnym i okres III, w którym jeszcze tkwię."*

intellectual discipline and creative boldness, she traced a vivid and clearly defined artistic path – a bridge between tradition and modernity, structure and freedom.

Chapter 4 Analysis of Selected Works

4.1 Analysis of the Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano

Grażyna Bacewicz's Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano, completed in 1949, was written during the peak of her creative activity. In post-war Poland, despite the tightening ideological control over art and the constraints imposed by the socialist realist reform of culture, Bacewicz adopted a strategy of combining artistic independence with adaptation to the demands of the time. This is reflected in numerous instrumental miniatures based on Polish folk dances (including the oberek), rooted in tonality yet marked by folkloric immediacy. Such a compositional stance allowed her to sustain remarkable productivity even under the doctrine of socialist realism. The Fourth Sonata holds a special place in Bacewicz's output, serving as a representative example of her chamber music "middle style"[48].

As a work of her mature period, this sonata continues neoclassical constructivist tendencies while evolving towards heightened emotional expressiveness—contrasting with the restrained objectivism of her pre-war output. The sonata radiates intensity: lyrical melodic lines, along with harmonic and timbral devices, are subordinated to dramatic narrative. A particular innovation lies in its architecture: instead of the traditional three-movement scheme, Bacewicz adopts a four-movement layout, in which each movement forms part of a polyphonic dialogue of contrasts. Violin and piano develop parallel yet timbrally distinct narratives, based on homophonic or quasi-polyphonic textures. Movement I combines a slow introduction with a sonata-form Allegro; Movement II is a lyrical Adagio; Movement III—a lively Scherzo; the final *Con passione* concludes the work with a dramatic crescendo. The inclusion of the scherzo and expressive finale enriches the structure with additional layers of emotional gradation.

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[48] Określenie „styl średni" odnosi się do drugiego okresu twórczości kompozytorki, przypadającego na lata 1945–1959, w którym wykształciła swój indywidualny język muzyczny.

In the harmonic domain, Bacewicz—much like Stravinsky during his neoclassical period—employs non-functional harmonic devices while preserving clear tonal centres. Her writing is governed by a linear voice-leading logic, enriched by displacement techniques and chromatic transformations. The equilibrium between the violin and piano parts manifests through thematic polyphony: motifs intersect, overlap, and coexist, generating a clear yet tension-laden sonic texture.

4.1.1 Movement I – Moderato

Movement 1			
Part	Measure numbers	Section	Tonality, collections
Introduction mm1-22	mm.1-4 mm.5-14 mm.15-22	Intro Theme(Piano) Intro Theme(Violin) Intro Theme(Piano)	C Maj /F Pentatonic Scale,Tonally Ambiguous B Maj/E Pentatonic Scale,Tonally Ambiguous C Maj/ F Pentatonic Scale,Tonally Ambiguous;mm18-22:E♭ Maj
Esposition Mm22-111	mm.22-37 mm.38-58 mm.59-66 mm.66-84 mm.84-103 mm.104-111	First Thematic Group: Theme A / Transition / Theme A' Second Thematic Group: Theme B / Theme C / Theme D/Transition	D min F Maj ;41-48:G Maj;49-53:A min;54-58:G Maj; C Maj E min E min,Tonally Ambiguous D min
Development Mm112-155	mm.112-128 mm.129-137 mm.138-155	Beginning of Development Transition Preperation of Recapitulation	D min Tonally Ambiguous A Maj---F Maj
Recapitulation mm.155-235	mm.156-170 mm.171—194 mm.195-215 mm.216-224	Theme A Transition Theme B Theme A'/Transition	D min F Maj ;174-181:G Maj;182-186:A min;187-189:G Maj;190-194:D min, Tonally Ambiguous C Harm. Maj C Maj/G
Coda mm.224-243	mm.224-235 mm.236-243	Theme A Material Intro theme	D min F Pentatonic Scale，Tonally Ambiguous

The first movement, *Allegro*, structured in a conventional ABA form, opens with an extended 22-bar introduction based on a dialogue between the violin and piano, deliberately lacking a clear tonal centre. The piano, marked *ppp* and playing in the low register, highlights second intervals within a melody unfolding in octaves (bars 1–4).

The main phrase seems to pivot around the pitch *D* (bar 2), yet the displacement of accents and a crescendo to *pp* clearly emphasise the pitch *B* – a note outside the *F* pentatonic scale – thus generating harmonic tension.

In bars 5–8, the violin picks up the initial motif, transposed by a major seventh from *G* (or a minor second down), intensifying the dissonant effect. The tonal centre remains unclear: the progression could be interpreted as a modulation towards B major or as a fragment of the E pentatonic scale (*E–F♯–G♯–B–C♯*). The enharmonic descent from *C♯* to *C* in bar 8, along with the appearance of *A♭*—which does not belong to either of these scalar frameworks—forces the performer to decide which pitch is to be treated as central.



Fig. 4-1-1. *Violin and Piano Sonata No. 4*, Movement I, bars 1–12.

In the third phrase (bars 9–22), the piano motif is transposed an octave higher in the right hand, accompanied by a tonal shift towards *E-fla*t major. The crescendo (p to mf) and the phrase's unexpected resolution on the note *F* in the violin line create a sense of suspension and surprise. This harmonic and dynamic instability effectively sets the stage for the entrance of the principal theme.



Fig. 4-1-2. *Violin and Piano Sonata No. 4*, Movement I, bars 22–25.

A key element of Grażyna Bacewicz's compositional language is the strategy of thematic reduction and condensation.[49] Within the ABA form, the principal theme returns without development or transformation, presented in a shortened version with only minimal motivic or harmonic alterations.

The first theme appears abruptly after a brief rest in bar 22, marked *Con passione*, accompanied by a tempo change from *Moderato* to *Allegro non troppo*. The shift to *D minor* is articulated through repeated octave leaps in the piano bass (from dominant to tonic). The theme, concise and compact, is passed between the violin and piano in alternation. Chromatic motion generates tension, while in bars 26–28, a rhythmic figure (semiquaver followed by a quaver) functions as a transition towards the return of the theme. Bacewicz often uses semitone motion to obscure a stable tonal centre. In bars 36–38, the theme returns without the piano's octave bass reinforcement; instead, double stops in the violin part enhance the dissonant character of the texture. For the performer, it is essential to highlight the contrasts in articulation and tension between the successive thematic appearances, while maintaining the equilibrium of the instrumental dialogue.

Subsequent sections exhibit a clear blurring of tonal centre, alongside a more intricate harmonic language and a deliberate weakening of its structural role. In the first

[49] Maryla Renat, *Wybrane zagadnienia idiomu kompozytorskiego Grażyny Bacewicz*, w: Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie. Edukacja Muzyczna, nr 1 (2005), s. 44.

transitional passage (bars 38–43), the violin executes a second-based scale in octaves, while the piano restricts itself to subtle semitonal displacements within chordal textures. The subdued dynamic underscores the linear motion of the thematic material, intensifying the expressive contour of the melodic narrative.



Fig. 4-1-3. *Violin and Piano Sonata No. 4*, Movement I, bars 37–45.

In the second transitional episode, the composer introduces a new rhythmic pattern with a toccata-like character.



Fig. 4-1-4. *Violin and Piano Sonata No. 4*, Movement I, bars 46–50.

Within this passage, the violin and piano form a complementary rhythmic relationship. The violin, aiming for articulate *marcato* expression, employs the darker timbre of the *G* and *D* strings to create a "sonoristic sharpening" effect. From bar 67, a contrasting secondary theme emerges. In the piano part, a pedal tone *E* in *E minor* is accompanied by non-chord and passing tones, producing a diffuse chordal texture. Each accented note following an ornament must be clearly articulated without disrupting the overall balance.



Fig. 4-1-5. *Violin and Piano Sonata No. 4*, Movement I, bars 66–72.

In the 44-bar development section (bars 112–156), Bacewicz systematically develops the introductory motifs, particularly in the piano's upper voice, characterised by clearly articulated accents and a double repetition.

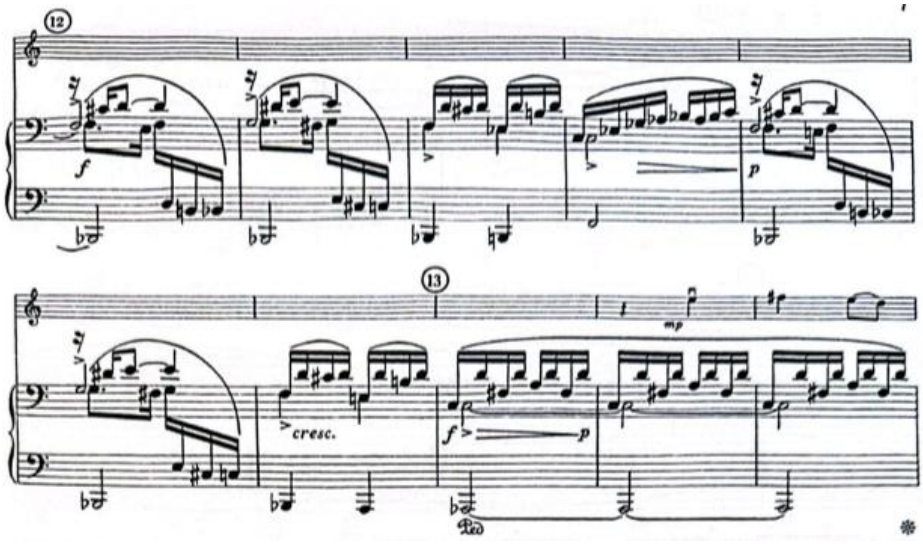


Fig. 4-1-6. *Violin and Piano Sonata No. 4*, Movement I, bars 112–126.

Particular attention should be paid to Bacewicz's use of a technique resembling *bariolage*, which musicologist Małgorzata Gąsiorowska describes as a "pendulum structure."[50] Its most characteristic feature involves playing on a single string while gradually narrowing or widening the ambitus, alternating between fixed and moving pitches. Moreover, the rhythmic displacement resulting from the violin's entrance on the weak beat further emphasises the chaotic character of the transformed motif. Unlike the solemn opening *Moderato*, the development section is set in a dynamic *Allegro*, requiring performers to highlight thematic accents with precision while ensuring textural clarity.

Subsequently, Bacewicz expands the material from the second transitional section, using chromatic scale-like passages in the violin part to build tension, which gradually subsides in the more subdued part of the development.



Fig. 4-1-7. *Violin and Piano Sonata No. 4*, Movement I, bars 143–148.

In the analysed passage, a significant inversion of performative roles takes place: the violin, previously serving as the principal melodic carrier, is transformed into an accompanying instrument, while the piano takes over the initiative through linear melodic writing. In interpreting this passage, the performer should focus on emphasising the organic tension between stasis and motion—on the one hand, through precise differentiation of articulation in the violin part (*marcato* under pedal tones

[50] Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1999), s. 167. „struktury wahadłowej"

versus *legato* in connecting phrases); on the other hand, by accentuating the internal pulsation of the piano line, achieved through subtle agogic and dynamic modulations.[51]

From bar 156, the recapitulation begins with a complete presentation of the first theme, which, in bar 194, transitions into the second theme.



Fig. 4-1-8. *Violin and Piano Sonata No. 4*, Movement I, bars 194–198.

The climax of the entire movement—indicated dynamically as *p–molto cresc–f–ff* is dominated by a transformed version of the principal theme and reaches its expressive peak in bar 224. The piano concludes this section with parallel triads in the bass octave (deliberately employing parallel fifths in the lower voice), introducing the coda.

In the final bars, the introductory motif returns in the violin part, accompanied by a sustained piano chord. Despite the tonal ambiguity, a clear centre emerges around the pitch *E*, rhetorically preparing the tonality of the following movement. The return to *Tempo I* fulfils a dual function: closing the formal cycle and serving as a rhetorical bridge to the slow movement.

[51] Por. Maryla Renat, *Wybrane zagadnienia idiomu kompozytorskiego Grażyny Bacewicz*, w: Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie. Edukacja Muzyczna, z. 1, 2005, s. 48.



Fig. 4-1-9. *Violin and Piano Sonata No. 4*, Movement I, bars 236–243.

4.1.2 Movement II – Andante ma non troppo

Movement 2		
Part	Measure numbers	Tonality, collections
A	mm.1-12	A min-C/G Maj-A min
B	mm.13-21	B Maj-E Maj
A’	mm.22-32	A min-C/G Maj-A min
B’	mm.33-40	B Maj-E Maj
C	mm.41-61	C Maj/min
B’’	mm.62-69	B Maj
A’’	mm.70-81	A min

The second movement follows a tripartite structure with clear features of a rondo. The main theme (A) and the episodes (B, C) are distinctly separated. The recurring A theme is interwoven with a transformed version of episode B (B′), in which an ascending progression functions as a transition to the central episode C. The combination of material from B and the return of A in the conclusion reinforces the formal coherence of the entire movement.

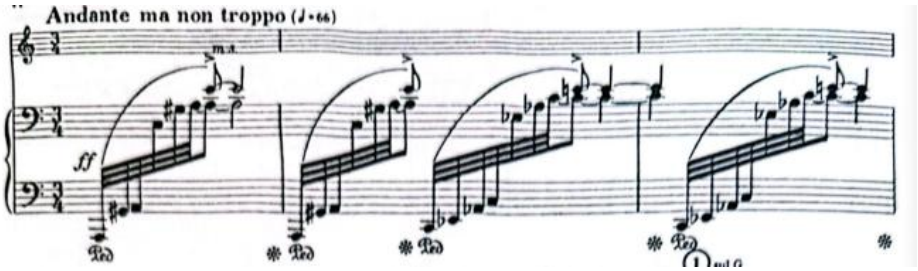


Fig. 4-1-10. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, second movement, bars 1–3.

The movement opens with a dialogue between piano and violin. The piano's initial part, reminiscent of improvised arpeggios, gradually leads to two sustained pitches that establish the tonal centre of *A minor*. The melodic motion from *G-sharp* to *A* underscores the tonic function and creates a sense of suspended harmonic tension. At the same time, Bacewicz introduces accents that produce syncopation, obscuring the perception of regular metre and requiring the performer to exercise precise rhythmic control and careful phrase shaping.

After a brief dialogue between piano and violin, a chordal theme in *B major* appears, characterised by a blurred modal colouring and a clear tendency to move toward *E major*. The melody, enriched with chromatic passages, gradually thickens the texture. Episode B brings a stark expressive contrast: the metre changes to 6/8, and the piano responds with a cantabile line reminiscent of a lullaby, creating a space of lyrical stability.



Fig. 4-1-11. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, second movement, bars 10–18.

The climactic section C, like episode B, is based on the same metre and motivic material. The piano maintains an even rhythm consisting of doubled tertian chords, sustained by stable pedal tones (*C* and *E-flat*). The repeated pattern of two chords per bar, along with shifted accents, creates a pulsating, breath-like structure that supports the development of the violin line and highlights its timbre in the upper register. This requires the pianist to shape the pulse and accents consciously, in a "breathable" manner that supports rather than overpowers the violin's narrative line. A growing crescendo leads to a point of maximum tension, creating the most dramatic moment in the movement.



Fig. 4-1-12. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, second movement, bars 41–44.

From bar 62, the two main themes return in reversed order: first comes section B″ (texturally identical to bars 13–21 but with different dynamics), followed by section A″, with a clearly emphasised role for the violin.

In the final four bars, the piano, through arpeggios highlighting the pitches *A* and *E*, creates an acoustic arch with the movement's opening, and both instruments join in the concluding tutti.

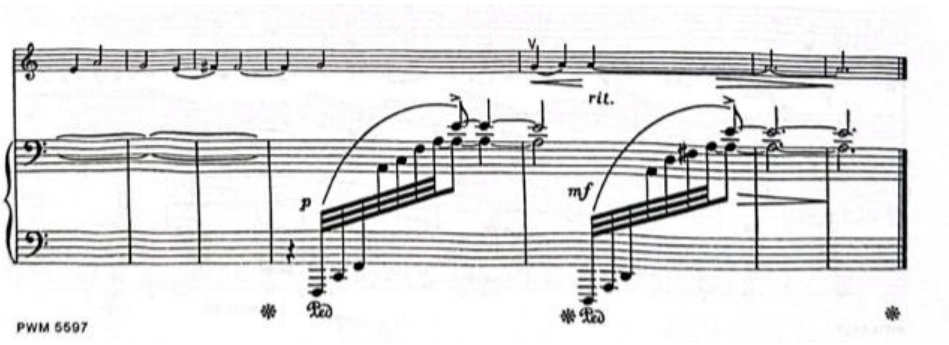


Fig. 4-1-13. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, second movement, bars 75–81.

4.1.3 Movement III – Scherzo. Molto vivo

Movement 3			
Part	Measure numbers	Section	Tonality, collections
A （mm.1-68）	mm.1-4 mm.5-34 mm.35-58 mm.59-68	Introduction Theme 1 Theme 2 Transition	A min A min C Maj/D♭ Ambiguous-G Maj
B	mm.68-86		G Maj
A’ (mm.87-140)	mm.87-116 mm.117-140	Theme 1 Theme 2	A min C Maj/D♭
C	mm.141-168		Ambiguous-G Maj
A’ (mm.169-188)	mm.169-178 mm.179-188	Theme 2 Transition	C Maj/D♭ Ambiguous
B	mm.189-206		A min
A’’	mm.207-216	Theme 1	A min
Coda	mm.217-221		A min

The third movement has the character of a scherzo, but instead of the classical ABA form, Bacewicz adopts a freer structure with rondo-like features. Harmony and

texture unfold in a linear manner, and the frequent semitone shifts combined with the absence of clearly defined tonal functions result in an ambiguous sound, giving the movement a grotesque and slightly tense quality.



Fig. 4-1-14. Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano, movement III, bar 1.

The scherzo opens with a four-bar introduction, in which the piano presents a three-note motif *(E–F–G*), emphasising the dominant of *A minor* through octave leaps on the pitch *E*. The violin responds in quavers, establishing a dialogic exchange between the instruments. Despite the shared staccato articulation, the contrast between the violin's "bouncing" bowing and the piano's short legato phrasing creates a textural polyphony that defines the whimsical character of the movement. The conclusion of bar 4 may be interpreted as a rhetorical "breath"—a brief suspension that enhances the dramaturgy of the transition into bar 5 and heightens the expressive effect.

The rhythmic development of the semiquaver motif in the piano part, combined with the violin's chromatic melodic line—marked by ornamentation, unstable registers, and "suspended" rhythmic patterns—amplifies the effect of jesting agility. In bars 25–34, a timbral inversion occurs: thematic material is transferred between the instruments, bringing out their contrasting sonorities while preserving a unified musical concept.



Fig. 4-1-15. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, Movement III, bars 1–12.

In section A (bars 35–58), a modulation to *C major* occurs. The theme is passed alternately between the piano and the violin, and the performer should pay close attention to syncopations and rhythmic displacements, which significantly affect the perception of structural coherence. From bar 47, extreme chromaticism leads to a complete dissolution of tonal clarity. The transitional passage—characterised by stacked fourths and rhythmic features analogous to section A (*staccato* quavers, rapid semiquavers)—prepares the ground for episode B, in which the violin presents a *G major* scale in long note values, concluding on the dominant.



Fig. 4-1-16. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, Movement III, bars 58-63.

From bar 69, the piano's irregular bass line introduces instability, while the violin and the upper piano voice engage in a lyrical dialogue based on stable melodic figures.



Fig. 4-1-17. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, Movement III, bars 69-73.

Subsequently, quartal sequences in staccato quavers generate mounting harmonic tension, contrasting with the "calming" ascending scale in the piano part (bars 87–140), which functions as a rhetorical preparation for the reprise A′.



Fig. 4-1-18. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, Movement III, bars 79-84.

In Section C, alongside the staccato motif from A, Bacewicz intensifies chromatic fifth-based progressions[52]—a feature characteristic of her idiom. Despite the lack of a clear tonal centre, the final *E major* and *D-flat* major scales in the violin (alluding to the motif concluding the transitional passage) function as a bridge to the reprise.

[52] Por. Maryla Renat, *Wybrane zagadnienia idiomu kompozytorskiego Grażyny Bacewicz*, w: Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie. Edukacja Muzyczna, z. 1, 2005, s. 55.



Fig. 4-1-19. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, Movement III, bars 161-165.

The two abbreviated returns of A function as introductions to section B and the final segment, each limited to a single statement of the theme. In the coda, the piano revisits the introductory motif in a modified 6/8 metre, while the final chord—tonic with the dominant—is disrupted by the presence of a foreign pitch, *D*, which may be interpreted as either a suspended or transitional tone. This intentional instability, continued into the subsequent movement in *A minor*, reinforces a modernist conception of open form.



Fig. 4-1-20. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, Movement III, bars 216-221.

4.1.4 Movement IV – Finale. Con passione

Movement 4			
Part	Measure numbers	Section	Tonality, collections
Esposition mm.1-95	mm.1-6 mm.7-31 mm.32-41 mm.42-71 mm.72-95	Introduction Theme A Group Theme 1 A Theme 2 Theme B Group A' Theme 1	A min Tonally Ambiguous Tonally Ambiguous G Maj, Tonally Ambiguous Ambiguous
Development mm.96-132	mm.96-116 mm.117-122 mm.123-132	Beginning of Development Transition (Intro theme) Preperation of Recapitulation	B Maj, Tonally Ambiguous A Min Ambiguous
Recapitulation mm.133-172	mm.133-140 mm.141-172	Theme 2 Theme B	Tonally Ambiguous C Maj-G min-G ♯ min-C Maj-D Maj
Coda	mm.173-185	Theme A Material	C Maj

Bacewicz scholar Adrian Thomas refers to the "Quixotic diversity"[53], elements of which are discernible in the fourth movement. Formally drawing on the sonata-rondo structures of the Classical period, this movement fuses neoclassical structural discipline with avant-garde harmonic language, generating a dynamic tension between tradition and experiment.

[53] Adrian Thomas, *Grażyna Bacewicz: Chamber and Orchestral Music*, Polish Music History Series (Los Angeles, CA: Friends of Polish Music, University of Southern California, 1985), s. 34. (ang. „Quixotic diversity")



Fig. 4-1-21. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, movement IV, bars 1–6.

The introduction is brief, comprising two phrases. In the first phrase, the piano introduces forceful arpeggios, moving from a Neapolitan chord to a major triad, which creates dramatic tension from the outset. In the second phrase, the bass ascends chromatically, forming a contrapuntal relationship with a fourth-based sequence in the piano's upper voice.

Particularly noteworthy is the presence of *set 3–3 (0,1,4)*[54], which appears both vertically and horizontally. Rather than fulfilling a tonal function, this trichord shapes intervallic and timbral relationships, lending the entire passage a distinctly sonoristic character.



Fig. 4-1-22. Set 3–3 (0,1,4), bars 2–3.

[54] The term "set 3–3" originates from the classification system developed by Allen Forte (1926–2014), an American music theorist renowned for his pioneering research on set theory and the analysis of atonal music. Forte devised a method for categorising pitch-class sets in post-tonal music, assigning each unique configuration a set-class number based on its intervallic structure. For example, "set 3–3" denotes a trichord containing a semitone and a minor third, such as C–C♯–E. In simplified terms, Forte's system enables precise descriptions of non-tonal or unconventional sonorities, which is particularly useful in the analysis of twentieth-century music, where traditional harmonic rules often fall short.

Following the stormy opening, the *Poco meno* section introduces a lyrical atmosphere.



Fig. 4-1-23. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, movement IV, bars 7-11.

Simultaneously, the right hand of the piano part introduces continuous, non-functional chromatic progressions. The bass line contains additional semitonal sequences built upon irregularly spaced minor third intervals. This linear chromatic modulation significantly increases the technical demands of the passage, requiring the pianist to maintain narrative momentum—crucial for revealing the formal structure and ensuring the coherence of the movement. At bar 24, the *set 3–3 (0,1,4)* returns, with the violin part embellishing it with additional melodic ornamentation. The second theme of Section A employs harmonic textures dominated by stacked seconds, producing a dissonant, grotesque sonority.



Fig. 4-1-24. *Set 3–3 (0,1,4)*, bars 24–25.

Episode B introduces a distinct stylistic reference to the French Baroque gigue, whose rhythmic vitality and dance-like character provide a stark contrast to the surrounding sections.



Fig. 4-1-25. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, movement IV, bars 42-47.

From bar 42, the piano part develops in *G major*, creating a contrapuntal texture based on wide intervals (e.g., the tenth *A–d*^{1}), which generate harmonic tension and an unusual sonority.

In bars 58–71 (see Fig. 4-1-26), the climactic passage of Section B merges polyrhythmic interaction—between four-beat violin phrases and piano triplets—with chromatic bass motion (*G–G♯–C*), creating a sense of suspension and heightened drama.

For performers, maintaining balance between the parts, articulatory precision, pulse control, and careful use of the sostenuto pedal are essential to the cohesion and clarity of this section.



Fig. 4-1-26. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, movement IV, bars 64-71.

The sudden release of tension leads to a return of the first theme from Section A, now reworked with earlier motivic material and functioning as a bridge into the development. This development, divided into three segments, systematically elaborates on motifs from the first and second movements. In bars 96–112, the tonal centre briefly stabilises in *B major*, with the violin recalling the rhythmic contour of the second theme from Section A, while the piano articulates vertically doubled chords across various registers—the bass providing harmonic grounding, and the right hand transforming the gigue theme into triplet figuration. Here, sensitive use of the middle pedal is crucial to maintain bass resonance while preserving the buoyancy and clarity of the upper triplets.

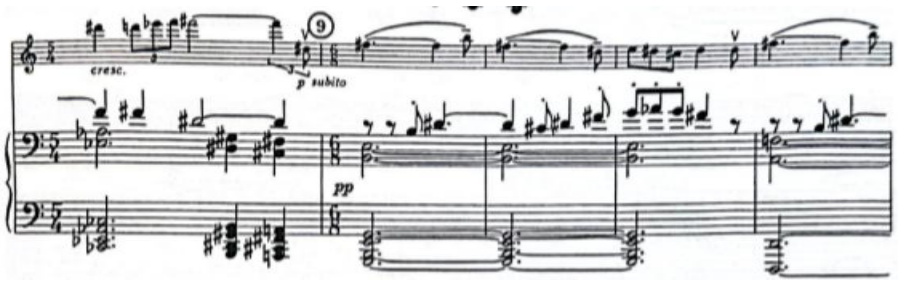


Fig. 4-1-27. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, movement IV, bars 95-99.

In the transitional passage (bars 117–122), a condensed recollection of the introductory material leads into the climax from rehearsal number 12. The piano reiterates chords in multiple octaves, employing selective use of the middle pedal to sustain resonance in both the upper and lower registers while keeping the middle range acoustically neutral, thereby forming a timbral bridge. The violin, operating in the same register, alternates staccato eighths with *marcato* septuplets.

In this intricate texture, the key challenges lie in differentiating articulation, maintaining rhythmic coordination—particularly during bow changes—and achieving a balanced dynamic interplay between the parts. Clarity of harmonic verticals and tension control across registers are vital to the formal legibility and dramatic impact of the culmination.

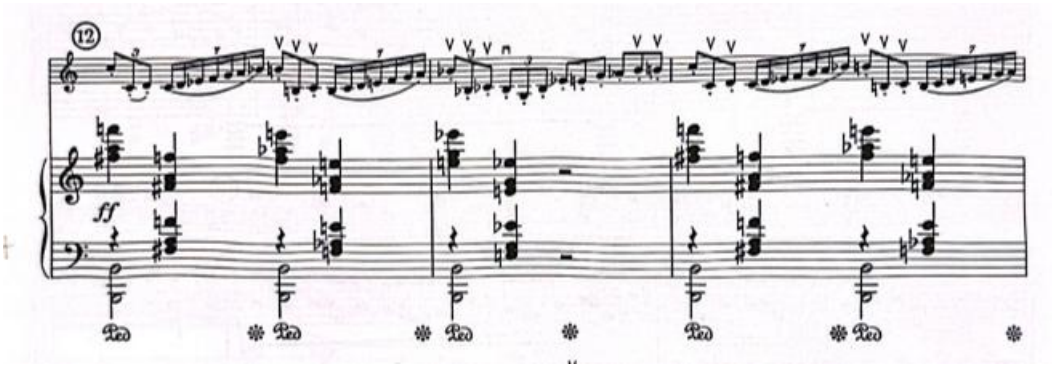


Fig. 4-1-28. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, movement IV, bars 123-125.

From bar 133, the recapitulation begins, reintegrating the second theme from Section A along with material from B, expanded through a crescendo-based sequence ($G \rightarrow G\sharp \rightarrow C \rightarrow D$), which reaches full expressive intensity in the coda (marked *mf* and *Più mosso*).



Fig. 4-1-29. *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano*, movement IV, bars 173-175.

The violin introduces a new motif, while the piano transforms the triplet arpeggios into a rhythmically nuanced form. Linear chromatic progression ultimately dissolves the tonal centre, gradually dissipating energy in an austere coda.

Stefan Kisielewski commented:

"[…] Despite the undeniable pathos and monumentality of the piece, its texture remains simple, clear, and economical—the piano part stands out as unburdened yet expressive, offering an excellent contrast to the violin. Dramatic intensity and pathos are achieved here through remarkably simple means."[55]

In the Fourth Sonata, Bacewicz synthesises a range of traditional elements within the broad framework of neoclassicism, granting the piano an equal role to that of the violin. The instrument does not merely serve an accompanying function but actively shapes the work's architecture through its harmonic complexity, textural richness, and refined melodic invention. The interaction between instruments takes the form of a polyphonic dialogue, with initiative fluidly exchanged between the parts. Crucially, as both a distinguished violinist and a skilled pianist, Bacewicz consciously designs this symmetry, rejecting the conventional dualism of "melody versus accompaniment" in favour of a synergistic narrative in which the two instruments complement one another. This concept is deeply rooted in her dual expertise and is fully realised in her

[55] Stefan Kisielewski, *Recenzja z prawykonania IV Sonaty na skrzypce i fortepian* (26 IX 1950), „Tygodnik Powszechny" 1950, nr 41. *"[…] przy niewątpliwym patosie i monumentalności utworu, ma on fakturę prostą, klarowną, oszczędną – zwraca uwagę partia fortepianu, nieprzeładowana a wyrazista, świetnie kontrastująca ze skrzypcami. Dramatyczność i patos osiągane tu są niezwykle prostymi środkami."*

vocal-instrumental works, where the principle of equal voices attains a masterful level of expressive integration.

4.2 Analysis of Vocal Works

4.2.1 Early Songs of Bacewicz: Oriental Inspirations and Poetics of Sound

In 1930s Poland, under the influence of neoclassical and modernist currents, instrumental music assumed a dominant position. However, this does not imply that Grażyna Bacewicz marginalised vocal composition—on the contrary, the art song represented a significant trend in interwar Poland. This is evidenced by the fact that when she composed her first vocal work *Różowe pole powojów* (1934), Karol Szymanowski—the foremost representative of the genre—had already completed masterpieces such as *Słopiewnie*. An examination of Bacewicz's complete output of sixteen solo songs reveals a consistent interest in a wide spectrum of texts, ranging from folklore and local poetry to more exotic, Oriental inspirations. As early as the 1930s, she drew on Oriental poetry in her published songs, which may be interpreted as a conscious engagement with the literary and musical trends of the time.

As musicologist Anna Nowak notes in her study *Pieśni Grażyny Bacewicz* (1989): *"Oriental poetry enjoyed considerable popularity in interwar Poland. One could say it became something of a fashion, even among composers. Let us recall: several dozen songs inspired by Oriental poetry were composed at the time by Szymanowski, Perkowski, Lefeld, Friemann, Maklakiewicz, and Regamey. Perhaps this impulse played a role."*[56]

Róże

[56] A. Nowak, *Pieśni solowe Grażyny Bacewicz*, referat wygłoszony na sesji ZKP „Grażyna Bacewicz – człowiek i dzieło. W 80. rocznicę urodzin i 20. rocznicę śmierci", Warszawa, 9–10 stycznia 1989, s. 120. "*Poezje orientalne cieszyły się w międzywojennej Polsce sporą popularnością. Można powiedzieć, że panowała na nie swego rodzaju moda, także wśród kompozytorów. Przypomnijmy: pieśni inspirowanych poezją orientalną powstało wówczas kilkadziesiąt, komponowali je: Szymanowski, Perkowski, Lefeld, Friemann, Maklakiewicz, Regamey. Być może, iż ten impuls zadziałał*"

Grażyna Bacewicz began her vocal oeuvre with the song *Róże* (1934), based on Leopold Staff's translation of the poem *Nadżé* from an anonymous 10th-century collection of Arabic poetry, published in the anthology *Ogród pieszczot* (1921). For the European cultural imagination of the time, the allure of exoticism represented a realm of mysterious fascination and aesthetic detachment—an attitude strikingly aligned with the neoclassical ideal of "cool objectivism." Composers associated with this aesthetic, including Bacewicz, approached musical material with a characteristic formal distance, a quality evident even in her vocal settings of Oriental poetry. Although she drew on exotic literary sources, she consciously avoided direct musical quotations of Oriental idioms, instead remaining faithful to neoclassical principles of order and structural discipline. At the same time, through deliberate tonal displacements and harmonic instability, she subverts neoclassical conventions, generating a tension between order and disintegration. *Róże*, which balances precisely at this threshold, offers a compelling example of this dialectical approach.

The structure of *Róże*, following an A+A1+B+A2 scheme, develops a single motivic idea through varied transformations. The central section subtly evokes the Polish carol *Przybieżeli do Betlejem* (without direct quotation), suggesting a rootedness in local folk tradition—a persistent element in Bacewicz's stylistic vocabulary.



Fig. 4-2-1. *Róże*, bars 1–5.

The piece is written in *C major*, yet frequent modulations and chromatic piano passages blur the tonal centre, creating a sense of instability. Dense sonorities dominated by second intervals generate harmonic tension. In the textual dimension, the recurring phrase "zerwałem trzy róże" ("I picked three roses") serves as a rhetorical anchor in each A section, providing a structural point of dramatic emphasis. The performer should pay particular attention to nuanced dynamic differentiation in the piano chords and clarity of phrasing in the vocal line, in order to sustain narrative coherence despite the irregular prosody.[57]

Song text:

Dla trojga dziewcząt, co przechadzały się w moim ogrodzie, *(A)*

zerwałem trzy róże. (zerwalem trzy róże)

Nadeszła Nedże niedobra Nedże i rzekła: *(A')*

Zerwałeś trzy róże. (zerwalem trzy róże)

Pokaż mi w swym ogrodzie tę, *(B)*

która jest ci najmilsza i którejbyś nie dał nikomu.

Cicho podałem jej zwierciadło. *(A'')*

(Trzy róże, trzy róże...)

To highlight this turning point, the composer introduces a radical change in the piano texture: the continuous sixteenth notes give way to a sequence of chords.

[57] Por. Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1999), s. 94.



Fig. 4-2-2. *Róże*, bars 21–25.

In section B, the harmony reaches its peak intensity through frequent use of dominant seventh chords. Notably, these tonal shifts do not undermine the neoclassical principles of construction but are instead integrated into their logic, producing a subtle ambivalence between formal discipline and controlled chaos.

Mów do mnie, o miły

In 1936, Bacewicz once again turned to Oriental poetry, selecting the text *Mów do mnie, o miły* (*Speak to Me, My Beloved*) by Rabindranath Tagore, in a Polish translation by Jan Kasprowicz. Scholars of her oeuvre have noted that the growing interest in Tagore's poetry in Poland may have been inspired by Szymanowski's legacy, whose artistic engagement with Tagore had an indirect influence on Bacewicz[58]. As Małgorzata Gąsiorowska writes in her monograph on the composer: "*The musical narrative here is governed by the freedom of emotional shaping of the melodic line, woven from short phrases which nonetheless form a fairly regular pattern. Yet structural regularity gives way to expression; the musical discourse unfolds between parlando full of tension and two expansive outbursts built on wide intervals. The expressive quality of the piece brings to mind some of Szymanowski's songs [...] in*

[58] Zob. szerzej: Renata Czekalska, *The Wonder of Inspiration: Musical Universalizations of Rabindranath Tagore's Poems in Polish Culture*, „Politeja", nr 40 (2016), s. 113–128; Carlo Coppola, *Rabindranath Tagore and Western Composers: A Preliminary Essay*, „Journal of South Asian Literature", vol. 19, nr 2 (1984), s. 41–61.

which the diatonic 'harshness' has here given way to the softness of full chromaticism."[59]

The piece opens in *A minor*, evoking a mystical atmosphere that is temporarily replaced by *A major*. Although chromatic shifts and tonal instability permeate the work, they do not disrupt its unified character, which ultimately resolves with a return to *A major* in the reprise. The composition unfolds through three distinct yet interpenetrating layers: the bass line, sustained by whole notes in nearly every measure, provides a stable harmonic foundation (to ensure maximum continuity in the bass, the performer should carefully distribute the material between the hands); the middle voice, filled with chromatic sequences and rhythmically varied contrapuntal transformations, imparts fluidity and elasticity to the harmonic texture.

Song text:

Mów do mnie, o miły! Mów do mnie, o miły! *(A)*

Powiedz mi w słowach to, co śpiewałeś.

A Noc jest ciemna. Gwiazdy utonęły w obłokach. Wiatr jęczy między liściwiem.

Rozplotę włosy. Płaszcz mój błękitny otuli mnie jak noc. *(B)*

Głowę twą przycisnę do piersi; i tu, w tej błogiej samotni, szeptaj mi o swem sercu.

Zamknę oczy i będę słuchała. Nie spojrzę ci w oblicze.

Gdy skończą się twoje słowa, siedzieć będziemy spokojni i milczący. (C)

Tylko drzewa szemrzeć będą w ciemności.

Noc zblednie. Nadejdzie brzask dnia. Spojrzymy sobie w oczy i każde pójdzie swą drogą.

Mów do mnie, o miły! Powiedz mi w słowach to, co śpiewałeś. *(A)*

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[59] Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1999), s. 105.*„[...] Narracją muzyczną rządzi tu swoboda emocjonalnego kształowania linii melodycznej tkanej z krótkich fraz, układających się mimo to w dość regularny wzór. Regularność budowy ustępuje tu jednak ekspresji; muzyczna mowa rozpostarta jest między pełnym napięcia parlando a dwukrotnym wybuchem szerokointerwalowych zwrotów. Emocjonalność utworu, przywodząca na myśl niektóre pieśni Szymanowskiego [...] w którym diatoniczna , szorstkość' ustapiła tym razem pola miękkości pełnej chromatyki."*

The vocal part, based on the declamatory repetition of a single pitch, gradually ascending in contour, highlights the rhythmic freedom of the text, focusing on the natural intonation of speech and a growing emotional tension that eludes conventional musical structures. The performative character should evoke the atmosphere of a poetic whisper: the intimacy of the phrase "*Mów do mnie, o miły!*" and the half-whisper evocative of nocturnal contemplation in the line "*Głowę twą przycisnę do piersi...*".

The minimalism of means and the dispersed harmonic tension create a contemplative, intimate mood, requiring precise diction, natural phrasing, and expressive restraint on the part of the performer. This synthesis of formal discipline and expressive freedom represents the quintessence of Bacewicz's mature style, in which the literary text becomes an integral component of the sound architecture.

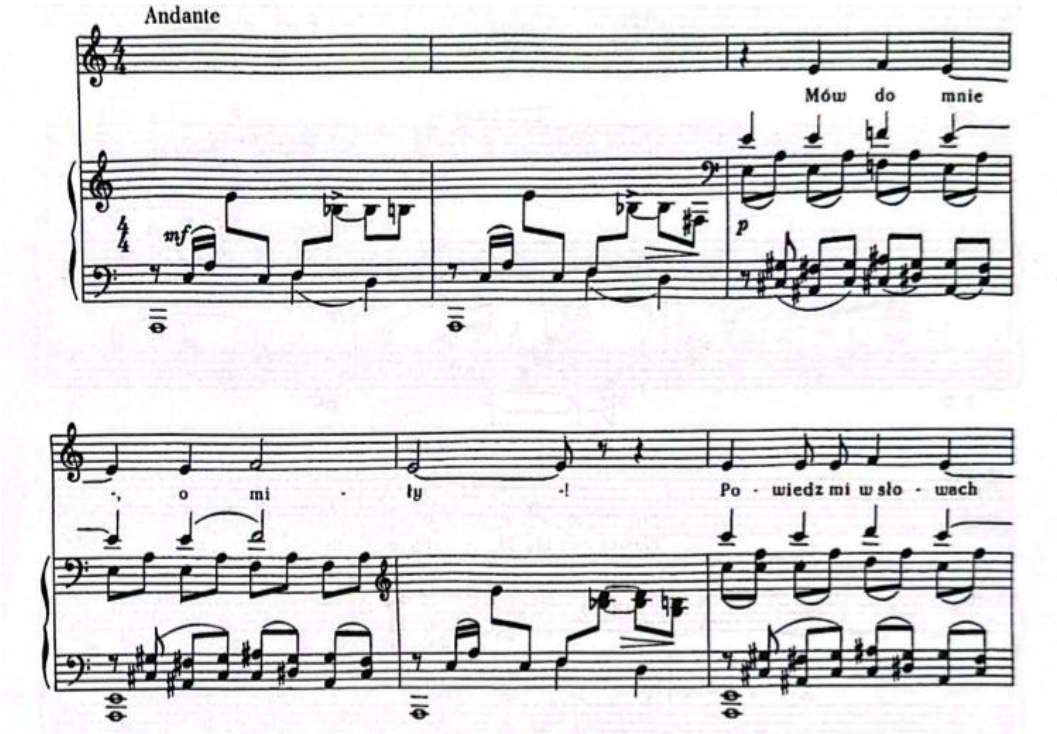


Fig. 4-2-3. *Mów do mnie, o miły*, bars 1–6.

4.2.2 Three Songs from the Arab Period

Two years later, Bacewicz once again turned to Arabic poetry in Leopold Staff's translations, composing the cycle *Trzy pieśni z czasu arabskiego* (*Three Songs from the Arabic Period*)—*Mamidło*, *Inna*, and *Samotność*. The songs, thematically centred around love and solitude, occasionally evoke erotic undertones.

Mamidło

In the first song of the cycle, *Mamidło*, the piano part—structured in a ternary form with reprise (A+B+A1)—contrasts with the vocal line, which is freely shaped according to the prose-like structure of the text. The variable syllabic patterns generate fluid, evolving phrases that depart from traditional versification.

Song text:

Zasnąłem i miałem sen. *(A)*

Śniłem, że wycieńczona karawana ciągnęła pustynią, gdziem jej przewodził.

I że bajeczne mamidło powstało przed nami. *(B)*

I że mamidłem tym byłaś ty z jeziorami twych oczu i z sadami twego ciała.

I że rzuciłaś się ku mnie i że towarzysze moi zrozpaczeni pokładli się, by umrzeć.

Wymówiłem właśnie twe imię by zacząć na nowo ten sen...

Niestety! nie widzi się nigdy dwa razy tego samego mamidła. *(A')*

Unlike in her other works inspired by Oriental poetry, Bacewicz here employs the Phrygian mode on *A*, whose exotic hue—combined with a steady pulse and ternary, "stepped" piano figuration—evokes the heavy footsteps of a weary traveller. The gradual pitch succession accentuates the fatigue and monotony of the journey. In this context, the piano texture reinforces the meaning of the text, resulting in a unified sonic and literary expression



Fig. 4-2-5. *Mamidło*, bars 1–5.

In section B, the piano texture undergoes a fundamental transformation: parallel progressions of arpeggiated augmented triads emerge, accompanied by a sustained upper voice that enters into dialogue with the vocal line. The tonal centre gradually shifts through *A*, *B*, *E-flat*, and *C-sharp*, while increasing harmonic instability intensifies the emotional tension, culminating in the work's dramatic peak. Following bar 37, the reprise restores the Phrygian mode and the ascetic texture heard at the opening, closing the song in a formal arch that also reflects the structure of the literary text.

Inna

Inna, though consisting of only 26 bars, is constructed in a ternary form with reprise (A+B+A1). The piano texture is based on a recurring ostinato pattern in *F major* that continues throughout the piece. This repeated intervallic leap provides a cohesive rhythmic and harmonic foundation.

In section B, the piano texture clearly divides into three parallel voices, which, together with the vocal part, form a four-voice polyphonic structure. As the melodic line ascends, the music reaches its expressive climax, and the harmony becomes more saturated. The independent lines of the piano and the voice are treated contrapuntally, creating a strong contrast and a multilayered sonic structure.

In this passage, the performer should ensure a balanced interplay between the parts: the piano must not overpower the voice, and the timbre and dynamics should reflect the distinctive character of each individual line.



Fig. 4-2-6. *Inna*, bars 13–20.

Song text:

Dłoń moja przesunęła się po jej ciele. Spała. *(A)*

Patrzyłem na nią. Tymczasem myśl ma biegła ku innej. *(B)*

Jakżeby dłoń jej umiała mnie uśpić!

A tak mi trzeba snu... *(A')*

Despite the presence of erotic imagery in the text, Bacewicz refrains from evoking an atmosphere of sensuality or intimacy. Instead, in an Allegretto tempo, she employs short, explosive motifs which, combined with pauses and abrupt contrasts, produce a grotesque and tension-laden effect. This unexpected aesthetic underscores the dramatic character of the work and stands in stark contrast to the textual content.

Samotność

All three songs of the cycle form a miniature arch structure, in which the third piece, *Samotność*, provides a sense of resolution in a tranquil *Andante* tempo following two dynamic *Allegretto* movements. The piano part is constructed in a rondo-like form (A+B+A1+C+A2), where the repetition and transformation of section A correspond to

the textual reiterations, establishing a close interrelation between musical structure and poetic form.

Song text:

Czekam jej, jak co dzień. Czy wróci? *(A)*

Myślę o wieczorze rozstania, o trzasku drzwi, które zawarław gniewie,

o milczeniu, które zaległo w mej duszy. *(B)*

Czekam jej, jak co dzień. Czy wróci? *(A')*

Weszłaby, mówiąc, by coś rzec:

"Mijałam twój dom i przychodzę spojrzeć, czy róże nie ucierpiały od zimy." *(C)*

Potem uśmiechnęłaby się do mego ogródka,

do spokojnego widnokręgu

i wiem, że nie odeszłaby już. *(A'')*

The harmonic structure is grounded in the tonic chord of *D major*, with the progression primarily based on small intervallic oscillations between adjacent tones. This lends the piece a sense of stability, while subtle shifts introduce fluidity and a sense of continuous motion.

Set against this background, the vocal line offers a marked contrast: in section A1, the repetition of the phrase "*Czekam jej, jak co dzień. Czy wróci*" accentuates the underlying longing and emotional uncertainty of the text. The melody is then restated with slight pitch variations, while preserving its rhythmic shape and declamatory character. Quartal and quintal leaps on the words "*Czy wróci*?" express sudden emotional shifts, enhancing the dramatic intensity of the passage.



Fig. 4-2-7. *Samotność*, bars 1–9.

It is precisely this strong contrast between the stability of the piano and the dramatic character of the vocal line that enables the use of subtle rubato to enrich the interpretation, allowing for greater emotional depth and a more pronounced dramatic effect.

4.2.3 Songs from the post-war period

The post-war period marked the zenith of Bacewicz's neoclassical style, a time during which she composed a number of representative instrumental works, including the *Third String Quartet* (1947), *Concerto for String Orchestra* (1948), and *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1949). Amid this intense creative output, two vocal compositions—*Rozstanie* (*Parting*) and *Smuga Cienia* (*The Shadow Line*)—also emerged in 1949, contemporaneous with the *Fourth Sonata*. As Małgorzata Gąsiorowska observes in her monograph on the composer:

"Despite her declared anti-Romantic stance, many external attributes of Romantic art remain present in her music. The category of 'tension,' central to Romantic musical discourse, constitutes a key structural and expressive element in her

compositions. However, the origin of this dramaturgy of tension is different: it is no longer a sonic sublimation of the artist's inner emotions [...] This, in general, is the meaning of the Romantic revindication found in many neoclassical works."[60]

It is difficult to define a singular aesthetic in Bacewicz's music—each piece represents an amalgamation of diverse techniques and expressive devices. In her songs, even those with rigorously constructed forms, melodic development is subordinated to emotional and textual expression, evoking the "Romantic genes" cloaked in neoclassical attire. Even in her seemingly rational works, an undercurrent of deep affective resonance remains perceptible.

Rozstanie

Rozstanie, based on Jan Kasprowicz's Polish translation of Rabindranath Tagore's poem *Zakończ więc pieśń* (*So End the Song*), presents an intriguing counterpoint to Szymanowski's setting of the same text in its German version (*Op. 41 No. 4*). Whereas Szymanowski chose the markings *Lento assai, Mesto*, Bacewicz indicates *Allegretto* and *con passione*, imbuing her setting with a tone that is resolute, dramatic, and impassioned, rather than lyrically subdued.

The ternary structure (ABA) is grounded in *E-flat minor*. The piano part, built from arpeggiated chords spanning different registers within a 6/8 metre, generates a dense, multi-layered sonority that obscures the tonal centre and amplifies the work's underlying tension and harmonic instability.

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[60] Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1999), s. 150. *"Mimo deklarowanej postawy antyromantycznej w jej muzyce zachowało się wiele zewnętrznych atrybutów sztuki tego czasu, zaś centralna dla problematyki muzycznej ‚romantycznosci' kategoria ‚napięcia' stanowi istotny rys konstrukcyjno- wyrazowy dzieł kompozytorki. Inna jest wszakże geneza owej dramaturgii napięć: to już nie dźwiękowa sublimacja wewnętrznych przeżyć artysty [...] Taki jest — w ogólności —sens romantycznych rewindykacji w wielu neoklasycznych dziełach."*



Fig. 4-2-8. Rozstanie, bars 1–4.

Song text:

Zakończ więc pieśń tę ostatnią i rozejdźmy się. *(A)*

Zapomnij tę noc, gdy noc minie. *(B)*

Kogoż ja to usiłuję zamknąć w objęcia?

Sny się uchwycić nie dadzą.

Chciwe me ręce przyciskają próżnię

do serca i ta miażdży moje łono.

Zakończ więc pieśń tę ostatnią i rozejdźmy się. *(A')*

The vocal line, marked by irregular rhythmic shifts and wide intervallic leaps—especially prominent in the phrase "*Zakończ więc pieśń tę ostatnią i rozejdźmy się*"—intensifies the expressive and dramatic character of the text. The melodic line eschews a flowing cantilena in favour of a declamatory, almost recitative-like delivery, shaped by the natural contours of speech. In interpreting these songs, performers should prioritise the natural flow of phrasing and the prosodic contours of the text over rigid rhythmic precision.

Smuga Cienia

The song *Smuga Cienia* signals a shift in Bacewicz's creative focus, turning towards a more philosophical reflection on the human condition, in contrast to her earlier preoccupation with themes of love. As noted in the composer's monograph, Bacewicz's pre- and post-war songs constitute a distinctive cycle of lyrical miniatures

shaped by the perspective of a maturing artist, whereas her later works increasingly engage with universal and existential concerns. The bold hypothesis advanced by some scholars—suggesting that these compositions represent a form of "compensation" for the neoclassical rigour of her instrumental works[61]—opens up new avenues for understanding the dialectic between emotion and rationality in Bacewicz's oeuvre.

Song text:

Przeleciał ptak rzucając cień na otwarte okno, pełne dnia. *(A)*

Więc tak? Więc znowu dal wiosenna,

a oczom w niebie nie ma dnia?

A ruń! A zieleń! Toż to istna zagłada w morzu traw i drzew! *(B)*

Daleko, miła, iść a iść nam w brzozowy szept, wierzbowy śpiew.

Daleko iść i żyć nam długo. *(A')*

Minęło życia pół?... No tak...

I właśnie w oknie cienia smugą przeleciał krackząc czarny ptak.

This composition, based on Władysław Broniewski's poem *Smuga cienia*, adopts a ternary (A+B+A1) structure that reflects the tripartite division of the poetic text. The opening section (A), evoking life's transience through the metaphor of a bird's shadow cast on a windowpane, unfolds in *C-sharp minor*. The piano texture comprises three distinct layers: a pedal tone on *B* in the bass, static chords with minimal voice-leading in the middle register, and a linear, understated melody in the upper register.

[61] Por. Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1999), s. 253.



Fig. 4-2-9. *Smuga Cienia*, bars 1–4.

The B section introduces a surge in intensity: the upper voice begins to leap across wide intervals, while the harmony—enriched with frequent dominant seventh chords—moves away from *C-sharp minor*, introducing tonal instability and a growing sense of unease. The coda, constructed on a quartal progression beginning on *B*, provides a symbolic conclusion—a musical analogue of the poem's framing device, uniting themes of transience and the inevitability of fate.

4.2.4 Songs of return: Mickiewicz and illustrative expression

From 1949, Grażyna Bacewicz entered a six-year hiatus in vocal composition. Anna Nowak interprets this withdrawal as a tacit response to the doctrines of Socialist Realism—a deliberate avoidance of ideologically driven vocal expression in favour of a focus on instrumental music. During this period, her style underwent significant transformation: she gradually moved away from traditional tonality, embracing modern rhythmic approaches involving polymetre and asymmetrical thematic structures, a denser piano texture, and a broader spectrum of tone colours. After the political thaw

of 1953, Bacewicz regained a measure of artistic autonomy, which facilitated her return to the song genre, now marked by a greater level of textural refinement and expressive range.

Dzwon i dzwonki

In 1955, Bacewicz set to music *Dzwon i dzwonki* (*The Bell and the Chimes*), a poem by Adam Mickiewicz, crafting a ternary (ABC) form with a partial reprise. The work is characterised by a close alignment between the music and the semantic content of the text, with the piano part fulfilling an illustrative role evocative of the tradition of the Romantic *Lied*.

Song text:

Dzwonki razu jednego świegotały z wieży do dzwona, *(A)*
który w piasku pod kościołem leży:
„Widzisz, bracie, choć mniejsi, jak śpiewać umiemy, *(B)*
śpiewać umiemy. śpiewać umiemy.
Cóż tobie po wielkości, gdyś głuchy i niemy?“
„O głośni braciszkowie! — dzwon smutny zaszeptał, *(C)*
Dziękujcie plebanowi, że mię w piasek wdeptał.”

In section A, rapid patterns of two- and three-note figures in the upper register imitate the sound of church tower chimes—an effect reinforced by Bacewicz's marking *Zefiroso*. These bell-like motifs unfold in "breathing" phrases, with the harmonic ambitus gradually expanding or contracting. The vocal line does not engage in strict counterpoint with the piano; instead, a polyrhythmic relationship develops, imparting the music with flexibility and narrative freedom.

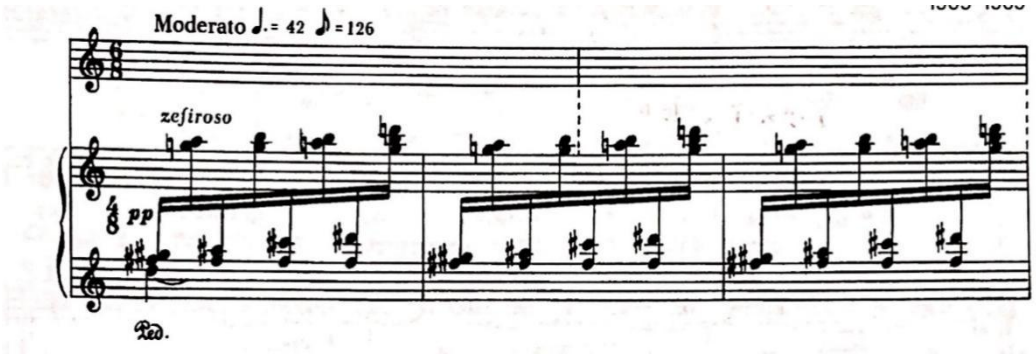


Fig. 4-2-10. *Dzwon i dzwonki*, bars 1–3.

In section B, the rapid semiquaver figurations in the piano part sustain a pulsating momentum, while the gradually intensifying dynamics build dramatic tension. Section C introduces a stark contrast through heavy, lugubrious chords in the lower register, imitating the toll of a large bell. This musical shift reflects the textual dialogue between the "chirping" small bells and the old bell buried in the sand.



Fig. 4-2-11. Dzwon i dzwonki, bars 24–27.

A brief *perdendosi* episode reintroduces the bell motif from section A, enclosing the composition within a symbolic arch form. In performance, it is essential to highlight the contrast between the dynamic, "singing" bells and the heavy, funereal piano chords, while preserving the natural phrasing and ensuring clear, expressive declamation of the text.

4.2.5 Humor and grotesque in late song works

In Bacewicz's final vocal works—especially the last two—a radical stylistic shift becomes evident: a move away from poetic gravitas towards everyday language and humorous expression.

Boli mnie głowa

Boli mnie głowa (1955), set to the composer's own text, is a miniature "monodrama" in which performative aspects play a central role. The vocalist constructs a grotesque comedic effect through gestures, facial expressions, vocal timbre shifts, and nuanced *agogica*, all amplified by sharp dynamic contrasts, fluctuating (and likely autobiographical) emotional states, and deliberate silences surrounding the *Parlando* indication. The piece follows an A+A1 form with minimalist piano accompaniment; changes in metre (3/8 and 2/8) and persistent repeated eighth notes accented on the downbeat create an acoustic backdrop for the singer's staged action. The recurring phrase *"Boli mnie głowa"* lends the work the quality of a simple yet striking monologue, oscillating between humour and absurdity.



Sroczka

The final song, *Sroczka* (1956), based on a folk text, adopts a four-part structure built from short, tightly constructed phrases and frequent modulations. The piano part,

featuring rapid semiquaver ostinatos, syncopated accents, and onomatopoeic effects, creates a swirling, dance-like character. Repetitive vocal lines—such as *"gra sobie, gra, gra gra gra…"*—mimic children's play, enhancing the grotesque effect and infusing the piece with a playful yet absurd tone.

Song text:

Pstra sroczka, pstra, troje dziatek ma.

Jedno orze na ugorze, drugie pogania.

Trzecie siedzi na kamyczku, trzyma skrzypki na rzemyczku,

gra sobie, gra. gra sobie, gra sobie, gra sobie,

gra gra gra gra gra gra gra gra gra gra

W czarnej potoce sroka grzegoce, syn jej się żeni w tureckiej ziemi.

A sroka się dowiedziała, na wesele poleciała.

Wywiódł ci ją wróbel w taniec, urwał ci jej palca koniec.

Polałuże, opentańcze, bo mi urwiesz wszystkie palce.

Polałuże, opentańcze, bo mi urwiesz wszystkie palce. A...



Fig. 4-2-13. *Sroczka*, bars 1–4.

Despite their thematic and emotional diversity, Bacewicz's songs are unified by a consistent treatment of poetic text, carefully constructed vocal lines, and a distinctive approach to harmony. Of particular importance is the role of the piano, which—much

like in her Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano—extends far beyond that of mere accompaniment. Through its complex harmonic textures and expressive colouration, the piano not only establishes the mood but also actively participates in the interpretation of the text, functioning as an equal partner to the voice in shaping dramatic structure and emotional depth.

As noted by Kiejstut Bacewicz, the composer's brother and frequent performer of her works:

"Grażyna's songs, both in terms of expression and compositional design, are profoundly chamber in character. They are refined, subtle musical poems written for a vocal-piano duo. Even the choice of literary texts reveals a clear interpretative intention. As a chamber pianist, I can affirm that the musically autonomous piano parts in these songs form an integral component of their musical construction, and—relative to the literary text—serve as a medium of poetic expression and psychological characterisation. [...] They are pervaded by an atmosphere of inner concentration. Their emotional content is highly sublimated. What we encounter here is a delicate play of symbols, not a direct, primitive outpouring of emotion. This unique aesthetic of Grażyna's songs naturally entails specific performance challenges. Highly skilled performers with refined artistic taste are able to avoid any expression that contradicts this aesthetic—they can fully reveal the subtlety of these songs and create the emotionally intimate atmosphere essential to them."[62]

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[62] K. Bacewicz, tekst audycji radiowej nadanej przez Rozgłośnię Łódzką 2 marca 1989 roku, cyt. za: M. Gąsiorowska, *Bacewicz*, s. 259*„Pieśni Grażyny mają zarówno w sensie wyrazowym, jak i kompozycyjnym charakter wybitnie kameralny. Są to kunsztowne, subtelne poematy muzyczne skomponowane na duet wokalno-pianistyczny. Już sam wybór tekstów literackich ma tu swoją wyrazistą wymowę. Jako pianista kameralista stwierdzam, że odznaczające się samodzielnością muzyczną partie fortepianowe tych pieśni są pełnoprawnym czynnikiem ich muzycznej konstrukcji, a w odniesieniu do tekstu literackiego pełnią rolę czynnika wyrazu poetyckiego, psychologicznej charakterystyki. […] Dominuje w nich nastrój skupienia wewnętrznego. Treść emocjonalna jest bardzo wysublimowana. Mamy tu do czynienia z subtelną grą symboli, a nie z jakąś bezpośrednią, pierwotną erupcją emocji. Z tą swoistą estetyką pieśni Grażyny wiążą się – rzecz jasna – swoiste zadania wykonawcze. Wysoko wykwalifikowani i obdarzeni dobrym smakiem wykonawcy potrafią oczywiście uniknąć sprzecznej z tą estetyką egzaltacji – potrafią wydobyć z kreowanych pieśni całą ich finezję i stworzyć tak istotny dla nich, kameralny klimat emocjonalny."*

Chapter 5 Conditions and Perspectives of Reception of Bacewicz's Chamber Works in Chinese Music Education

5.1 The Introduction and Integration of Chamber Music into the Chinese Educational System

Western chamber music began to enter China at the beginning of the 20th century. A pioneering group of musicians and educators returning from overseas studies—such as Li Shutong[63] and Xiao Youmei[64], actively promoted Western musical culture through educational and artistic initiatives[65]. A pivotal moment came in 1927 with the founding of the National Conservatory in Shanghai, which was the first institution in China to introduce a string quartet course, making use of newly translated teaching materials by Xiao Youmei, including the influential *He sheng xue* (*Harmonics*)[66], regarded as the first Chinese-language textbook on harmony based on the German theoretical tradition. These efforts cultivated the first generation of professionally trained Chinese musicians who began performing canonical Western chamber works—from the quartets of Beethoven and Schubert to impressionist compositions by Debussy—on domestic stages. Nevertheless, limited access to musical education and the lack of deep-rooted familiarity with the aesthetics of Western chamber music among the general public meant that its impact remained largely marginal.

The Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) and the subsequent Civil War (1946–1949) brought the previously dynamic development to a halt. Widespread social chaos and the prioritisation of military objectives effectively suspended music education,

[63] Li Shutong (1880–1942) – chiński muzyk, pedagog, malarz, kaligraf, jeden z pionierów wprowadzających zachodnią muzykę i edukację artystyczną do Chin. Studiował w Japonii, po powrocie do kraju aktywnie propagował zachodnią kulturę muzyczną.

[64] Xiao Youmei (1884–1940) był jednym z pionierów nowoczesnej edukacji muzycznej w Chinach. Studiował w Niemczech i jako pierwszy systematycznie wprowadzał zachodnią teorię muzyki.

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[66] *He sheng xue* [*„Harmonika"*], tłum. z niemieckiego, Commercial Press, Szanghaj 1931, uchodzi za pierwszą chińską publikację dydaktyczną z zakresu harmonii opartą na tradycji niemieckiej.

and chamber music entered a period of stagnation lasting more than a decade. Only after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949—especially in the 1950s—did prestigious institutions such as the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and the Shanghai Conservatory of Music begin systematic efforts to reintegrate chamber music into formal music education, under the guidance of Soviet advisors. Guided by the pedagogical principle of "training through ensemble precision," Soviet experts introduced a rigorous system of weekly chamber music sessions, with the goal of cultivating a "National Quartet of the People's Republic of China"[67]. Performances organised by these experts—including string quartets by Dmitri Shostakovich—broadened the artistic horizons of Chinese students and faculty. However, by the end of the 1950s, changing political conditions brought these initiatives to an abrupt end. During the Cultural Revolution, professional music education virtually ceased, and the teaching of chamber music was completely discontinued.

Since the launch of economic reforms and the policy of opening-up in 1978, China has experienced rapid socioeconomic development, creating favourable conditions for the revival of musical arts. Chamber music, having regained institutional recognition, entered a phase of steady professionalisation. For instance, the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing resumed chamber music instruction after 1977, establishing ensembles such as string quartets, woodwind quintets, and brass quintets as integral components of its pedagogy. The inclusion of Haydn and Mozart as mandatory repertoire reinforced a so-called "Central European model" within the curriculum, which by the mid-1990s formally integrated these ensemble formations into the credit-based compulsory programme. The Shanghai Conservatory of Music also made

[67] Li Ran, *Wymiana muzyczna chińsko-radziecka z perspektywy socjologicznej: Przykład radzieckich ekspertów muzycznych w Chinach (1954–1960)*, rozprawa doktorska, Uniwersytet Nauczycielski w Harbinie (Harbin Normal University), 2011. s. 31.

a notable breakthrough: since 2002, Professor Yu Yinjia[68] of the Department of Orchestral Instruments has led a pioneering course in “Chamber Music for Strings and Piano”—the first of its kind in Chinese higher education—developing an original teaching standard and comprehensive undergraduate curriculum. These initiatives signify the gradual institutionalisation of chamber music as a core component of professional music training in China.

As an artistic form of foundational significance, chamber music in China has undergone a long journey from marginalised cultural import to systematic educational integration. While China’s institutional promotion of the genre began comparatively late—especially when contrasted with the centuries-old traditions of Western academies—efforts initiated in the late 20th century have led to increasing standardisation and dissemination. Today, leading music conservatories across the country offer chamber music courses at all levels of education[69], from secondary to postgraduate study, incorporating them into both compulsory and elective curricula with an emphasis on developing ensemble sensitivity and collaborative skill. Notably, in 2020, the Zhejiang Conservatory of Music established a dedicated Chamber Music Institute under the artistic direction of internationally renowned violinist Ning Feng[70]. Through masterclasses and focused recital series, the institute provides students with essential performance experience; its inaugural diploma concert attracted more than 700,000 online viewers, underscoring the growing visibility and relevance of chamber music education.

Despite such advances, the development of chamber music remains largely concentrated within specialist conservatories. In generalist and pedagogical institutions,

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[68] Yu Yinjia, kierowniczka Pracowni Muzyki Kameralnej na Wydziale Instrumentów Orkiestrowych Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

[69] Obecnie w Chinach działa ponad dziesięć publicznych wyższych uczelni muzycznych, zlokalizowanych m.in. w Pekinie, Szanghaju, Changshy, Chengdu, Shenyangu, Xi’anie, Tiencinie, Wuhanie, Kantonie i Hangzhou.

[70] Ning Feng, chiński skrzypek, pedagog Hochschule für Musik „Hanns Eisler” w Berlinie, dyrektor artystyczny Instytutu Muzyki Kameralnej Zhejiang Conservatory of Music oraz zastępca dyrektora Instytutu Skrzypiec w Sichuan Conservatory of Music.

chamber music remains marginal—often limited to elective courses or integrated into orchestral training without a dedicated curriculum—exacerbating disparities in educational quality across institutional types. A further challenge is the shortage of specialised teaching staff: in many institutions, solo instrumentalists are assigned to coach chamber ensembles without formal training in ensemble pedagogy, which compromises the rigour of instruction. Leading conservatories have attempted to mitigate this by inviting international experts and organising masterclasses, yet many mid- and lower-tier schools still lack adequate personnel. Additionally, in institutions where chamber music is not yet a core subject, securing sufficient teaching hours remains a systemic hurdle, as balancing ensemble work with individual instrumental training continues to pose structural limitations.

5.2 Adaptability Analysis of Bacewicz's Chamber Music in China

Due to historical reasons, China's chamber music curriculum system remains relatively nascent compared to its Western counterparts, with institutions continuously refining course content and pedagogical approaches. Traditionally, chamber music education in China has focused predominantly on canonical works from the Classical and Romantic periods, resulting in a conservative and homogeneous repertoire. For instance, string quartets frequently draw upon foundational works by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, while piano trios emphasize Romantic-era composers such as Mendelssohn and Brahms. While this established repertoire has solidified students' technical foundations, its long-standing rigidity has led to diminished engagement and constrained pedagogical outcomes. In recent years, however, conservatories such as the Zhejiang Conservatory of Music have begun modernizing their curricula by incorporating 20th-century and contemporary chamber works, alongside new compositions by Chinese artists, thereby broadening students' artistic horizons. Initiatives like chamber music festivals[71] have further diversified repertoire exposure,

[71] Por. informacje na temat VII Międzynarodowego Festiwalu Muzyki Kameralnej w Zhejiang Conservatory of Music, https://www.zjcm.edu.cn/zyxww/mtjj/202411/42225.html (dostęp: 13.04.2025).

stimulating student enthusiasm through performances of modern pieces. Pedagogically, the shift from instructor-led rehearsals to student-centered learning—emphasizing autonomous practice, group discussions, and analytical interpretation—has redefined the teacher's role as a facilitator rather than a director.[72] This evolution not only enhances instructional efficiency but also cultivates students' collaborative problem-solving skills. Collectively, these developments signal a comprehensive transformation in Chinese higher education's chamber music pedagogy, characterized by repertoire expansion, methodological innovation, and faculty development, thereby creating fertile ground for introducing works by Polish composers such as Grażyna Bacewicz.

Under this evolving educational landscape, the integration of Bacewicz's chamber music—exemplified by her *Fourth Violin and Piano Sonata* (1949)—holds significant potential for diversifying students' repertoire and fostering multifaceted musical sensibilities. As one of Poland's most eminent 20th-century female composers, Bacewicz's chamber works are internationally acclaimed for their structural rigor and stylistic synthesis. Formally, her compositions adhere to Classical sonata conventions, including four-movement architecture and sonata-allegro forms, aligning with the Austro-German tradition. However, her integration of Polish folk idioms and modernist techniques—manifest in innovative harmonic progressions, rhythmic complexity, and textural experimentation—distinguishes her works from their Germanic counterparts. This duality of traditional scaffolding and contemporary innovation offers Chinese students, steeped in Classical aesthetics, an accessible yet novel auditory experience—a transitional zone that nurtures stylistic adaptability.

From a technical standpoint, the *Fourth Sonata* presents considerable demands for both violinists and pianists. The violin part necessitates mastery of rapid spiccato, double stops, and shifting techniques, while the piano part requires nuanced touch control and sophisticated harmonic comprehension. Such challenges, though formidable for advanced undergraduates or graduate students, serve as ideal material for honing ensemble skills and overcoming technical barriers. Through studying this work, students engage with the fusion of Polish folk elements and neoclassical precision,

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[72] Xie Lin – profesor Xinghai Conservatory of Music, specjalistka w zakresie pedagogiki muzycznej i reformy nauczania, *Wzmocnienie reformy programowej w celu kształcenia wszechstronnych talentów muzycznych*, Jiangsu Think Tank, 9 sierpnia 2024 r., dostęp: https://www.jsthinktank.com/xhrbzkzk/202408/t20240809_8374285.shtml (dostęp 13.04.2025).

deepening their appreciation for cross-cultural musical synthesis. Notably, the sonata's concise structure—spanning four movements in approximately twenty minutes—aligns perfectly with semester-long rehearsal cycles. The Central Conservatory of Music's pedagogical emphasis on "repertoire suitability and goal alignment" further underscores the work's viability: its moderate length and technical demands match advanced undergraduate capabilities, enabling students to showcase ensemble cohesion and interpretive depth without exceeding their technical thresholds. Thus, its inclusion in chamber curricula demonstrates both feasibility and pedagogical relevance.

Critical to this assessment is evaluating the reception of such niche foreign repertoire in classroom and performance settings. Given Bacewicz's limited recognition in China, initial implementation may require instructors to invest additional effort in contextualizing her stylistic and cultural nuances. However, surveys of Chinese music performance majors reveal unanimous agreement on the importance of chamber music education, with students expressing enthusiasm for exploring novel works.[73] This suggests that, with structured pedagogical support, Bacewicz's sonata could be met with receptive curiosity, establishing a conducive environment for its academic integration.

Nevertheless, students' cognitive enthusiasm and initial declarations of positive attitude require further verification through in-depth pedagogical observation and analysis of performance experience.

5.3 Survey and Audience Feedback Analysis

To further evaluate the reception and dissemination potential of Grażyna Bacewicz's works within China's music education context, a total of 135 valid questionnaires were distributed and collected, addressing four thematic categories.

[73] Zob. „Raport roczny o jakości kształcenia na poziomie licencjackim – Xi'an Conservatory of Music", 2013, https://www.xacom.edu.cn/2014/1023/c1843a51442/page.htm (dostęp 13.04.2025). W raporcie podkreślono, że kursy muzyki kameralnej zostały pozytywnie ocenione przez studentów, a ogólny wskaźnik satysfakcji z nauczania osiągnął 85%.

5.3.1 Sample Composition and Professional Background

The questionnaire first examined respondents' institutional affiliations and geographical distribution, reflecting the structure of China's music education system: 89 participants from conservatories, 21 from comprehensive universities and teacher-training colleges, and 11 from theaters or private training institutions. Additionally, 12 faculty members[74] provided critical insights from an instructional perspective.

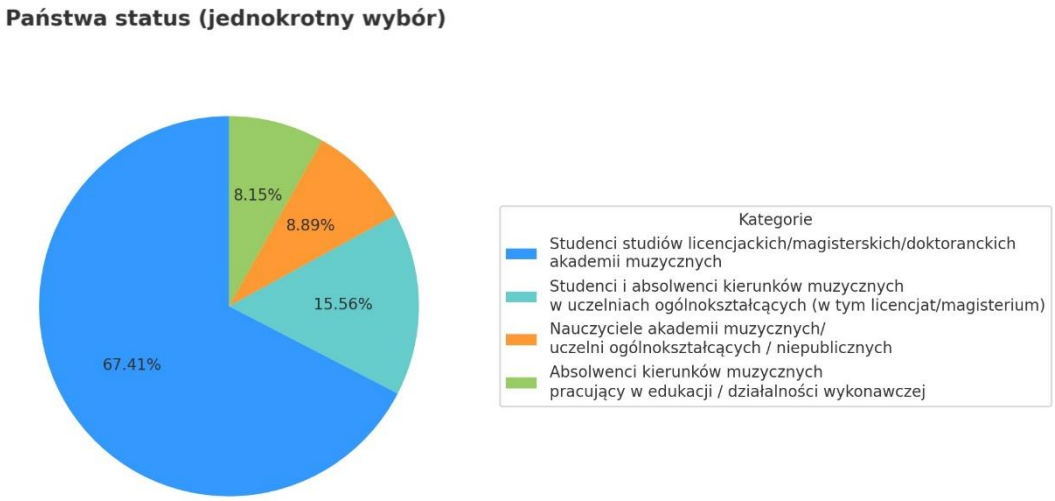


Fig 5–3–1. Identity of the survey respondents.

The second section focused on respondents' specializations and educational backgrounds. Piano (54 respondents, 40%) and vocal performance (46, 34.07%) dominated, with 10 respondents (7.41%) specializing in collaborative piano or art song accompaniment. Questions regarding exposure to chamber music courses (e.g., art songs, ensemble coaching) revealed that conservatory-trained participants had significantly higher engagement with chamber pedagogy, underscoring these institutions' curricular specialization. In contrast, comprehensive universities exhibited limited chamber music integration, highlighting disparities in foundational infrastructure.

[74] The sample of teachers was drawn primarily from the Wuhan Conservatory of Music, Tianjin Conservatory of Music, and Hunan Normal University, representing Central, Northern, and Southwestern regions of China, thus providing a certain degree of geographical and institutional representativeness.

5.3.2 Knowledge of Polish music and analysis of reactions to sound samples

The third section of the survey addressed core issues, aiming to assess respondents' familiarity with twentieth-century Polish composers such as Szymanowski, Penderecki, and Lutosławski, as well as with Bacewicz's own oeuvre. It also sought to collect subjective impressions, technical evaluations, and performance intentions after listening to selected chamber and vocal works. The section incorporated both mandatory response items and embedded listening links to ensure data reliability and relevance.

Without the aid of audio materials, fewer than half of the respondents indicated awareness of the aforementioned composers. Regarding the specific question "Have you heard of Bacewicz?", affirmative responses ("yes" or "somewhat") were predominantly concentrated among those with overseas study experience. Although many respondents had encountered Polish works during their studies or performances, their knowledge typically derived from brief references in Western music history courses, and lacked systematic understanding.

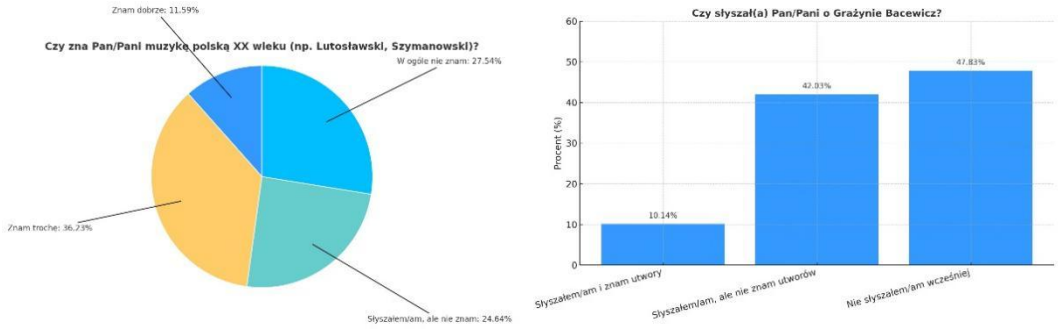


Fig 5–3–2. Familiarity with 20th-century Polish music and the works of Bacewicz among respondents

To further gauge potential receptivity, the questionnaire included a listening segment featuring excerpts of Bacewicz's music tailored to the respondents' principal study areas. The instrumental group received links to the first movement of the *Fourth Violin Sonata*, *Oberek No. 1*, and the first movement of the *Second Piano Sonata*; the vocal group was offered six selected soprano art songs. A total of 135 participants completed the listening session (79 in the instrumental group and 56 in the vocal group) and provided feedback. Overall, respondents expressed a mix of curiosity and reservation toward Bacewicz's musical style.

In terms of melody, many noted the presence of folkloric elements. One teacher remarked in an interview that Bacewicz's music possessed "a strong national flavour that students find appealing." Some listeners also commented that, compared to the familiar Romantic repertoire, Bacewicz's melodic lines were freer and more unpredictable. While these traits offered a refreshing experience, others admitted to struggling with certain aspects of the modern harmonic language and unexpected formal shifts. This reflects the structural complexity of Bacewicz's works, which may require more advanced analytical skills from listeners.

Despite the initial lack of familiarity, the listening experience significantly enhanced participants' interest in and willingness to engage with Bacewicz's music. In the instrumental group, over 60% expressed a willingness to include her works in teaching or performance contexts. The vocal group also responded positively, though they emphasised the need for translated lyrics and pronunciation guidance. When asked under the assumption that teaching materials and adapted resources would be provided, the majority answered affirmatively—approximately 70% in the instrumental group chose "willing," while over half of the vocal group indicated they would consider performing the works if Chinese translations were available. These findings suggest that, with appropriate external support, the promotion of Bacewicz's music in China is both viable and promising. The teaching community does not inherently reject unfamiliar repertoire; rather, the key lies in lowering access barriers and offering adequate pedagogical resources.

Nevertheless, due to a lack of direct performance experience, most respondents were unable to fully assess the technical demands or pedagogical suitability of the works. While the listening feedback was encouraging, practical classroom implementation remains essential for further evaluating the feasibility and long-term educational value of these compositions.

5.3.3 Practical Barriers and Promotional Challenges

The fourth section consisted of open-ended questions inviting participants to share their reflections on the promotion of foreign contemporary music in Chinese higher education institutions. This part received a high response rate, particularly among teachers, whose input offered valuable practical insights and suggestions.

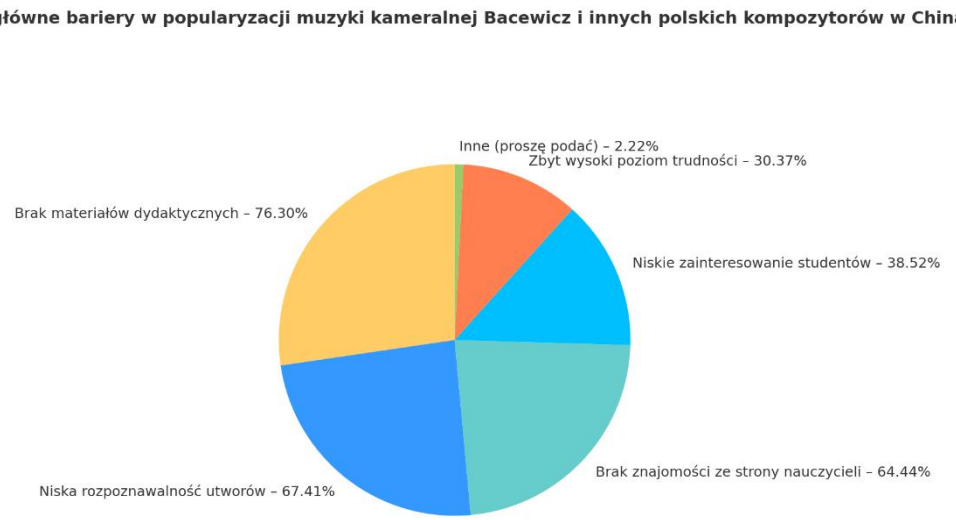


Fig. 5–3–3. Main barriers to the popularisation of Bacewicz's chamber music and other Polish composers in China (survey results)

The questionnaires and interviews revealed several concrete obstacles currently hindering the dissemination of Bacewicz's works in China. The accompanying chart summarises the most frequently cited limiting factors. Chief among them—selected by over 75% of respondents—was the lack of teaching materials and scores. Even when educators are willing to promote the repertoire, they are often constrained by the absence of accessible resources. Some interviewees admitted that virtually no Chinese-language materials exist at present; as a result, instructors must rely exclusively on original-language editions, which makes it difficult to provide students with adequate background information or technical guidance during lessons.

Another major bottleneck is the limited teaching experience related to Polish contemporary music. Approximately half of the respondents noted that most Chinese music educators lack performance or pedagogical experience with such repertoire. Introducing a completely unfamiliar body of work like Bacewicz's into the curriculum thus entails both a confidence gap and a practical skills deficit. This experience divide causes teachers to lean toward the established Western European canon while hesitating to adopt less familiar works.

Language and cultural barriers also emerged as critical challenges, particularly for vocal repertoire. Polish pronunciation is perceived as difficult and obscure, creating

a significant hurdle for singers. Even when translations are available, conveying the original poetic nuance remains a complex task. Moreover, from a cultural perspective, the historical background and aesthetic context of Bacewicz's works often differ significantly from Chinese students' frame of reference. Several respondents noted that, without proper contextualisation and stylistic guidance, students may initially experience a sense of distance from the music, limiting their understanding and emotional engagement. Therefore, effective promotion should be accompanied by teaching strategies that incorporate cultural orientation and comparative stylistic analysis, aiming to bridge perceptual gaps and enhance accessibility.

In sum, Bacewicz's chamber and vocal works possess demonstrable educational value and artistic appeal within Chinese conservatories, aligning well with current goals of diversifying curricula in higher music education. While practical issues such as language, staffing, and resources remain considerable, these challenges can be gradually addressed through dedicated research, targeted resource development, and systematic introduction. Bacewicz's music thus holds significant potential to enrich existing repertoires and foster deeper international musical understanding.

Conclusion

The starting point of this research was a chance question. During a rehearsal of Johannes Brahms's *Violin Sonata No. 2*, Op. 100, my professor asked: "Would you like to try a *contemporary Polish Brahms*? She's a woman composer." This remark sparked a deep curiosity in me, which gradually developed into a systematic exploration of the works of Grażyna Bacewicz. This process led to the selection of her *Fourth Sonata for Violin and Piano* and several songs as the main objects of analysis. My first encounter with the *Fourth Sonata* proved challenging—I was not yet familiar with the modernist language of twentieth-century music. However, with each rehearsal I became increasingly fascinated by its expressive power, balancing formal discipline with freedom of expression.

The aim of this thesis is to reveal the compositional logic and aesthetic of Grażyna Bacewicz through formal and performative analysis, as well as to examine the stylistic idiom of her chamber music. Chapter One reconstructs the background of Polish music development in the twentieth century. Chapters Two and Three discuss the composer's biography and stylistic evolution, analysed through selected piano works. Chapter Four presents a detailed analysis of the *Fourth Sonata* and songs, with particular emphasis on the role of the piano part and its performative challenges.

Based on existing research, this thesis integrates the performer's perspective with formal analysis and stage experience, exploring the dynamic relationship between the piano and other parts in Bacewicz's music. This approach not only deepens the understanding of her chamber writing but also offers theoretical support for performance practice. In the song analysis, special attention is given to the coherence of musical language between the vocal and piano parts, demonstrating the consistent compositional logic and rhythmic organisation across genres. At the same time, the study is situated within a cross-cultural context through an examination of the reception of Bacewicz's works in China's music education system.

As a pianist, I gradually came to realise through numerous rehearsals that the essence of working with other instrumentalists or singers lies not in virtuosic expression, but in subtle rhythmic and dynamic interaction. Whether in violin sonatas—where instrumental roles are in constant flux—or in songs that avoid the conventional "melody plus accompaniment" model, one must continuously adjust the control of sound density and articulation to reflect the composer's intentions. A deeper understanding of rhythmic layers and formal design proved essential in bridging theory and practice.

Chapter Five offers recommendations for promoting Bacewicz's works in China, taking into account the differences between the Polish and Chinese music education systems. In Poland, her works are part of the pedagogical canon, whereas in Chinese conservatories, the repertoire is still largely dominated by the German-Austrian tradition. As a form requiring synergy, chamber music could serve as a medium for connecting different styles and eras; however, repertoire choices still reflect local habits and pedagogical conservatism. Although this thesis does not propose comprehensive institutional solutions, it outlines potential directions for further action—such as intensifying academic cooperation, improving access to sheet music, and encouraging the performance of her works within university settings.

In a 1950 review, Stefan Kisielewski wrote: *"We may, with a clear conscience, say that the honour of Polish composers was saved this time by 'a woman'—Grażyna Bacewicz."*[75] Though delivered in a somewhat humorous tone, this comment reveals both an appreciation for the quality of her work and a tendency to treat female composers as exceptions. In the history of music, which has long marginalised women's voices, Bacewicz broke through this narrative with her creative output.

I am deeply convinced that Bacewicz's compositions are not merely historical artefacts, but living material of universal value. For performers seeking to grasp the

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[75] Stefan Kisielewski, *Recenzja Koncertu na orkiestrę smyczkową Grażyny Bacewicz,* Tygodnik Powszechny, nr 28 (9 lipca 1950), cyt. za: https://bacewicz.polmic.pl/koncert-na-orkiestre-smyczkowa/ (dostęp: 12.05.2025).*„Z czystym sumieniem powiedzieć można, że honor kompozytorów polskich uratowała tym razem 'baba' — Grażyna Bacewicz."*

essence of twentieth-century music, they offer not only objects of study but spaces for dialogue—with the era, the culture, and one's own identity. I hope that this thesis will serve not only as a systematic study of the composer's work but also as a point of reference for future performers, educators, and researchers engaged in intercultural dialogue.

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