

The Double Centenary of Polish Musicology  
(1911/1912–2011/2012).  
Józef Michał Chomiński — Portrait of a Scholar<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This text is a compilation of my articles about the Professor written since 1976 (e.g. 'Professor Józef Chomiński (1906–1994)', 1995). It is mostly an extended version of the essay, 'Profesor Józef Michał Chomiński — uczony i pedagog' [Scholar and Teacher] (Poniatowska 1998: 27–41). Maciej Gołąb wrote a monograph work dedicated to the Professor (Gołąb 2008).

Poland's first Chairs of Musicology were established in Cracow (1911, by Prof. Zdzisław Jachimecki) and in Lvov (1912, by Prof. Adolf Chybiński). The later musicological centres at the universities in Poznań and Warsaw are offshoots of the Lvov school, from Prof. Chybiński and his students.

Professor Józef Chomiński was educated in the Lvov centre. He studied composition and conducting with Adam Sołtys. After passing the state exam in music in 1928, he taught in the Malwina Reyss Higher Institute of Music (till 1936), conducted the choir of the singer Zofia Kozłowska's students and was a corepetiteur in Lvov Opera House. On this post, he gained thorough knowledge of 19<sup>th</sup>-century opera and music drama scores, including Wagner. Simultaneously he studied at the Humanities Department of the Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov — musicology with Adolf Chybiński and ethnography with Adam Fiszer. He graduated in 1931, and obtained a PhD in musicology in 1936 on the basis of an (unpublished) dissertation entitled *Structural Aspects of Edvard Grieg's Solo Songs*.

In 1937 he received a research scholarship from the National Culture Fund. Having moved to Warsaw, he worked until the outbreak of the war in the Music Department and Foreign Periodicals Catalogue of the National Library, and in Warsaw Conservatory as a librarian. After the war, he was appointed professor of the Higher School of Music in Poznań, but failing health forced him to leave for Switzerland for treatment. On his return, he directed the office of the *Kwartalnik Muzyczny* [*Music Quarterly*] and the Programme Committee of Music Education at the Ministry of Culture and Art. In 1949 he obtained a habilitation from Poznań University (on the basis of his study entitled *Structural Aspects of Karol Szymanowski's Piano Sonatas*, written in 1937) and took up a post at the Institute of Musicology, University of Warsaw, first as a lecturer, later (from 1951) — as a senior lecturer, from 1954 — as an associate professor, and from 1960 — as a full professor. In 1951–1958, he also headed the Section (later — the Faculty) of Music History and Theory in the State Institute of Art (from 1959 — the Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences). He founded the section and created its academic profile, which covered the entire history of music from the Middle Ages to contemporary works.

At the University of Warsaw and the Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, as well as at other schools, Chomiński educated the majority of the musicologists working in Poland till the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (many of them are still active). He supervised several dozen master's theses, 25 doctoral dissertations, and wrote a similar number of reviews of doctoral and habilitation (postdoctoral) theses. No other musicologist could compare with Chomiński with respect to these numbers.

Chomiński's most fruitful, mature years as a lecturer and tutor were spent at the Institute of Musicology, University of Warsaw, where together with Prof. Zofia Lissa and Prof. Hieronim Feicht they represented Polish musicology as Prof. Adolf Chybiński's pupils. After the war Chybiński (who died in 1952) took up the Chair of Musicology at Poznań University. Prof. Zdzisław Jachimecki, the founder of musicology at the Jagiellonian University, died a year after Chybiński, and his chair was held till 1959 by Prof. Stefania Łobaczewska). Shortages of staff meant that for a number of years the Warsaw Institute of Musicology was the only musicological centre in Poland. This situation continued till Prof. Chybiński's pupils, having obtained their doctorates under Prof. Chomiński's supervision, reactivated musicological studies at the universities in Cracow (Zygmunt Szwejkowski, 1966), Poznań (Jan Stęszewski, 1975) and Wrocław (Maciej Gołąb, Prof. Chomiński's pupil, 2003).

Students were attracted to Prof. Chomiński first of all by the wide range of his musicological interests, by his accurate choice of research themes and scope, as well as by his unusual kindness and the fact that he treated students as his partners in research. He always repeated that he could learn a lot from them, and then, as if "by the way", he suggested an idea that enriched or directed his student's line of research — and this happened on all levels, from undergraduate to postdoctoral. The Professor's resourcefulness, his ability to present various research stances, were so precious that during the discussions he never got lost in details, even though he did not refuse to answer detailed questions whenever they arose. One would need to be a very mediocre student to feel any "erudition complex" in front of him. His seminars and tutorials provided all the delights of contact with

a master, whose knowledge of composition techniques from all ages and the scope of his theoretical background were truly amazing. From memory, using as a prop only one chord jotted down on a small piece of paper, he could present on the board examples from Wagner's scores and demonstrate the principles of his instrumentation (and that in an age when photocopies and computer presentations were still unknown). He could also deliver an entire lecture using just three brief points in his notes. He did not try to dazzle or charm the students with a brilliant manner of talking, but this did not discourage the audience from following his analyses of composition technique with great attention. Towards the end of his teaching career, however, as a retired professor, he would read his lectures, which was sometimes criticised. These were the edited texts that he later included in his series *Formy muzyczne* [*Musical Forms*]. Still, even the most complex analytic or methodological problems seemed easy in a conversation with Prof. Chomiński. Delicate in contacts with people, he grew heated in a discussion of new topics or methods of research, but he never imposed them on students. As a universal historian of music, he lectured both in history and in European composition techniques, from the early Middle Ages to the contemporary avant-garde, and he also presented fundamentals of music theory, focusing on the components of a musical work, musical forms and genres, as well as textures. His lectures, always dedicated to specific fields, were the "anteroom" of his later historical syntheses. He taught to think in contextual, historical terms, paying attention to the work's synchronic relations to other musical and artistic phenomena of the period, and, most of all, to look at each work from the perspective of the entire music history — from Perotinus to Penderecki, one might say. His objective-historical, but also experimental-technical perspective on the musical work, his emphasis on the sound aspects of the music, led to the development among Prof. Chomiński's students of a broadly conceived methodological stance which allows us today to see him as the founder of Poland's only musicological "school". His pupils developed their own areas and methods of study which in analyses of musical works extended beyond musical structure and covered the various cultural contexts. All of them, however, remained faithful to the Professor's passionate ap-

proach and to his principle of exploring the sense of musical phenomena viewed as part of a historical continuum.

Chomiński had the ability to create a proper atmosphere for research and study, and to integrate the scholarly circles around him. His modesty can be illustrated by an example from the 1970s: he was offered the opportunity of having his selected article translated for the *Polish Musicological Studies*, but he refused, saying that in fact he had not written anything worth translating into a foreign language and that he would let us know if he wrote something really worthwhile. In reality, he had already accumulated a huge body of research papers. Eventually, both volumes in that series (published in 1977 and 1984) included texts written by Chomiński: *Contribution of Polish Composers to the Shaping of a Modern Language in Music* and an article on Beethoven for the bicentenary of his birth. When presented with a volume of works dedicated to him by his pupils and friends (Poniatowska 1984, handed 1976), he was visibly moved but also evidently he felt unworthy of such a homage.

The model of a scholar that Prof. Chomiński represented was one developed at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was that of a researcher working in many different fields, capable of synthesising all his theoretical and historical knowledge of the discipline. He seldom travelled abroad for international conferences (Vienna 1956, Budapest 1961, Halle 1964, Venice 1965, Brno 1978) and in principle was not attracted by the latest (1970s and 80s) methodological trends in the humanities. He was acquainted with them, but he created his own syntheses and experimented with the theory of contemporary music. He was not fond of writing occasional, contributory papers. Even his article for the Beethoven anniversary in 1970 he used as a pretext for a discussion of the metabolic transformations of form, for tracing references to the past and germs of modern composition technique in Beethoven's music, and for a presentation of the expressive potential inherent in the transformation of technical means, which was exploited by 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers. His papers are not essayistic, nor do they respond to current issues. They focus on the analytic discourse, precise but creative, interpreting musical phenomena in their essence and in their diachronic context.

Of greatest importance in Prof. Chomiński's output are his academic handbooks published by PWM Edition, which proved fundamental to Polish musicology. The largest-scale series is that of *Musical Forms*, written over the period of more than 30 years. The first two volumes, published in 1954–1956, are a systematic survey of instrumental forms in their typical evolutionary phases. These volumes still bear the mark of the ideological pressure that the Professor felt, in the form of some elements of Marxist ideology, which are most strongly present in his *Muzyka Polskiego Odrodzenia* [*Music of the Polish Renaissance*], written together with Zofia Lissa (Chomiński and Lissa 1953).

Twenty years later, Chomiński resumed his project and wrote — together with his wife Krystyna Wilkowska-Chomińska — five large volumes covering the entire spectrum of musical forms: vocal, instrumental and mixed, as well as the theory of form and the experimental theory of sonoristics, developed in collaboration with his son, the electronic engineer P. K. Chomiński. This research project had no precedents in the history of Polish musicology. The cycle began with *Pieśń* [*Song*] (vol. 3 of *Musical Forms*) in 1974, presenting a panorama of the song genre and its forms from medieval lyrical song to the sonoristic song forms in the most recent music, with emphasis on the aesthetic and artistic phenomena specific for each period, which exerted their influence on the form of song. The volume includes a full typology of song genres and structural types. The whole structure of songs, from problems of versification to the shaping of musical components, from conventional means of expression (in the form of rhetorical musical figures in the baroque) to the most contemporary forms, was precisely interpreted by means of a methodology borrowed from literary theory. The book was unique in the Polish musicological literature.

This multifaceted analysis of a synthetic audiovisual genre was continued in Chomiński's *Opera i dramat* [*Opera and Music Drama*] (vol. 4 of *Musical Forms*, 1976), covering the history of music drama from the late Renaissance to surrealist works, as well as a brief survey of the history of ballet. The author's interesting proposal for the periodisation of the opera is based on its literary qualities (Late Renaissance drama 1600–1640, baroque opera 1640–

1760, then classical, 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century opera), which results at times in a synchronic overlap of various genres, such as e.g. realism and symbolism, neo-classicism and expressionism, but provides us with the only possible typology of operatic forms — based on specific literary trends and formal principles, even if those literary trends do not clearly correspond to any specific musical components. This problem can be explained on the example of 20<sup>th</sup>-century opera and music drama. Music historians normally do not attempt a typology of dramatic music from the previous century. In *The World of Opera* by W. Brockway and H. Weinstock (London 1963), composers and their works are presented in the form of encyclopedic entries, without distinguishing trends and directions in the development of operatic genres. The *New Oxford History of Music* (Cooper 1975: 202–207) only dedicates separate sections to symbolist drama (1890–1918), interpreted as a symbolist poem, “an act of contemplation, a magic evocation of the metaphysical reality behind appearances.” The problem of a typology of stage works in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was solved simply by postulating a dichotomy between the opera and music drama. Musical centres and their characteristic genres, such as the great historical opera or lyrical opera, as well as the local circumstances leading to the rise of the national opera, and artistic personalities — all these elements are missing, as the authors concentrated exclusively on form and on a description of the genre of the number opera. They presented the types of arias, as opposed to the *unendliche Melodie* of Wagner’s dramas. The book offers a synthetic, “bird’s-eye” view of an entire century of operatic history.

In his discussion of the “zonal” nature of time, Ludwik Bielawski (1976: 187) points out that as we move up to higher categories of time, our understanding and the quality of explanation improve, whereas if we proceed towards lower categories of time (or locality), improvement is evident in the amount and quality of information. Still, this is by no means a simple relation. It is not only the question of a mere reduction of information for the sake of a more comprehensive view, but rather — of the consistency of methods applied to reduce and synthesise that information.

Carl Dahlhaus (1982) treats realism in the opera not as a period, not as a style that developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but as a kind of musical syndrome

that may be found in various proportions in different works. Chomiński and his wife claim, conversely, that realism in the opera can be discussed only with reference to the verbal component and acting. In the 20<sup>th</sup>-century opera and musical drama, they distinguish several types of realism: verismo, psychological, social, historical realism, realistic representation of manners. The scopes of these categories overlap at times, but their typology has the advantage of each type being exemplified by specific musical works. Music interacts with the dramatic component: e.g. in psychological drama, the tendency towards a concentrated form finds its reflection in music (Strauss's *Electra*); neo-classicist trends are characterised by a return to the so-called "numbers" in the opera and to polyphonic textures (Paul Hindemith's *Cardillac*); neo-impressionist fantasy worlds are intensified by coloristic effects (Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel*); expressionist dramas find their means of expression in *Sprechgesang*, a wide dynamic scale and wide interval leaps difficult to perform. Still, the authors point out that music is in many cases stylistically independent from the dramatic concept, as e.g. in the expressionist *Sancta Susanna*, where Hindemith flirts with the neo-baroque, in A. Berg's dramas, which contain traditional 19<sup>th</sup>-century forms and leitmotifs, or in Poulenc's *Les mamelles de Tiresias*, where Apollinaire's surrealist text is set in the convention of an opera buffa. Chomiński and Wilkowska-Chomińska believe that one cannot speak of expressionist or surrealist elements in music. Expressiveness is an immanent feature of music in general, and music is non-realistic by definition. If it ever becomes realistic, it is only to illustrate some real events, such as the song of birds, the sounds of a storm, etc. Expressionist style can be defined as a phase characterised by a sharpening of expressive contours and an intensification of expressive power (huge intervals, sharp dissonances, dynamic contrasts, expansion of material so as to embrace the totality of musical space, reduction conceived as a concentration on selected instruments, and even — deformation).

Great vocal forms — the motet, the madrigal, the vocal concerto, the cantata, the Passion, the oratorio and the mass — were the subject of J. Chomiński and K. Wilkowska-Chomińska's largest, fifth volume of *Musical Forms* (published in 1984). It was an attempt, based on historical material and chrono-

logical order, to grasp the essential features of each form in the successive phases of its development. The book was not meant as a history of the development of the genres in different countries and musical centres. The authors gave to their cycle the succinct title of *Musical Forms*, without pointing to their rooting in the context of the history of musical culture. For this reason, if you are looking for a history of the Italian cantata or the oratorio in England, this handbook is not the right place. Apart from the text, which is the basis for all the forms presented in this volume (except for the vocalise included in a concerto), the element that defines the genres and forms is the line-up of performers and their place in the architecture of form, while style is determined also by the musical means which in some periods (e.g. in the baroque) were common to many different genres. In this volume, less space is dedicated to contemporary forms, as it was written in 1971 and went through an unusually long publishing cycle. Some of the problems discussed here had already been tackled in the previous volumes. One of these is musical rhetoric, which from the classical period had undergone transformations and had been submitted to the service of a new aesthetic — that of individual expression. Rhetorical figures were losing their commonly accepted meanings in favour of a wider, richer scope of semantic possibilities. E.g. in the *Hymn to the Sun* from J. Haydn's *The Seasons*, the chromatic music that accompanies the "dramatic" figure of pathopoeia expresses joy, power and majesty. The question of interpenetrating genres is perfectly illustrated on the example of mixed forms derived from the cantata, such as the cantata-motet, cantata mass, cantata-oratorio, symphony-cantata and a cantata-oratorio-style Passion. The authors also distinguished the song cantata, the symphony with elements of song, the ballad opera, the ballad oratorio, the symphonic ballad cantata, the motet madrigal, the motet Passion and mass, the dramatic symphony (Berlioz), the cantata symphony (Mendelssohn), the symphony with vocal elements (Liszt), and the entirely vocal symphony (Mahler), as well as a symphony combined with a symphonic poem and song (Szymanowski's *Symphony No. 3*). They revealed a new network of musical genres. Hybridisation of genres was caused — according to the authors — by the exhaustion of the expressive potential of a given form, the influence of new aesthetic

and theoretical trends, and by the composers' individual attitudes. In the typology of individual musical genres, however, Chomiński's dependence on the artistic-literary trends of the period was less pervasive than in the opera and the music drama, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The less numerous oratorios and cantatas did not inspire a classification of styles, though their topics (mystical-historical, Biblical and mythological) are discussed in the book. Still, especially with relation to Bach, the lack of a textual-symbolic typology is a disadvantage, and Volume 5 of *Musical Forms* does not allow us to gain a deeper insight into the cantata genres used by Bach. Notably, in the same period (Kassel 1971) Alfred Dürr published his analysis of Bach cantatas which wonderfully presents the various genres derived, first and foremost, from the symbolic-theological contents of the texts and from their relation to the musical setting. In Chomiński and Wilkowska-Chomińska's Volume V, the criteria for a detailed classification of forms remain autonomously musical: technique, style, and texture.

Volumes 1 and 2 of *Musical Forms*, published in 1983 and 1987, are a new presentation of instrumental forms, expanded so as to include new techniques of composition developed after World War II, but also — a new approach to the mutations of forms in musical history, now analysed from a perspective that emerged from the theory and artistic phenomena of contemporary music. Small forms are grouped here according to choreotechnical criteria (dance forms), expressive qualities (lyrical instrumental forms), technique conceived as a form-shaping principle (compositions based on figurations; polyphonic and variational forms) and the architecture of the work. Great instrumental forms, which are the subject of Volume 2, are mostly divided by genre: from the sonata form (in sonatas, symphonies, quartets, concertos, etc.), the suite, the symphonic poem — to stochastic principles and spontaneous forms in the most recent music.

The whole series is prefaced in Volume 1 of *Musical Forms* by a broadly conceived theory of musical forms. After a brief historical survey of various approaches to the problem of form, from Hugo Riemann, Ernest Kurth and Hans Mersman to the logical symbolism of Susanne Langer, the authors concentrate on the structural-acoustic reality of a musical work in its perceptible

historical transformations. The work is viewed as a musical result of interaction between a creative concept and the historically determined composition techniques and principles. Józef Chomiński and Krystyna Wilkowska-Chomińska leave out the question of social conditions as well as the problems of form perception and reception. They do, however, consider the various ways of preserving and transmitting form: committed to memory, recorded in a score and fixed on a magnetic tape.

The term "form" is normally applied to the overall possibility of shaping the musical material and to the cognitive formal models that developed throughout the ages. Handbooks dedicated to the problem of musical forms usually discuss only that latter aspect of form. The handbook series written by Chomiński and Wilkowska-Chomińska, however, deals with the problem of form in its entirety. In European music history and theory, the concept of form usually overlaps with the idea of a musical work, except that in contemporary music integrity is no longer recognised as the main principle of both form and the work. Other qualities of the musical work remain valid, however: its authorship, its durability, its specifically theoretical character and the individual methods of shaping the form. According to Chomiński and Wilkowska-Chomińska, the form-shaping process can be described by means of the following categories: generators, genres and structure as relations between components of form, as well as construction (i.e. the external framework within which the structures are formed) and architecture or composition design. In contemporary music, emphasis has shifted from architecture to structure and the creative process. The authors of the book also deal with the ways in which these structures are put together in contemporary music and how they form an outline of the whole, i.e. of form.

Chomiński and Wilkowska-Chomińska present their special theory of form in a highly condensed way. They distinguish open and closed sound systems (the latter — with equal and different intervals). Open systems, which offer unlimited possibilities of constructing scales with various intervallic relations, have gained importance in contemporary music. The ordering of rhythm is discussed by the authors in monochronous and polychronous structures. Diastematic ordering is understood as the horizontal successions (the

development of melody from psalm tones to the disruption of the melodic continuum in punctualism) and as the vertical-harmonic structure in the three phases of the history of harmony:

1. in the Pythagorean tuning,
2. in tempered tunings,
3. in open tunings with very wide frequency ranges.

No type of form ordering has been omitted from Chomiński's handbooks. They contain a survey of the theoretical foundations of music from the antiquity to the present day, and also point to the existing possibilities for the development of new systems.

The theory of sonoristics had been expounded by Prof. Chomiński already much earlier, in articles written in 1956 and 1961 (see Chomiński 1956a and 1961a). His views crystallised later and were summarised in the monograph *Muzyka Polski Ludowej* [*The Music of the People's Republic of Poland*] (Chomiński 1968). The main aspects of the musical work are discussed in that book from the perspective of modern sound phenomena. Hence the analytic categories used by Chomiński: technology of sound (the line-up of performers, disposition of voices, blending and selectivity of sound), time organisation, horizontal structures (stationary and variable) and vertical structures (homogeneous and polygeneous), sound transformations (by means of changes of tempi and dynamics), and the interrelations between technology and form. The book is at the same time a history of Polish music after World War II, with its characteristic traditions and caesuras. The extension of the analytic categories of the musical work makes it possible to apply this method to the music of different ages, including the contemporary avant-garde. This extension also allows the author to take advantage of the experimental studies of sound colour and the possibilities of transforming sound by means of synthesisers. The book provides the basis for an understanding of the newly discovered values of contemporary music — namely, its sonoristic qualities, which would not be possible if we used the traditional analytic methods. Chomiński's book provided a theoretical basis for the classification and evaluation of the unique flourishing of Polish music after 1956.

In *Musical Forms*, Prof. Chomiński returned to the “scientific” study of sound, that is — to sonology. In a systematic fashion he discussed such issues as:

- the new techniques of generating sounds by means of traditional instruments;
- sound generation by means of electro-acoustic and electronic devices;
- transforming sound material by means of these devices;
- combining traditional instruments with sound material created by means of these devices, etc.

From a discussion of technological processes, he moves on to the shaping of form by graphic methods, related to the concepts of infinite and circular form and linked with audiovisual means (a musical piece projected onto a screen as an audible and visible entity). Far from espousing a vision of “the end of musical art”, Chomiński forecasts theoretical, constructive and perceptive syntheses. The entire cycle by Chomiński and Wilkowska-Chomińska, dedicated to musical forms and the shaping of musical material, is unique in the world’s musicological literature. J. Chomiński’s theory of sound has inspired many analyses of contemporary music, and in 2010 Iwona Lindstedt published her fundamental monograph — her postdoctoral thesis at the University of Warsaw.

The knowledge and historical material contained in the series *Musical Forms* provided the basis for Chomiński and Wilkowska-Chomińska’s two-volume *Historia muzyki* [*History of Music*], published by PWN Edition in 1989–1990 (Chomiński and Wilkowska-Chomińska 1989–1990).

Prof. Chomiński’s second large series of handbooks was *Historia harmonii i kontrapunktu* [*History of Harmony and Counterpoint*], whose two volumes, dedicated to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, were published in 1958–1962, whereas Volume 3, dealing with the period from the baroque to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, appeared only in 1990. There is no other such a comprehensive history of composition techniques to be found in the entire musicological literature. The professor did not limit himself to an analysis of European

professional music in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; he also considered non-European polyphony and European folk music. The first two volumes contain as many as 600 analysed examples, which shows the scope of this research project and testifies to the author's profound knowledge of source materials. Nevertheless, later studies revised and modified many of Chomiński's theses and sources. The author discussed not only musical works, but also theoretical texts on counterpoint and harmony. This cycle became a model of consistently applied historicism in the study of autonomous sound technique in isolation from aspects of musical culture. Volume 3, completed 30 years later, presents an extraordinary panorama of composition techniques, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to contemporary avant-garde. In this comprehensive survey, the harmonic and contrapuntal foundations of European music — from the age of modal composition to major-minor tonality to forms of harmony in serial, collective, statistical and stochastic compositions — have been subjected to detailed analyses. Similarly, all the major handbooks of theories of 20<sup>th</sup>-century sound techniques have been interpreted. Both series — *Musical Forms* and *History of Harmony and Counterpoint* (especially its Volume 3) mutually complement each other, and together they provide a comprehensive overview of changes in composition techniques throughout the European music history — one that only Prof. Chomiński could possibly attempt in Poland.

Chomiński was also the author of numerous articles: on the history of instrumentation, harmony, form, texture, and on the academic and artistic interpretation of the musical work. He was interested in musicology as a systematic and historical discipline. He outlined his own concept of that discipline at the University of Warsaw, Institute of Musicology 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Session in 1974 (Chomiński 1978). In his view, musicology is not only an *ex post* systematic description of musical phenomena in the context of theory and aesthetics, but also aspires to be an experimental science, which forms new theories and creates principles for composers to follow. In this well thought-out, interdisciplinary model — corroborated by Prof. Chomiński's experiences with the (later presented) theory of sonology, which provided composers with a basis for the creation of new musical scales and new sound

qualities — Chomiński saw musicology as closely linked with related and auxiliary disciplines such as musical acoustics, the psychology of music, sociology, cultural studies, etc.

In the history of Polish music, Chomiński primarily focused on two figures: Szymanowski and Chopin. He did not, however, limit himself to these two composers. He made very important contributions as the editor of the already mentioned *Muzyka Polskiego Odrodzenia* [*Music of the Polish Renaissance*], *Kultura muzyczna Polski Ludowej* [*Musical Culture of the People's Republic of Poland*], written together with Zofia Lissa (Chomiński and Lissa 1957), *Słownik muzyków polskich* [*Dictionary of Polish Musicians*] (1964, 1967), editor-in-chief of the series *Studia Muzykologiczne* [*Musicological Studies*], of the *Muzyka* quarterly (in 1956–1971), *Monumenta Musicae in Polonia* (from 1964), and editor of the *Rocznik Chopinowski* [*Chopin Yearly*] in 1956–1971 (numbers 2–6 as *Annales Chopin*). He also left behind a typed copy of the *Historia muzyki polskiej* [*History of Polish Music*], written together with Krystyna Wilkowska-Chomińska (Chomiński and Wilkowska-Chomińska 1995–1996).

Chomiński's articles originally written in 1936–1967, devoted to Karol Szymanowski, were published in 1969 in *Studia nad twórczością Karola Szymanowskiego* [*Studies on the Works of Karol Szymanowski*] (Chomiński 1969) and dedicated to Prof. Jan Stopczyk, his medical rescuer. Though they cannot be used as a monograph study of Szymanowski's oeuvre, they offer an introduction to many important aspects of the composer's output. Among the discussed issues, there are: Szymanowski's stylistic affinities (to the late Romantic and impressionist music, his indebtedness to Stravinsky, Schönberg or Scriabin), but also — the structural analysis of Chopin's influence on Szymanowski, the organisation of sound material, the place of melody in the various genres explored by Szymanowski, and, finally, his own musical legacy. One of the most important papers in the volume is the treatise 'Studies on Szymanowski's Impressionism' from 1956, in which Chomiński analyses the main sound qualities of the musical work, such as: statics, selectivity, blend, homogeneity, polygeneity, and sound transformations — all the modern analytic criteria created by Chomiński and later described in the already mentioned *Muzyka Polski Ludowej*. This treatise proves that already before 1956

Chomiński was working on the foundations of a theory of sonoristics. He claimed that Szymanowski, though clearly interested in the innovations of Debussy and Ravel, strove to enrich the sound colour of his works in his own ways, drawing both on experiences earlier than impressionism and foreshadowing those phenomena that were to appear later. Szymanowski's oeuvre is thus a unique, individual creation. The preface to the volume dedicated to Szymanowski provides us with the earliest summary of Chomiński's research work, written by Mieczysław Tomaszewski (1969: V–X).

Józef Chomiński's Chopinological research was summarised in his major monograph studies on Chopin's *Preludes* (1950) and *Sonatas* (1954–55), in *Chopin*, published in Cracow in 1978 and in Leipzig in 1980 (see Chomiński 1978a), and finally — *Katalog dzieł Fryderyka Chopina / A Catalogue of the Works of Frederick Chopin*, prepared together with Teresa Dalila Turło (Chomiński and Turło 1990). Apart from these publications, Chomiński wrote a number of articles and reviews of papers dedicated to Chopin. He participated in the Chopin Congress in Warsaw, 1960, chairing one of its sessions, and delivered a paper at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Symposium 'Chopin and Romanticism' in Warsaw in 1986. The *Rocznik Chopinowski*, which he edited, printed articles by leading Polish researchers in the field of musicology, by the eminent pianist Zbigniew Drzewiecki, as well as articles by foreign musicologists in translation. The periodical reflected the flourishing of musicological studies after the war (its last issue, 24/25, appeared in 2001).

Chomiński's monograph on Chopin's *Preludes* was published as vol. 9 of *Analizy i objaśnienia Dzieł Wszystkich Fryderyka Chopina [Analyses and Elucidation of Fryderyk Chopin's Complete Works]*. The book is at the same time a monograph study of preludes as a periodical form and a collection of 26 analyses of Chopin's individual preludes. Chomiński examines the origins of the prelude cycle, in which the pieces are arranged according to their key, passing through all the keys of the major-minor system, but in various orders (in Chopin's cycle — in the order of the circle of fifth and of the respective relative keys). Chomiński discusses the development of the prelude cycle from Bach and Beethoven to Hummel, Moscheles, Herz and Kalkbrenner. He presents a survey of the literature of the subject. He divides the Chopin

preludes into cantilena-type and figuration-type, or, after Jachimecki, into the nocturne-type and etude-type. This division is related to two types of form-building: evolutionary and cyclic form. Still, not all the preludes can be classified as belonging to one of these types. E.g. the *Prelude in A Minor* represents, according to Chomiński, a “form resulting from the search for a tonic centre”. The same prelude, similarly as the *Prelude in E Minor*, builds melody in the form of overlapping planes instead of a periodic melodic form. Chomiński also considers the energy of the work’s musical components and of the overall cyclic form. He believes that the simplicity of the *Preludes in A Major* and *C Minor* is a kind of repose within the macro-form of the cycle. Despite the “serial” form of the cycle (a specific number of preludes in each part of the cycle), Chopin contained in his cycle many different types of form, with contrasted structural models. In the melody we hear, on the one hand, “stepwise oscillations” (*Prelude in E Minor*), but on the other — the broad and tempestuous figurations are interrupted by chords (*Prelude in F Minor*). Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger went a step further when he pointed to a melodic figure characteristic of Chopin: the leap a sixth up, followed by a descending fifth, present in all the preludes from Op. 28, though, naturally, not always as the initial figure. This is related to the functioning of the system of piano temperament (Eigeldinger 2000, see also Eigeldinger 2010: 137–140). A “stepwise oscillation” can be regarded as an element of Eigeldinger’s figure. The figure most typical of Chopin’s melodic structure is the leap a sixth up from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree of the scale, and a direct or meandrical return to the tonic. “The sixth figure” is an important component in the integration of the cycle’s substance, as it supports the expressive coherence of the cycle, evident in the reception and the literary descriptions of the individual preludes (Poniatońska 2003, see also Poniatońska 2008: 87–113). These studies and interpretations were later taken up by other scholars. In the form of the *Preludes*, Chomiński discovers traces of the monothematic sonata and of the techniques of sonata-form development, as well as the already mentioned periodical structures and segments based on figurations.

Many researchers stressed the improvisational character of the preludes, which served as a justification for the free architectural design and form of

the individual segments of the cycle. Schumann even wrote that the preludes had no form. For Chomiński, however, improvisation (understood as a loosening of structure in the musical progress) is quite absent from Chopin's preludes. Conversely: the preludes represent an extreme condensation of form and means. Those small-scale, aphoristic forms are extremely compact and coherent, so that each detail has some significance for the construction and composition of the whole. Chomiński provides a refined analysis of each prelude — of its melody, harmony, rhythm, texture and emotional expression — with reference to earlier interpretations. Even though the approaches to form and (especially) the terminology have changed since the 1950s, and despite Chomiński's indebtedness to Kurth and Mersmann's energeticism as applied to the expressive qualities of the musical work and to Erpf's harmonic system, Chomiński's detailed monograph of the preludes, with no parallels in Polish Chopin studies, still remains a valuable compendium of our analytic knowledge about the preludes and represents an important stage in the Professor's research work.

Similar methodological merits can be discovered in Chomiński's study of Chopin's sonatas, in which he presents in detail his idea of expressive form, corresponding to some extent to the Romantic idea of the musical work. This form reveals itself as a process, as a *forma formans* of the oscillations of accumulating and relieving forces and tensions, as a result of the interaction of all the musical components. The model stresses the drama and the dialectic of form and emphasises the substantial and textural contrasts, as well as the elements integrating musical progress in the work. Chomiński believed that this kind of approach was suitable for the large sonata cycles representing Chopin's mature individual style (apart from the *Sonata in C Minor*). In his monograph on the *Sonatas*, Chomiński demonstrates the mastery and specific discourse of his musicological analyses, which cover every form-shaping detail as well as the macro-form. While discussing the concentration of motivic material and evolutionism (e.g. in the development of the 1<sup>st</sup> theme from *Sonata in B Flat Minor*), the closed cantilena planes, simple sequential structures and textures with polyphonic elements, or the idiom of Chopin's harmony analysed from the points of view of its tonal logic, of

chromaticism, sound colour and sound qualities — Chomiński strives to discover the essential qualities of Chopin's form and the sources of the wealth of his composition techniques. Chomiński does not present the sonatas as an example of stylistic evolution, but rather — highlights the formal concepts behind each successive element of the cycle and their transformations. His in-depth analyses restore the *Sonata in C Minor* to its proper place in Chopin's oeuvre and point to novel, neoromantic elements in Chopin's last *Sonata in G Minor* for piano and cello.

After the monograph on the *Sonatas*, Chomiński interrupted his large-scale Chopinological studies for more than a dozen years, but in his articles he regularly returned to the problems of Chopin's piano texture, of his masterful style, the transformations of a work's artistic interpretations, also from the point of view of his ideas of sonoristics and the real acoustic shape of the composition. In that period, Chomiński also discussed sound techniques in Liszt, Wagner and Scriabin, the sound colour and tonal organisation of sound material in Szymanowski's music, improving the methodology and extending the scope of his analytic work. The impulse for his new publication on Chopin came from a publisher in Leipzig in the form of a commission for a monograph of that composer. Chomiński quickly completed the job, publishing the book first in Polish. Rather than engaging in a new biographical and source study, he presented a comprehensive overview of Chopin and his music in the context of the Romantic era, including also a new interpretation of Chopin's friendships, correspondence and artistic milieu. No new academic, musicological monographs on Chopin's life and work, based on the available sources, had appeared in Poland after World War II. Instead, there had been a number of literary works and popular biographical sketches. Chomiński's monograph, therefore, marked a new epoch in Chopin studies, which was to culminate in Mieczysław Tomaszewski's great syntheses of Chopin's life and work contained first in Volume 2 of *Encyklopedia Muzyczna PWM* [*PWM Music Encyclopaedia*] and later in the compendium *Chopin. Życie, dzieło, rezonans* [*Chopin. Man, Work, Resonance*] (see Tomaszewski 1998, also in Tadeusz Zieliński's monograph (1993)).

Chomiński presents the composer's biography using the traditional division into the Warsaw period (discussing the background of Warsaw's cultural life and ideological trends in Europe in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century), the first years in Paris, the Nohant years, and the last period of the composer's life. Most important, however, are his analyses of Chopin's work in each individual period. In the Warsaw years, Chomiński analyses the transition from Classicism to Romanticism, the *stile brillant*, the genres and techniques that Chopin worked with, up to the exploration of sound colour and to piano studies, i.e. the etudes. In the first years in Paris, against the background of the artistic and ideological atmosphere of the city, Chomiński traces back the origins of the composer's individual style to a new concept of ornamentation and harmony, to the expressive significance of dynamics and tempi, to the composer's poetic inspirations, and explains how this new style manifests itself in the different genres: in the nocturnes, mazurkas, polonaises, drawing room waltzes, etudes, impromptus, scherzos and ballades. The Nohant years were a period of search for a new logic of great forms, of the growing significance of polyphonic thinking, the development of the ballade style, work on the earlier selected genres, and a synthesis of musical means. Chomiński's monograph ends with a great synthesis: an overview of artistic ideology, of the national style, piano texture, the components of the musical work, modal thinking, forms, and Romantic expression in Chopin's compositions, as well as of his attitude to piano training, to other composers of his time, and to women. This overview ends with a portrait of Chopin as a man and artist. It is this synthesis, which places Chopin as a genius, a tutor and a man in the context of the Polish traditions and European artistic trends, that constitutes the main value of Chomiński's monograph today.

The greatest achievement of Professor Chomiński's final years was the *Catalogue of Fryderyk Chopin's Works* (co-edited with Teresa Dalila Turło), awaited for many years and finally published in 1990. Recent works of this kind include M. J. E. Brown's *Chopin. An Index of His Works in Chronological Order* (Brown 1960, 1972) and K. Kobylańska's *Chopin. Thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis* (Kobylańska 1979). Brown considers the chronological order in which the works were composed, which is still the subject of debates due

to inconsistent dating. Kobylańska based her work mainly on her own *The manuscripts of Chopin's Works. Catalogue* (Kobylańska 1977) and focuses on this area of source study.

Chomiński and Turło's work is a complete thematic catalogue which, for the first time, lists the works in alphabetical order as the most convenient to use for musicologists, pianists, music lovers, teachers and — in fact — all other users worldwide, if we take into account the popularity of Chopin's work and the international names of the genres he practised. The authors also include other orders in their catalogue: the chronology of works, opus numbering and the works without opus numbers, an index of subtitles added to Chopin's compositions and various other indices. The core of the catalogue, however, is the description by genre and form grouped together, supplemented by individual pieces such as the ballades and the *Barcarolle*, *Berceuse* and *Bolero*. The catalogue further lists all the sketches, fragments, exercises, lost works and pieces of dubious authorship ascribed to Chopin. A chronological presentation would scatter works in the same genre across the catalogue, especially as some of the pieces were published in Chopin's lifetime, and others — posthumously. The authors also reduced the spurious numbering of manuscripts introduced by K. Kobylańska, which included multiple copies, copies of prints and unfinished autographs — undoubtedly testifying to the musical culture of the time, but without much significance for the origins and evolution of Chopin's works — a fact demonstrated by the authors of the *Catalogue*. Separate entries are dedicated to first editions, whereas collective editions, selections of works and later individual editions or transcriptions are listed in separate sections. The individual areas of information are presented in coherent sections, which provides the *Catalogue* with clarity, logic and consistency. The overlapping orders of composition, editions and titles appear as mutually complementary and enhance the value of the *Catalogue* (17), which remains an unprecedented achievement in the history of Polish Chopinology, in the work of its authors and publishers (Fryderyk Chopin Society and PWM Edition), even if subsequent studies have verified the dating of some works and provided new data concerning editions, issues, etc.

The changes in Professor Chomiński's research outlook are best reflected in his great cycles on musical forms, harmony and counterpoint, as well as his monograph on Polish contemporary music and in numerous articles. The point of departure for his methodology was the positivist musicology that he became acquainted with during his studies. In the 1930s he became fascinated with Kurth and Mersmann's psychological discussion of energetic qualities, though he criticised Kurth for his treatment of Wagner's harmony in *Tristan und Isolde* as evidence of the crisis in the tonal system. Chomiński, conversely, saw Wagner as the peak of the major-minor harmony. He did not agree with Kurth's treatment of deviations from the scale-relative sound order (which Kurth embraced), such as alterations, chromaticisms or even chordal structures other than those based on the interval of a third — as destructive to the harmonic system. Chomiński accepted a wide network of interchordal relations. Still, the idea of energies or tensions inherent in the components of the musical work suited his own view of the musical laws, of their wealth and transformations, as the supreme form of artistic language. Chomiński referred to energeticism e.g. in his articles on K. Szymanowski's works in 1936–1938, and this idea was still to some extent present in his post-war writings e.g. on Chopin's *Preludes* and *Sonatas*, though transformed into an aesthetics of the heteronomous expressive qualities of the musical work.

We could point to 1956 as the turning point, the year of a great breakthrough and upheaval in Polish music, in which Chomiński also discovered the new, sonoristic qualities of a musical work and began to form new cognitive categories for the description of this empirical musical experience. What was characteristic of his work was the conscious self-limitation to the autonomous musical material and sound structure, to the work by itself, though, on the other hand, he extended his field of study to cover not only tonality, harmony, technique, but also texture and the purely acoustic qualities, and in contemporary avant-garde music — the sonological organisation of sound material, pointing to the possibilities of further developments in music. Chomiński was able to conceive the analysis of a musical work in its totality, from the creative process to the psychological and cultural context and the work's artistic and social impact. Still, he himself concentrated

exclusively on the “neutre” phase of the work, treating analysis as *rei cognitio*, in a sense — a value in itself. The changes in Chomiński’s ideology and research approach can be traced in all his works: both those dedicated to early music, and those on Chopin, Szymanowski and contemporary music. His profound synthetic, ordering sense, establishing the hierarchy of material, examining the nature and importance of the studied phenomena — left its mark on all his great handbook cycles, on his theoretical-historical treatises and, finally, on the *Catalogue of the Works of Frederick Chopin*. Professor Chomiński published more than 150 musicological studies. It should be remembered, however, that just one of these — his *Musical Forms* — and that only in its 5-volume version of 1974–1987 — is more than 3 thousand pages long. Intellectually active nearly till the end of his life, he was the embodiment of the principle which he passed down to his students — *nulla dies sine linea*. He brilliantly grasped all the twists and eccentricities of the contemporary musical language, discovering their theoretical foundations and links to the past. In an almost visionary manner, he perceived and revealed the processes of transformation in music. His universal and versatile mind, and his knowledge of composition techniques of all ages, made him into the unrivalled model of an academic: a university teacher and a researcher non-pareil.

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