

## The Conductor versus the Composer: The Limits of Interference in the Interpretation of Contemporary Music Using the Example of Ryszard and Aleksander Gabryś' Compositions

**Abstract.** The main body of the article is devoted to the analysis of some compositions, which were on the program of a monographic concert celebrating the 65th birthday anniversary of Ryszard Gabryś within the 104th Silesian Composers' Tribune on 9 December 2007 in the BWA Gallery of Contemporary Art in Katowice. The concert in a live version was recorded on CD released by the Acte Préalable label. The musical content of this album is filled with compositions for chamber string orchestra written by Ryszard Gabryś and *Abraxas for strings and tape* by his son Aleksander Gabryś, a score that won a distinction in 1999 at the Andrzej Panufnik Composers Competition in Cracow. The analysis of particular compositions includes their formal examination illustrated with rich examples coming from the manuscripts as well as a subjective interpretation of conducting solutions used in the process of interpretation and performance of the compositions.

**Keywords:** avant-garde music, Silesian composers, Ryszard Gabryś, Aleksander Gabryś, interpretation, conducting.

### 1. Introduction. Ryszard and Aleksander Gabryś – the avant-garde generation

With an interesting piece of equipment, the “artistic” fate of one of the “cicerone” of the Silesian avant-garde – Ryszard Gabryś – seems to be ascending. At the start of the 1970s a happening of his was held to accompany the exhibition of Sigmund Lis (the modern Silesian painter) at the Gallery of Modern Art (BWA) in Katowice entitled “Take the opportunity to trample evil”, and over thirty years later, on 9 December 2007, a concert of the compositions of Gabryś was held at the BWA Gallery in Katowice as part of the Silesian Composers' Tribune; a concert which was supposed to be an unofficial celebration of his 65th birthday. The following pieces were played: *Es muss sein II for string orchestra*, *Il Cicerone per contrabasso and 12 strumenti ad arco* as well as *Abraxas for strings and tape*, written by his son, Aleksander Gabryś. The premier performances included two composed especially for this occasion: *Piccolo prologo per Maestra ed archi* and *Dobranoc for boy soprano, double bass and strings*. Some of the afore-mentioned pieces, invoking the avant-garde experience of composers from years gone by, involved musicians to a much greater degree, giving them unusual tasks and forcing them into “paratheatrical” behaviour.

Aleksander Gabryś, a virtuoso double bass player, composer and performer, was born on 22 October 1974 in the town of Siemanowice in Upper Silesia. He graduated with merit from Waldemar Tamowski's double bass class in the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice in 1998, and obtained a Soloist Degree in 2002 from Wolfgang Güttler's class in the Academy of Music of the City of Basel, Switzerland. His first mentor and composing teacher was his father – Ryszard Gabryś. Under his watchful eye, Aleksander made his first attempts at composing, and later was a co-composer of some of his father's works (*Glorietta for choir, soloists and strings*, *Il Cicerone per contrabasso e 12 strumenti ad arco*).

Performance is a specific form of artistic expression which Aleksander Gabryś has engaged in for many years. “... I think, says Aleksander, that performance is not just about my acting on stage, but I also stay true to the idea of the speaker on the Voice of America from years ago, an outstanding violinist and a true artistic soul – Mirosław Kondracki: ‘... playing whatever, wherever, whenever, for whatever reason, however ...’ For me the boundary between art and life has been consciously blurred and crossed. Paraphrasing my mentor from many years ago, Prof. Jan Wincent Hawel, ‘art is like your daily bread.’” (Sylwia Praśniewska, Aleksander Gabryś 2011)

The creativity of Aleksander's composing is shown by the source of the Gabryś' mutual fascination – the folklore music of the Silesian Beskids, the specific “musical” sacrum as well as the inspiration of instrumental theatre, although the generational differences started to become evident as Aleksander became more and more interested in new technology. The medium of electronics through tape or “live electronics” seems to indicate the different style of Aleksander Gabryś, although the composer did not completely reject the traditional forms of sound. “I compose in my own style, said Aleksander, that means I construct the sense and progression of the content anew for each individual piece, plan or performance, not just on the basis of my own choices, but also based on my own rules. The style, which is developed each time from zero, clearly provides a chance to understand things even better and on a deeper level. Music and its science as well as ‘discovery’ have awakened in me a true thankfulness of the nature of religion ...” (Sylwia Praśniewska, Aleksander Gabryś 2011)

The specific relationship between the music of Ryszard and Aleksander Gabryś was a feedback effect of ideas and expressions. “They are both looking, as it were, for dramatically strong means of expression by consciously going beyond the frames of the *musica ipsa* and they both exhibit a philosophical-literary Faustian myth.” (Bożena Gieburowska-Gabryś 2009: 12)

This is documented by a phonograph recording of the concert for the 65th birthday of Gabryś senior – “Ryszard & Aleksander Gabryś – Music for strings” (Acte Préalable AP0228).

## 2. Ryszard Gabryś, *Piccolo prologo per Maestra ed archi*, 2007

This composition was written in 2007 for the concert on 9 December of that year, as part of the 104th Silesian Composers Tribune. The unique happening which opened this event, together with the closing *Dobranoc* (Goodnight), connected the beginning and the end. I discussed the form of the prologue many times with the composer. It was reflected in a short description of the subsequent events, making up a one-and-a-half minute “musical spectacle”. I only received the final version of the score fifteen minutes before the general rehearsal on the day of the concert, which had been approved by the musicians and was performed to the undoubted surprise of the audience gathered in the BWA Gallery in Katowice.

Shortly after the announcements by the narrator you could hear the tap of the conductor’s heels as he/she enters slowly, while the chairs of the surprised audience move as he looks around, playing a pantomime-like role as he places the notes on the conductor’s music stand, and then goes on to make temperamental gestures of imagined future musical phrases, thereby enticing the musicians onto stage. They come from backstage, appearing confused, and walk around the art gallery; their steps and the grating sound of moving chairs mixing with the playing of individual sounds or sound structures; admiring the pieces of art around them, some of which were an inspiration for these concert themes, and then walk around the stage arranged in the middle of the gallery until they are woken from their lethargy by the conductor’s shout of *signori, signore, prego* and finally take their seats. The “artistic” tuning of instruments, inspired and managed by the conductor with crescendos and diminuendos, is ended by a joint chord which is a taste of what is about to come in the next piece – *Es muss sein*.

It is a unique interplay between the conductor and the musicians, and the watching public. It is based on the Pied-Piper of Hamelin, without sound and just using gestures, with the conductor hypnotising the audience who seem to “hear” his silent, albeit expressive moves. At the same time a whole range of themes resound, some of which are known, referring to popular phrases from classical music, as if the musicians were teasing what is about to be performed. It was a very loose interpretation of John Cage’s 4’33”; although at the beginning the purpose of the conductor’s solo performance may seem negligible, its artisan-like strength unfolded gradually with regards to all the tones, both musical and non-musical, which kept the sound chaos under control. In this way, we come to the idea of performance, in which “interest in works of art ... gives way to interest in experiencing art”. (Mervin Carlton 2007: 222)

On account of the unique form of dedication to me as a female conductor noted in the title of the composition (*per Maestra*), I find a certain kind of personal inspiration, which guided the composer so bravely to give me the solo role in his work. On the one hand, my performing temperament and courage to take on new challenges, my willingness to take part in a specific type of “intellectual game” which the composer plays with both the performers and the audience, the not-always conscious role in the artistic creation, made me a key part of this piece.

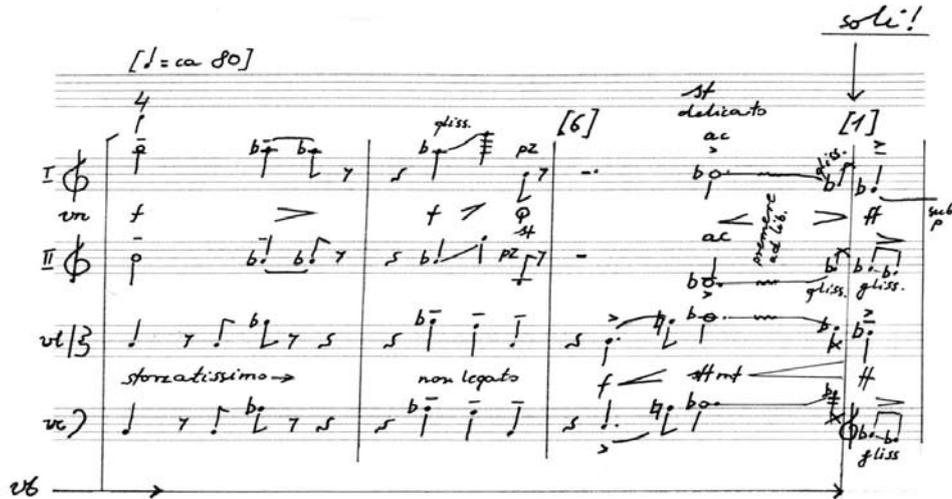
Ryszard Gabryś’ interest in neo-syncretism, his strive to link an acoustic and visual phenomenon, goes all the way back to the early years of his creativity, when he made so-called “integral spectacles” in cooperation with fine arts artists, actors and other musicians. He focuses on the actual “poetic” message of the score and goes beyond pure musical themes in which sound has no value in itself, but which becomes one of the elements creating a range of means of expression leading to the poly-genre projection and universal style of art of the future.

## 3. Ryszard Gabryś, *Es muss sein II for string orchestra*, 2007

This piece is dedicated to me and my ensemble and, like *Piccolo prologo*, was written with its performance during the Silesian Tribune for Composers in mind. The composition forms a version of *Es muss sein* written specifically for a string quartet. It is therefore no surprise that the whole piece is made up of lots of Beethoven-like reminiscences, drawn in particular from his string quartet No. 16, Op. 135 in F-major as well as *The Great Fugue* for string quartet op. 133 in B♭-major. The re-worked theme of the *Fugue* for string quartet op. 133 sets the framework for the piece.

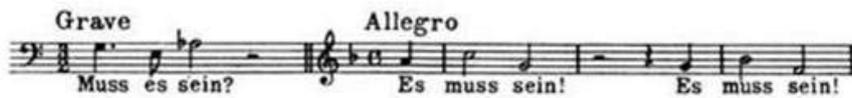


Example 1. Ludwig van Beethoven, *Great Fugue for string quartet Op. 133 in B major* (the Fugue theme)

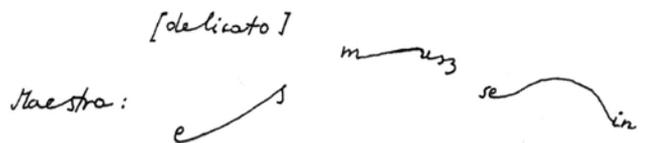


Example 2. Ryszard Gabryś, *Es muss sein*, p. 2

The motto of the piece and its framework come from the words Beethoven wrote underneath the cello part, which was the prologue for the final part of the string quartet op. 135. *Es muss sein* (It must be) is the latest version of a Beethoven-like conviction about the inevitability of fate.



Example 3. Ludwig van Beethoven, *String Quartet No. 16, Op. 135 in F major*, part IV (beginning)



Example 4. Ryszard Gabryś, *Es muss sein* (verbal sequence opening the piece)

Putting these words at the start of the piece, to be spoken by the conductor, initiates their later repetition by all musicians based on mutual counterpoint, up to the pantomime-like cumulation described in the stage direction script, enriched by the multi-layered *Es muss sein*. Ryszard Gabryś makes fun of other great masters, who made musical motifs out of their own name (b-a-c-h), make a *Klangzentrum* from “e-flat” which unfolds into a “Beethoven-Gabryś-like” musical cocoon, thereby using the elaborated articulated “battery”, enriching the sonoristic layer of the work and including the microtonal structures.

Example 5. Ryszard Gabrys, *Es muss sein*, p. 6

Amongst Beethoven's quotes, there is also one he made, merely on drafts, which only found its right place in the composition *Es muss sein*.

Example 6. Ryszard Gabrys, *Es muss sein*, p. 14 (theme "Viennese")

The traditional major-minor tonalities and arranged rhythmic material collide with a twelve tone technique (dodecaphony), microtonality and aleatoric sections. Fragments contrasting the expression and sound create a uniform and unusually balanced form, which gives the composer a difficult task to maintain the tension in the piece and manage the expression of the individual musicians to whom the score gives a large degree of freedom to shape the musical material.

Concerning the sonoristics, the composer has a wide range of technical possibilities for string instruments, using their specific playing options such as *pizzicato*, *Bartók pizzicato*, *sul tasto*, *sul ponticello*, *con legno*, *ricochet*, *glissando*, natural and artificial harmonics and *glissando* harmonics.

The specific understanding is also the role of the conductor, who initiates and inspires the musicians, sometimes encouraging them to show greater enthusiasm, several times breaking through their occasional internal resistance to use their voice or behave in a non-musical way. Traditional ways of conducting, which require fragments of the musical score associated with tradition, are transitioned smoothly into free gestures of the general phrase and expression, constructing the whole of the individual themes created by each musician.

The composers suggest all of this merely by a general outline of the sound. This is a particularly interesting fragment that requires a large amount of rhythmic discipline from the conductor, in which the “Viennese” quote is added to modernistic sound structures created freely by the musicians, which almost surface out of the musical chaos, played by a solo quintet.

Example 7. Ryszard Gabryś, *Es muss sein*, p. 15

A reference to instrumental theatre is part of the special piece earlier described as a pantomime whose gradual intensification develops into a powerful, choral-sounding theme reminiscent of Beethoven.

Example 8. Ryszard Gabryś, *Es muss sein*, p. 18

#### 4. Ryszard Gabryś, *Il Cicerone per contrabasso e 12 strumenti ad arco*, 2005

This piece was created on the commission of the Organ Conversatorium festival in 2005. It was first performed during the concert of the 20th festival at St. Mary’s church in Legnica on 7 September 2005. It was performed, just like *Piccolo prologo* and *Es muss sein*, by the chamber orchestra Camerata Impuls under my conductorship, while the solo part was performed by the composer’s son Aleksander.

*Il Cicerone* is evidence of the “reciprocal inspiration” of both excellent artists. The roots of the creation of both Gabryśes run deep into avant-garde, developed on the basis of jointly-created “codes”, both with regard to the notes, graphics and aesthetics. “In this sense this score displays a special valour ... of genetic recording.” (Bożena Gieburowska-Gabryś 2010: 21)

Due to the fact that the first performance, and the later performance at the 104th Silesian Composers' Tribune, was executed with "particella" (at that time I did not have the whole score, and only the general performance notes written by the composer, an outline of the sound structure with an accentuated entry for the instruments interspersing the rich narration of the contrabass part, general guidelines concerning the dynamically-growing form and the individual instrument parts, which were the source of the details of the missing "conductor's score"), the work on this was *de facto* the process of co-composing the piece equally with the author (thanks to his active, fully-committed presence at rehearsals), which involved the individual performers, including, in particular, the soloist.

The fragments of the "particella" are evidence of the great trust placed in the conductor by the composer, giving him/her a large amount of freedom to interpret the composition.

Example 9. Ryszard Gabryś, *Il Cicerone*, the first two pages of "particella"

The composition was a specific "dialogue" between the soloist and the conductor, who actively accompany the string ensemble. The titular character Cicerone, represented by the solo contrabassist, takes us on a journey through the canals of Venice, full of unexpected, even ecstatic experiences – from joyful to fear-filled musical journeys. The large range of impressions is only guaranteed if we are fully open to the adventures awaiting in the corners of the city of canals. Surrendering to a delicate wave, which takes us where the "boat" of the joint imagination of the soloist and conductor goes, completely freeing ourselves from the shackles of the route and opening our mind to every form of expression allows us to fully immerse ourselves in the maelstrom (abyss) of sound and time intertwined "internally" and "externally".

The form of the piece is designed around four solo cadences (co-composed by Aleksander Gabryś), whose specific notes and graphics became their own form of "generational language", developed over a long-term co-operation between both composers and their mutual inspirations. *Cadenza 2*, with its annotation "Hommage à Witold", a dedication to a friend of the family, the excellent Silesian composer Witold Szalonek, seems to be the flagship section here. The spectrum of sonoristic techniques, which were the quintessence of the interests of both Gabryśes, was filled in this and all other cadences by, for example, the sounds of the highest and lowest pitched notes on all strings, natural and artificial harmonics, *pizzicato à la Bartók*, *saltando*, *tremolo* with different frequency ranges, *glissando*, *glissando* harmonics, "the sounds of seagulls", the murmurs or "squashing" of the bow on the strings or its aggressive, circular friction on the strings.

Example 10. Ryszard Gabryś, *Il Cicerone*, p. 11

The whole piece inevitably leads to the finale, in which the Protestant chorale resonates triumphantly in its majestic fullness, like an echo of the modern “genealogical” journey of life – father and son, their mutual “Cicerone” gradually departing into non-existence, accompanied by the sighs of the remaining performers. It might be a measure of the hidden longing for sacrum – amongst the intensity of experiences associated with the attractions of the surrounding worlds.

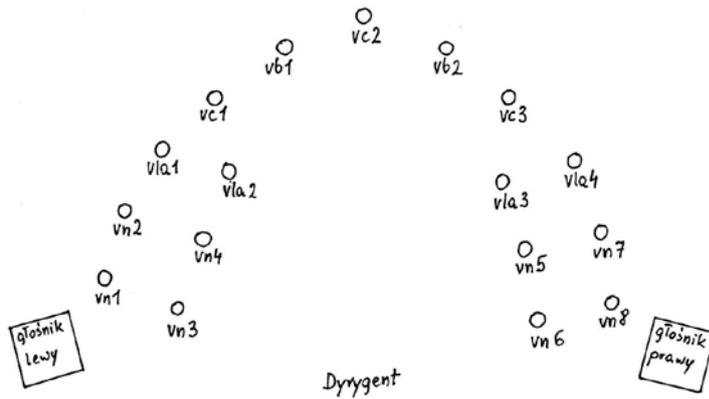
Example 11. Ryszard Gabryś, *Il Cicerone*, p. 25

*Il Cicerone* is, it seems, a piece to showcase both the unlimited possibilities of the performing soloist as well as the accompanying musicians. Enriched by the unusually expressive acting and voice skills of Aleksander Gabryś, it becomes a form of concert “staging”, in which the “para-theatrical” message is a key element for the whole piece. The recording is done exclusively phonographically, triggering the imagination of the listeners, allowing them to create their own “mental images” based on the exceptionally rich sonoristic structure. It allows the listener to take his/her “own” journey through the canals of Venice and uncover the sound attractions and the philosophical musing about one’s own, passing life and its sense in the mystic dimension.

**5. Aleksander Gabrys, *Abraxas for strings and tape*, 1999**

This work was composed, in a slightly different form, in 1994, originally with the title *Ogród igier boskich* (Playground of the Gods).

After the change of the title to its current name of *Abraxas*, in accordance with the author’s intention, “the title word has a magical character in it and opens the imagination to multiple different symbols that express man’s dream of Fulfilment, one where he came from and one to where he is headed” (Aleksander Gabrys 2002: 14). This fulfilment is exemplified in five primitive forces – the spirit, word, providence, power and wisdom.



Example 12. Aleksander Gabrys, *Abraxas*, prelude to the score

STRUKTURY (1,2,3) I ELEMENTY ( $\alpha, \beta, \Omega$ )  
ALEATORYCZNE

Example 13. Aleksander Gabrys, *Abraxas*, prelude to the score

“Later, Basilides appeared. He taught that a supreme god exists, and his name is Abraxas. It is from him that Providence comes, and from Providence, Power and Wisdom. From them come authority and angels, followed by an infinite number of angels and emanations. It was the angels created in 365 heavens that created the world in honour of Abraxas.” (Tertulian 1983: 220)

The sub-heading of the composition comprises information that it is “an element of action in an interactive virtual space”. The piece was performed by a string orchestra, whose sound was enriched by electronic sounds generated by a computer and recorded on a stereophonic tape. According to the will of the author, the set of the quintet can be chosen individually, from a small ensemble to a large group of instrumentalists.

In the introduction to the score, there was a detailed plan of the positions of the orchestra on the stage, which was extremely important to achieve the intended acoustic space.

The whole duration indicated by the composer is about 13’ 05”. The composition is divided up into seven sections and is completely free of traditional notes, except for the suggestions of the sound structure around which the narration of the individual instruments is built. The lack of time signatures, and the sharing of the whole piece into ten-second sequences forming the equivalent of bars (based on the tape recording), requires traditional forms of conducting to be abandoned and the development of a system of agreed signs which allow the performers to find a reference point in the narration of the composition. Conducting the ensemble requires the use of a stopwatch, which is started together with the *aufтакт* turning on the tape recording.

In the prelude to the score, the composer proposes ready-made music structures and aleatoric elements, which the conductor uses as a creative base.

The image shows a complex musical score for multiple instruments. At the top, there are several staves with rhythmic markings and a '-1-' sign. Below these, there are more staves with a legend for 'D' (D-sharp) and 'T' (target). The legend includes three numbered options (1., 2., 3.) and a box containing 'T'. The score includes various performance directions like 'espressivo' and 'agitato'.

Example 14. Aleksander Gabryś, *Abraxas*, p. 1

Against this background, the second cello reverberates in the form of a melody line of the “theme” from “D-sharp” to the structure noted in the legend as the target (example improvisation).

The image shows a musical score for a cello solo. It starts with 'VC 2 solo' and a specific melodic line. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of several notes, some with accidentals, and a final note with a fermata.

Example 15. Aleksander Gabryś, *Abraxas*, theme of the 2nd cello

The image shows a musical score for a prelude to the score. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff is marked 'espressivo' and 'p'. The second staff is marked 'mf'. The third staff is marked 'f'. The fourth staff is marked 'agitato'. The score includes various performance directions like 'espressivo', 'p', 'mf', 'f', and 'agitato'. There are also signs for '5', '10', '15', '20', '25', '30', '35', '40', '45', and '50'.

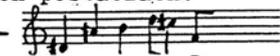
Example 16. Aleksander Gabryś, *Abraxas*, prelude to the score

In the legend of the performance directions and signs there is the main musical idea, the type of theme, which creates the *leitmotiv* of the whole composition, appearing in various rhythmic transpositions in the form of *deciso* and *complativo*.


 - myśl przewodnia, rodzaj tematu opartego na dźwiękach:




 T występuje w dwóch postaciach:

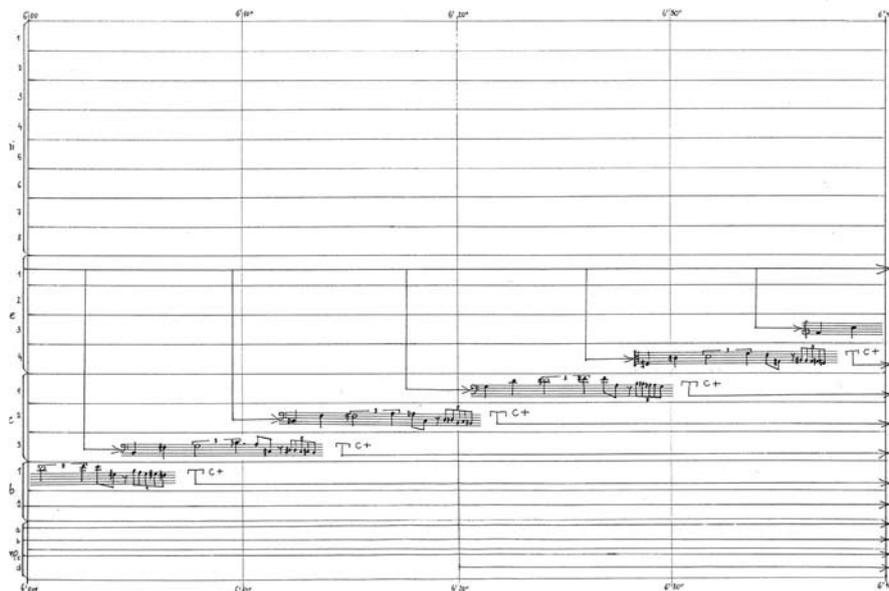
- DECISO - 
- CONTEMPLATIVO - 

Example 17. Aleksander Gabryś, *Abraxas*, prelude to the score

The thematic idea provides the fundamentals for improvisation, a suggestion by the composer for two variants: *viva* or *contemplativa*.

The “thematic game” gradually turns into a canon initiated by the second cello at 1’45”. It soon involves the remaining cellists, violists and contrabassists against the background of murmuring sounds coming from the violins. The continuation of the canon is performed with the desired rhythmic changes together with a gradually expanding spectrum of sonoristic techniques. It is interrupted by the chord structure indicated by No. 1 in the score legend, thereby opening Part IV.

After a short general pause comes the next part of the piece, in which the conductor freely creates a layer of sounds using the aleatoric structure proposed in the legend. It is similar to the cheironomic art of modelling phrases and themes which makes use of gestures agreed with the group during rehearsals, such as turning the palms of the hand, making a fist or using sports signals, such as time-out. The ensemble has to read, based on the conductor’s gestures, the intentions of the individual sequences, interrupted by the respective instruments, starting from the contrabass, gradually introducing the thematic idea that appears in different instrumental parts, something along the lines of a huge polyphonic section.



The image shows a complex musical score with multiple staves. The top part of the score is mostly empty, with some markings at the top. The lower part of the score contains musical notation for various instruments, including strings and woodwinds. There are several instances of the conductor's gesture 'T' and 'C+' (C with a plus sign) interspersed with the musical notation, indicating points of improvisation or specific performance instructions. The score is divided into measures, with time signatures and other musical notations visible.

Example 18. Aleksander Gabryś, *Abraxas*, p. 10

Part V opens by “rumbling” at any selected intervals: minor second, augmented fourth, major seventh and minor ninth, coming from the rhythmic quaver (eighth note) structure, soon spilling into the following thematic idea of the individual voices. I split this section into two bars of five beats due to the necessity of synchronising the individual parts, even though there is a lack of time signature in the whole piece. This was of considerable help to the musicians performing it. It was the only fragment of this composition where the traditional conducting pattern was used.

Example 19. Aleksander Gabryś, *Abraxas*, p. 13

The culminating scraping sound, leading to the peak at 9'40" performed by all instruments by pressing their bows down strongly on the strings, disappears somewhat into the sounds of the tape, which plays solo right up until the final Part VII.

The finale, referring to the introductory aleatoric elements performed in order, from *p* to *ppp*, creates an echo of thematic ideas from the second cello, which initiated it in the prelude to the composition. The tape ends at 11'50", after which there is merely the sound of strings, gradually falling silent.

After the general pause, the whole piece is crowned by the falling accord of the first structure, like the beads of a rosary, until the sound disappears completely.

Example 20. Aleksander Gabryś, *Abraxas*, p. 20

## 6. Ryszard Gabryś, *Dobranoc for boy soprano, contrabass and strings*, 2007

This was the final composition in the series of premier performances on the memorable evening organised by the Union of Polish Composers (The Katowice Branch), together with the Camerata Impuls orchestra and the Gallery of Modern Art (BWA) in Katowice on 9 December 2007 to celebrate the 65th birthday of Ryszard Gabryś. *Dobranoc* was also the final piece on the “live” CD recorded at the event, which was released two years later by the Acte Préalable label.

The idea of this composition, discussed many times with the conductor, was earlier written down in the form of a script, which was used during the concert as a kind of “particella”. The full version of the score was created four years later in 2011 thanks to the selfless work of the composer’s wife, Bożena Gieburowski-Gabryś.

It was the only work using a vocal instrument at that event, although in the previous compositions discussed above the composer did not shy away from using the human voice as an important means of expression.

Linking the “childlike” song-and-ludic-like parts with the Sprechgesang-style cried out philosophical sentences; he points to the deep creative conflict between intuition and intellect. The innocent “goodnight” and “lu li la” take on an extremely dramatic dimension in comparison with the Wittgenstein-Kantian message: “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world, although I can assure you other language worlds do exist, I’ve been there”. This is similar to the *Sprechgesang* technique used for “the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me”. The sub-conscious brings with it childlike joy, while the conscious brings with it the pain of eternal unfulfillment; fruit from the tree of knowledge satisfies the hunger for knowledge, while at the same time causing humanity to be expelled from the safe world of “intellectual nirvana”. The creator affected by torment has to face the eternal dilemma: the maturity of knowing and the child-like unconcerned “intuition”.

Life is therefore just a human dream about one’s self; death is then our awakening from the dream of self, by reaching the *Abraxian* completeness of knowledge and intuition.

“The things we can’t express in words, we should be silent about or sing about” ... (Ryszard Gabryś).

The introduction to *Dobranoc* is a solo narration by double bass, which introduces the first phrase of the boy, childish *alter ego* “Cicerone”, developing against the background of the orchestra’s D16 chord (D16 is D F# A C# E G B).

At the end, a boy, listening to the whole orchestra, humming a lullaby and walking between the musicians, looking over their shoulders and showing them something, or even underlining the notes – “turns off” selected musicians one-by-one with a soft clap or by touching them on the shoulder.

This piece was used as the soundtrack for a film etude presented during the Biennial of Art for Children in 2011 in Katowice.

Compositionally, the concert documented on this disc and the scale of that whole evening, that scattering of the artists as the boy’s “click” flicks off the “lamps” over the pulpits, seems like a situational reverse of the Prologue.

## 7. Conclusion

The CD from the concert at the 104th Silesian Composers’ Tribune, which comprised compositions by Ryszard and Aleksander Gabryś, is the recording of a dying world – at the crossroads of the diverging musical paths of “neo” and “electro”. The proposition is to take part in this musical-intellectual game, enriched by elements of a happening, saturated with expressive emotions, which are blurred in the modern world by the longing for tradition on the one hand, and the dream of “ultra-modern” music, on the other.

It becomes a kind of art which requires the full engagement of the performers, even if they are not completely aware of it, it is nevertheless a passionate experience of co-creating an act and not just taking part in the performing process.

The conductor has an important role in this process, becoming thereby a decoder of the composer’s ideas for the audience. The meaningful pattern models and the developed gestures are placed in a framework of meaning based on the traditional musical notation and graphic notation, allowing it to effectively reach the co-performers as well as the audience through emotions. The total sound “energy” of the composition together with the feelings of the performers allows the audience to focus fully on the cohesion of the piece of art which “we have to feel directly (this means that it should only be evident to us once we analyse and penetrate the internal relationship between the elements of the piece)” (Konstanty Regamey 2010: 46).

This is an example of the evolution whereby the 18th century model of a conductor-composer supporting the performance, is replaced by a conductor-performer co-creating the musical piece.

An undoubted problem could be the resistance of orchestral musicians to the proposed style of performance, which often is unconventional. That is why the use of voice or “paratheatrical” behaviour while playing can sometimes lead to protests by musicians.

The condition for this to work, however, is that the conductor has a full understanding and conviction about the values proposed for the performance of the piece of music. In order to “have the right to interpret, you need to receive the piece on the waves it was transmitted on and hear it in its unique, unrepeatable whole”.

A perfect interpretation of these requirements was given by Prof. Mieczysław Tomaszewski (2003: 9): “... first you have to listen properly to the piece. In full, absolutely, and without any prior assumptions, so that you inhale its sound, taste its nuances and even experience, almost to a painful extent, the acoustic or structural abrasiveness. ... There is no such thing as interpretation without previous, specific experience, whether it’s the narrative or dramatic form of the piece; without a direct experience of the relationship between what already exists and what is new. Consequently, without any wonder about the unusualness, originality and singularity of the composer’s solutions. That’s right, without wonder about the perfection of the creative process. If the interpreter wants to achieve this task honestly, he/she has to be able to admire or become fascinated with it. Or even enchanted. ... Standing face-to-face with the piece means tirelessly asking questions. ... This dialogue allows you to realise its features and look deep into its world, which cannot be completely understood. ... This hermeneutic dialogue leads to an attempt to understand the piece in its uniqueness endowed with value and sense. ... Being able to grasp the sense of the piece and placing it in a field of values is the goal of the final attempt we are talking about. The interpreter is at the threshold of something that is virtually indescribable. But it exists. ... When the interpreter gets close to the truth of the piece, to doing it justice, he/she is condemned to square this circle and dynamically unify the subjective and objective.”

## References

- Carlton, Mervin (2007), *Performans*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, translated by Edyta Kubikowski.
- Gabryś, Aleksander (2002), *Abraxas*, In: The Programme of the 10th Silesian Days of Modern Music, Katowice: Związek Kompozytorów Polskich O/Katowice.
- Gieburowska-Gabryś, Bożena (2009), *Muzyka na smyczki* [Music for strings], booklet CD “Ryszard&Aleksander Gabryś – Music for strings” ActePrealable AP9228: 5–19, translated by Adam Zbyszewski.
- Gieburowska-Gabryś, Bożena (2010), *BASSOLO – granie totalne* [BASSOLO – total playing], booklet CD „Bassolo. Aleksander Gabryś. XXth & XXIst centuries’ Contrabass Music” DUX 0800/0801: 7–34.
- Praśniewska, Sylwia (2011), *Pewnej nocy ujrzałem wieczność – rozmowa z kompozytorem Aleksandrem Gabrysiem* [I saw Eternity the other night – a conversation with composer Aleksander Gabryś], “Twoja Muza” No. 3, <http://www.twojamuza.pl/index.php?w=6&cid=898&cg=3>, page visited on 19.09.2016
- Regamey, Konstanty (2010), *Wybór pism estetycznych* [Selected Writings on Aesthetics], Kraków: Universitas.
- Tertulian (1983), *Przeciw wszystkim herezjom* [The Prescription against Heretics]. In: *Wybór pism* [Selected Works], Vol. 2, Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, translated by Wincent Myszor.
- Tomaszewski, Mieczysław (2003), *Muzyka w dialogu ze słowem* [Music in Dialogue with the Word], Kraków: Akademia Muzyczna.

## Dirigentas versus kompozitorius. Interpretavimo ribos atliekant šiuolaikinę muziką – Ryszardo ir Aleksanderio Gabryśų kompozicijų pavyzdys

### Santrauka

Straipsnyje pateikiama analizė kelių kompozicijų, kurios buvo autorinio koncerto, žymėjusio Ryszardo Gabryśo 65-erių metų sukaktį, programos dalis. Koncertas vyko 104-osios Silezijos tribūnos metu 2007 m. gruodžio 9 d. BWA (Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych; Meno parodų centras) šiuolaikinio meno galerijoje Katowicuose (Lenkija). Koncerto įrašą kompaktinėje plokštelėje išleido įrašų kompanija „Acte Préalable“. Muzikinį šio albumo turinį sudaro Ryszardo Gabryśo kompozicijos styginių orkestrui ir jo sūnaus Aleksanderio Gabryśo kūrinys *Abraxas* styginiams ir fonogramai – partitūra, 1999 m. pelnusi pripažinimą Andrzejaus Panufniko kompozitorių konkurse Krokovoje.

*Piccolo prologo per Maestra ed archi* yra performanso tipo kūrinys apie muzikavimą. Jis sumanytas kaip specifinės situacijos imitavimas: pamažu suėję į sceną muzikantai groja įvairias koncerto dalis, o dirigentas pantomimiškai repetuoja būsimas kūrinių frazes. *Es muss sein II* styginių orkestrui, dedikuotas Małgorzatai Kaniowskai, yra parašytas specialiai jai ir „Camerata Impuls“ ansambluiui. Pavadinimas kilo iš Beethoveno frazės, užrašytos Styginių kvarteto Nr. 4, op. 135 rankraštyje. *Il cicerone per contrabasso e 12 strumenti ad arco* yra parašytas Ryszardo Gabryśo sūnui Aleksanderiui. Solo partija siekta pademonstruoti instrumentinį ir vokalinių virtuoziškumą, atskleidžiant Aleksanderio tiek scenines, tiek ekspresijos galimybes. Šis ekstravertinis kūrinys turi specifinį sonorinį ir virtuoziškumą potencialą. *Dobranoc* (Labanakt), parašytas berniuko sopranui, kontrabosui ir styginiams, yra niūri, nostalgiska atsisveikinimo daina, kartais kelianti liūdesį. Performansas pradedamas kūriniu *Piccolo prologo* ir baigiamas *Dobranoc*, kai atlikėjai, gavę ženklą iš lopšinė atliekančio berniuko, pamažu paskui dirigentą palieka sceną.

Pasirinktų kompozicijų analizė apima ir formalių aspektų nagrinėjimą, iliustruojamą tiek pavyzdžiais iš rankraščių, tiek subjektyviais dirigento sprendimais, kilusiais atliekant kūrinius.