

## Andrzej Panufnik and Andre Dzierzynski: Art, Music and Poland

This paper will explore the connection between the works of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Polish composer Sir Andrzej Panufnik, 1914–1991, and the Polish painter Andre Dzierzynski, 1936.<sup>1</sup> This exploration will be achieved by answering the following questions:

- How did Panufnik's defection differ from Dzierzynski's emigration to Great Britain? What stylistic similarities existed between the works of the two men?
- What effect did Panufnik's *music* have on Dzierzynski's paintings?
- Did Dzierzynski's paintings ever effect Panufnik's compositions?

In order to answer these questions it is first necessary to explore their individual narratives.

### Sir. Andrzej Panufnik

Andrzej Panufnik is very rightly considered one of Poland's most prolific 20th century composers. Panufnik studied composition at the Warsaw Conservatorium (1932–1936), conducting at the Vienna Academy with Felix Weingartner (1937–1938) and composition privately in Paris with Philippe Gaubert (1938–1939). (Panufnik, 1987)

After World War II Panufnik emerged as the most promising and progressive of the new Polish composers, and subsequently became communist Poland's composer of choice. While Panufnik was bestowed with several honours<sup>2</sup> and frequently flown to the West to conduct his compositions, many of these very same compositions were heavily criticised in Poland for being formalistic. (Panufnik, 1987; Stasiak, 1990; Sokorski 1949, cited in Stasiak 1990)

Indeed the increasing pressure to compose in the Communist's rigid doctrine of *Socialist Realism* was felt much more strongly by Panufnik owing to his status. Furthermore with additional presumes placed on his everyday life, an almost complete lack of freedom and the ongoing attempts by the regime to use Panufnik as a propaganda tool, he found himself unable to compose. (Bolesławska, 2001) This can be seen in his compositional output; in his final two years in Poland (1953–1954) he composed only two small, and arguably insignificant, works; *Quintetto Accademico*, a small chamber work written as a study piece, and *Nowy Czas*, a mass song which some, including Camilla Panufnik (2012a), argue he was forced to compose or possibly did not even compose this work at all. Thus following the death of his first child, Panufnik defected to Great Britain on the 14th of July 1954.

Panufnik stated in a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) broadcast speech (cited in Telewizja Polska, 2009) upon his arrival.

"I'd like to give my reasons for leaving Poland. The main reason was being forced into political activity, because of this I was in a totally uncreative situation. I was forced to participate in political activities against my own convictions. My greatest desire is to dedicate myself to creative work. This is only possible with complete freedom of thought and belief."

Once Panufnik left Poland he became persona non grata in his homeland. His music was officially banned, his scores and recordings were destroyed and his name was removed from all documents (Panufnik, 1987; Bolesławska, 2001; Siemdaj, 2001) as a penalty for this unspeakable treason against communism. Furthermore, his membership to the Polish Composers Union and his publishing contract with the state publishers *Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne* were also revoked. (Panufnik, 1987; Bolesławska, 2001; Siemdaj, 2001) Panufnik had very little contact with the friends and family<sup>3</sup> he left behind, all telephone calls and letters were censored by the state and in most cases would not even reach their intended recipient intact. Moreover, propaganda was spread in Poland to discourage his friends from contacting him or replying to any correspondence he might send. The propaganda included an accusation that Panufnik had left Poland for money and was in huge debt when he defected. Bolesławska (2001) however, has proven these allegations to be unfounded and the only

<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgments: Andre Dzierzynski, Julia Siudzinska, Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd and Lady Camilla Panufnik.

<sup>2</sup> Panufnik was the winner of the 1949 Chopin Composition prize and was awarded the order of the Banner of Labour of First Class (the highest state distinction) in 1951 and 1952.

<sup>3</sup> The only remaining member of Panufnik's family left alive in Poland at this time was his niece, Ewa Panufnik.

bill he had not paid upon his defection was his telephone bill as this had not arrived until after he had left Warsaw. Perhaps the most frightening prospect for Panufnik was that, if he ever attempted to return to Poland, he would have been instantly and permanently incarcerated.

To make matters worse, after a very short flurry of attention upon his arrival in Great Britain, Panufnik was all but forgotten. In a time which was dominated by Cold War cultural politics, where Panufnik did not belong to either side of the musical debate (the West, the East or even the reactionary movement headed by Pierre Boulez) almost no one paid attention to Panufnik or his music in the west. Even the BBC only broadcast his compositions on only 12 occasions for the first decade of his life in Great Britain, they had broadcast his works almost as many times prior to his defection from 1946–1954. Furthermore in the years 1956, 1960 and 1962–1965 he was not broadcast at all. (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2012) This was partially due to his previous position in Communist Poland and the political associations which (rightly or wrongly) came with it. To exacerbate the situation further Panufnik (1987) was a man who, by his admission, did not make friends easily. Lady Camilla Panufnik (2012a) once said that he much preferred to stay at home than attend parties or concerts. It was just as this situation began slowly to change in the mid-1960s that Panufnik met Andre Dzierzynski.

### **Andre Dzierzynski**

Dzierzynski, Panufnik's junior by 22 years, grew up in the countryside near Vilnius and then studied Art History at the Warsaw University from 1953 to 1957 (Hamet Gallery, 1970). Unlike Panufnik Dzierzynski's decision to immigrate to Great Britain was not directly as a result of artistic pressure (Dzierzynski, 2012b), as at this point he was not a painter but an art historian. This is not to say that Dzierzynski was immune to the effects of the communist regime, he suffered as much from the housing and food shortages and lack of freedom as the rest of the people of the Eastern Bloc.

The difference between Dzierzynski and many others in Poland however was that his father, a Polish Military telecommunications engineer, had been evacuated from Poland in September 1939 with a number of Polish troops and members of the Polish government, subsequently residing in Great Britain. Thus when travel restrictions were relaxed in Poland after the 1956 cultural thaw he was granted a travel permit to see his father in Great Britain and subsequently did not return to Poland (Dzierzynski, 2012b).

Like Panufnik Dzierzynski spent his initial years in Great Britain adjusting to his new home. However he had come to Britain as a young unknown art history student, free from the Communist *excommunicata* which Panufnik bore.

In 1958 under the encouragement of the sculptor Irena Kunicka, who found him decorating windows in a department store, he took up painting, with his first professional exhibitions in 1961. (Dzierzynski, 2012b; Ellingham Mill, 1972)

### **How did their emigration differ?**

To begin with Panufnik defected to Great Britain due to political pressures, a lack of freedom and principally an inability to compose. Contrastingly Dzierzynski *migrated* rather than defected, and while one of his reasons for migrating was a lack of freedom in Poland, he did not, in any way, suffer from the same level of artistic pressure as Panufnik did.

Panufnik was a well-known composer and as a result of his position in Communist Poland was met very briefly with adulation in Great Britain followed by many years of scepticism. Dzierzynski on the other hand was a young unknown art historian and as a result was not met with any adulation nor any prejudice.

These differences aside both men saw Communism as a highly destructive force that created a society in which they were unable to live and create. This core belief which they both shared was one of the major building blocks of their relationship.

### **But how did this relationship begin?**

Shortly after Dzierzynski's arrival in Britain he met Panufnik's then wife Scarlet at a party of Polish émigrés. (Dzierzynski, 2012b)

It was as a result of this meeting that in 1963 Dzierzynski send an invitation to one of his exhibitions to Andrzej Panufnik. Oddly, for a man who much preferred to stay at home than attend gallery openings and parties, Panufnik accepted this invitation. Consequently having fallen in love with Dzierzynski's paintings Panufnik requested several for his new home and thus began their relationship. (Panufnik, 2012a)

## Style

There are several stylistic similarities between the pair, including; their uniquely individual styles, their use of some form of scaffolding or skeleton to act as the basis for their work, the importance they placed on an economy of means and their use of Polish themes in their works.

Both men had a profound desire to create their own individual voice from an early age. As an artist Dzierzynski ignored the fashions of the time such as *Abstract Expressionism*, *Pop Art* and *Minimalism*, and dedicated himself to developing a style that was devoted to landscapes. Panufnik also disregarded the fashions of the time, unlike most of his contemporaries he never prescribed to the *Avant-garde* school of thought. In fact his compositions do not belong to any of the musical schools of thought which existed during that highly political period in musical culture.

Dzierzynski (2012b) stated in a recent interview:

“[...] he [Panufnik] asked me, ‘you as a painter how do you normally work? How do you start?’ I said... so you see I am a little like a surgeon, I need a skeleton and I can build on that skeleton. And Andrzej said, ‘fascinating absolutely fascinating. Do you know that I always look at music as if you need a spin first.’ The Spin is the backbone which holds everything and then you can create on it.”

In Panufnik’s case it seems likely that he had always used a scaffolding or skeleton of some kind to produce a work. From 1968 onwards however he used geometric shapes to do this. He uses geometry not in a solely mathematical way but rather in an intuitive fashion, taking the geometric vision and representing this within his music, as can be seen from an examination of the many geometric designs which accompany his compositions (Panufnik, 1985b). These designs help to explain how he utilised a geometric shape in order to build a composition. *Sinfonia di sfera*, for example, uses a set of spheres that denotes the overall structure, tempo and dynamics, and produces a set of notes, which form the basis of the composition’s harmonies and melody and a set of rhythmic values which form the basis of the composition’s rhythms, as presented in Figure 1.

While Dzierzynski freely acknowledges that he uses a skeleton as the basis of his paintings he does not give any further information about how he does this. Notably Dzierzynski has a photographic memory which he uses to recall not only a landscape he views but the emotions he felt when viewing that landscape (Dzierzynski, 2012b). Given this information it seems most likely that the skeleton of his works are either the emotions which he associated with the landscape upon seeing it (hence his highly coloured style of painting), or a particular element within the landscape such as a tree or building for example.

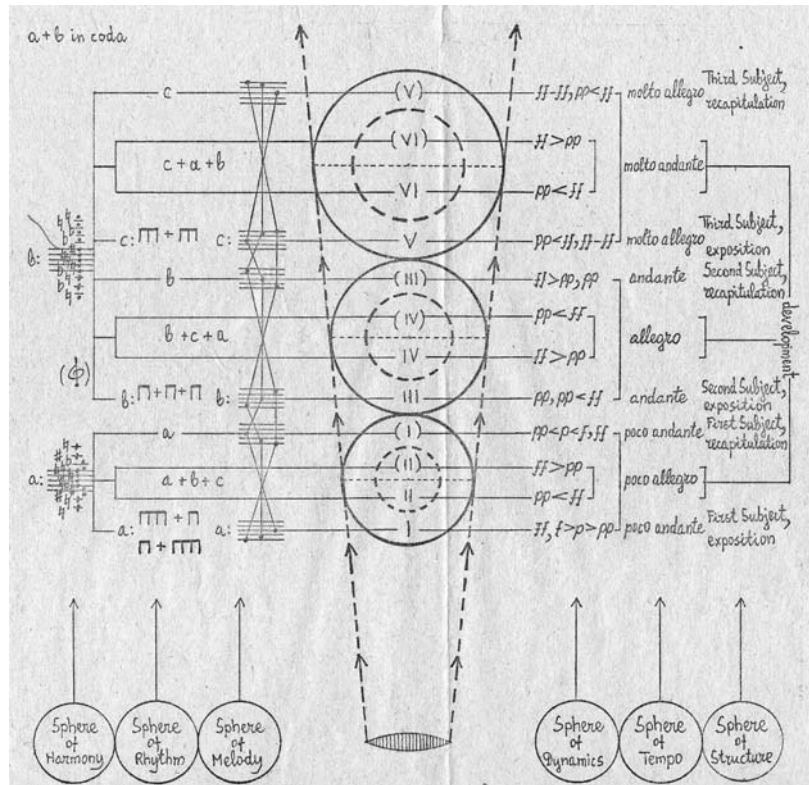
Both men sought to maintain an economy of means and prevent the use of superfluous notes or brush strokes within their works. Panufnik achieved this by producing a 3 or 4 note cell which he then derived all of his melodic and harmonic material from. He would then explore almost all of the possible transpositions, alterations, additions, etc. of this cell throughout his composition. An example of this is the 3 note cell used in Panufnik’s *Universal Prayer* and the extrapolation of this cell in the composer’s hand can be as shown in Figure 2.

Noted musicologist Jadwiga Paja-Stach (2003, p. 11) argues that Panufnik acted in the same way with rhythm, “he manipulated rhythmic models, repeated and subjected to various transformations; he used, among others, retrograde and additive rhythms.” A good example of such economy of means can be found in *Vision I* of Panufnik’s *Sinfonia Sacra* as is shown in Figure 3.

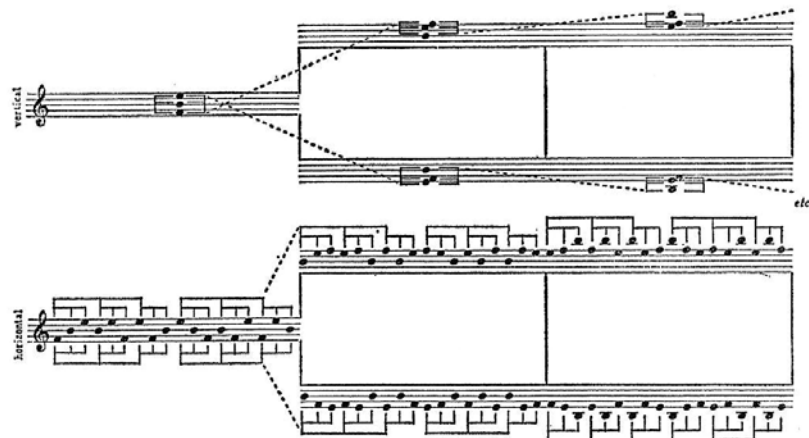
Dzierzynski’s desire for an economy of means is slightly more obvious as he clearly attempts only to paint the objects which characterize the landscape most, without diverting into insignificant detail. This is not to say that he is a minimalist but rather that he captures what catches his imagination in the landscape in a clear and direct fashion. Good examples of this type of painting include his *Polish Landscape* found in appendix Figure 1 and the *Forest of Katyń* found in appendix Figure 2.

Dzierzynski and Panufnik frequently used a variety of Polish themes within their works. In Dzierzynski’s case he often painted landscapes which he remembered from his childhood and his years studying in Warsaw. His *Landscape from Kujawy*, which can be seen in appendix Figure 3, is a good example of this. In fact it should be noted that of his first 33 paintings 18 of them were Polish Landscapes. Furthermore from 1961 Dzierzynski had begun painting landscapes of East Anglia which, as he wrote reminded him of his native Poland. (Divine Mercy College, 1966)

In Panufnik’s case events in Poland or a general longing for Poland was often heard in his music. Of the 43 works composed after his defection some 18 possessed Polish themes, including:



**Figure 1.** Andrzej Panufnik's geometric design for *Sinfonia di Sfere*.  
 © Copyright by Lady Camilla Panufnik. Reproduced by permission (Panufnik, 1982)



**Figure 2.** The 3 note cell used by Andrzej Panufnik in the *Universal Prayer* (1969) and its extrapolation.  
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- *Sinfonia Sacra*: composed as a tribute to Poland's Millennium of Statehood and based on the earliest Polish Hymn, the Bogurodzica (Panufnik, 1963);
- *Sinfonia Votiva*: dedicated to the black Madonna (Panufnik, 1982), a symbol of Polish independence;
- *The bassoon Concerto*: dedicated to the Polish martyr Father Jerzy Popiełuszko (Panufnik, 1985a);
- *The String Quartet No 3*: based on Polish Folk art (Panufnik, 1990).

It is clear that there were several stylistic similarities between the works of both Dzierzynski and Panufnik. Notably however most of the stylistic similarities exist not because of an effect one man had on the other, as often these similarities existed prior to their friendship. The question then follows what effect, if any, did the music of Panufnik have the paintings of Dzierzynski?

**SINFONIA SACRA**

**VISION I** ANDRZEJ PANUFNIK

The score for Vision I, Sinfonia Sacra, is written for Tromba 1 in Do and four Tr. in Do parts. The tempo is marked *♩ = c. 48* (*Maestoso*) and the time signature is 2/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *secco*, and *lunga*. There are two first endings marked with a box containing the number 1, and a second ending marked with a box containing the number 2. The notation includes various musical symbols like slurs, accents, and dynamic hairpins.

Figure 3. The first page of Vision I, *Sinfonia Sacra*.  
 © Copyright 1967 by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. Reproduced by permission (Panufnik, 1963)

**KATYŃ EPITAPH**

ANDRZEJ PANUFNIK

The score for Katyń Epitaph is written for Violino Solo and Vlno. Solo. The tempo is marked *♩ = c. 48* (*molto lento*) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, and *più pp*. It also features performance instructions like *espr. (improvisando)* and *ten.*. The notation includes slurs, accents, and dynamic hairpins.

Figure 4. The first 12 bars of Andrzej Panufnik's *Katyń Epitaph*.  
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### Katyń Epitaph

Dzierzynski stated, in a recent correspondence, that he almost always listens to music when painting and that this includes the music of his good friend Andrzej Panufnik. (Dzierzynski, 2012a) However the only painting which he painted while specifically listening to the music of Panufnik was, the *Forest of Katyń*, as found in appendix Figure 2. Dzierzynski produced this painting while repeatedly listening to Panufnik's *Katyń Epitaph*, which is dedicated "to the memory of 15,000 defenceless Polish prisoners-of-war murdered in Russia." (Panufnik, 1972, p. 1) As Dzierzynski (2012b) recounts; "Immediately after I listened to it for the first time I went and got the largest canvas I could and I painted this [...]"

This painting is indeed large measuring at 140 cm by 165 cm. The majority of the canvas is taken up by a vast blue sky which meets with a distant black forest, on the horizon of a wide, expansive and icy plain. The great expanse of space which is visually present in this painting can also be heard in Panufnik's *Katyń Epitaph*. This is due to the work's very gradual dynamic and rhythmic changes and the continuous thread which is created by the use of a three-note cell to create all of the harmonic and melodic material of the piece. Furthermore the hairpin like crescendo and de-crescendos contained in the opening line of the work helps to create this feeling of distance; this can be seen in Figure 4.

The cold icy plain and the cool blue sky which take up almost the entire painting represent the tragic emotions associated with the Katyń massacres. Indeed the very same emotions can be found in Panufnik's *Katyń Epitaph*, for example, in the opening of the work, a lone violin plays a slow falling line with sombre and almost grief stricken tonal quality that very easily conjure images of slowly falling tears or the wind on this icy plain, as seen in Figure 4. In fact the falling line in the music and the cold colours in the painting both help to produce a cold emotional response from the listener.

Interestingly Dzierzynski (2012b) said:

"[...] Andrzej's *Katyń Epitaph* was taking me, not to the tragedy or fear of those men [...] but rather the hope. That hope was the gap [...] the gap is there to show that the forest cannot end your life, that there is always hope."

This is very interesting for several reasons. Apart from the fact that Dzierzynski again acknowledges the influence of Panufnik's music on this painting, he also shows that he heard in the *Katyń Epitaph*, and as a result painted a work, with the dual emotions of grief and hope. This dual emotional response comes in Panufnik's music principally from his use of, what Professor Charles Bodman Rae (2001) labels, a *major-minor chord*. He goes on to say (2001, p. 136), "[A] four-note chord which can be described as 'major-minor': the triadic configuration which contains both major and minor thirds in relation to the same root." Hence the use of both tonalities at the same time results in a dual emotional response, an example of such a chord can be seen in Figure 5.

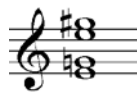


Figure 5. An example of a major-minor chord as used by Andrzej Panufnik

Panufnik uses this type of chord throughout this work, as can be seen in bars 15, 17 and 20–22 for example, where he has helpfully indicated the minor third with a bracketed natural sign.

In the end by Dzierzynski's own admission this painting was overtly affected by Panufnik's composition, the *Katyń Epitaph*. Furthermore the expanse of space, the tragic and cold emotional content and most importantly the dual emotions within the work prove this association.

### Landscape

Andrzej Panufnik had a great appreciation for the artwork of Andre Dzierzynski, and used his paintings as cover art for 3 of his recordings in the 1960s. Including his *Polish Landscape* which appeared on the 1967 Unicorn recording of *Sinfonia Sacra* and *Sinfonia Rustica*, as found in appendix Figure 4. It was this same painting that Panufnik acquired for his studio. Notably this was the only painting he had there and according to Andre Dzierzynski (2012a) he called it "my window for Poland". But admiration for Dzierzynski's paintings doesn't mean that Panufnik's music was affected by them, although there is evidence to suggest that this is a least possible.

In 1962 Panufnik composed a short work for string orchestra entitled *Landscape*. Panufnik (1985b, p. 34) wrote in his program notes, “*This is an attempt to convey musically a landscape [...] seen in Suffolk or remembered from Poland.*” Obviously this was before he had met Dzierzynski and hence it would seem to be impossible for his art work to have effected this composition as Panufnik presumably had never seen his paintings. However in 1963 Panufnik did uncharacteristically accept an invitation to one of Dzierzynski’s exhibitions under the premises of buying some of his paintings. It is therefore possible that he made this decision based on other paintings by Dzierzynski that he had seen previously. Additionally he revised *Landscape* in 1965 and it is highly possible that Dzierzynski’s landscapes generally or more specifically the Polish Landscape which hung in Panufnik’s studio could have effected that revision.

Ultimately while the painting probably meant a lot to Panufnik as it was the only painting in the studio and reminded him of Poland, but there is no evidence that it or indeed any of Dzierzynski’s art works directly affected his compositions.

### Conclusion

In conclusion both men left their homeland due to the highly destructive nature of Communism, however due to Panufnik’s position in Poland he suffered creatively far more than Dzierzynski. Additionally as a result of his position in Communist Poland Panufnik suffered from a level of scepticism once he emigrated which Dzierzynski did not.

It is clear that there were several stylistic similarities between the works of both men, however most of these similarities existed prior to their meeting hence their relationship would only have galvanized them. It is clear however that Dzierzynski’s painting the *forest of Katyń* was visibly effected by Panufnik’s composition, *Katyń Epitaph*. While it is far less clear if Dzierzynski’s paintings, in particular the Polish Landscape housed in Panufnik’s studio, ever affected Panufnik’s music.

☞ see p. 187



**Figure 1.** Andre Dzierzynski’s *Polish Landscape*. © Andre Dzierzynski. Reproduced by permission



**Figure 2.** Andre Dzierzynski’s *Forest of Katyń*. © Andre Dzierzynski. Reproduced by permission



**Figure 3.** Andre Dzierzynski’s *Landscape from Kujawy (Raciazek)*. © Andre Dzierzynski. Reproduced by permission



**Figure 4.** Andre Dzierzynski’s *Polish Landscape*. As seen on the cover of the 1967 Unicorn recording of Andrzej Panufnik’s *Sinfonia Sacra* and *Sinfonia Rustica*. © Andre Dzierzynski and Lady Camilla Panufnik

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## Santrauka

### Andrzejus Panufnikas ir Andre Dzierzynskis: menas, muzika ir Lenkija

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamos dviejų XX a. lenkų menininkų – kompozitoriaus sero Andrzejaus Panufniko (1914–1991) ir dailininko Andre Dzierzynskio (g. 1936) – kūrybos sąsajos. Abu šie kūrėjai paliko Lenkiją ir išvyko į Didžiąją Britaniją šaltojo karo metais, abu buvo nukentėję nuo lenkų komunistinio režimo šeštojo dešimtmečio pradžioje. Greičiausiai dėl šių bendrų išgyvenimų jie ir tapo artimais draugais.

Seras Andrzejus Panufnikas labai vertino Andre Dzierzynskio kūrybą, o jo tapybos darbus panaudojo savo trijų kompaktinių plokštelių, išleistų septintajame dešimtmetyje, viršeliams. Ledi Camilla Panufnik (Andrzejaus žmona) taip pat rekomendavo Dzierzynskio darbus senesniai „Classic Production Osnabrück“ (CPO) kompanijos išleistam visos Panufniko simfoninės kūrybos plokštelių rinkiniui. Be to, savo laiškuose ledi Camilla įvardijo Dzierzynskį kaip vieną iš kelių Panufniko itin mėgtų tapytojų.

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama Panufniko muzikos įtaka Dzierzynskio kūrybai. Paminėtina, kad pastarojo meto korespondencijoje Dzierzynskis rašo, jog tapydamas jis beveik visada klausosi muzikos (ir savo gero draugo Andrzejaus Panufniko kūrinių).

Vienam iš dailininko darbų skiriamas ypatingas dėmesys. Tai paveikslas „Katynė“, šiuo metu priklausantis ledi Camillai Panufnik. Dailininkas jį tapė klausydamasis Panufniko kūrinių „Katynės epitafija“, skirto „penkiolikos tūkstančių beginklių lenkų karo belaisvių, nužudytų Rusijoje, atminimui“. Nagrinėjamos vizualinės diagramos (geometrinės figūros), kurias Panufnikas dažnai naudojo kaip savo kūrinių pagrindą, ir keliamas klausimas, ar tokių diagramų yra Dzierzynskio darbuose, įkvėptuose Panufniko kūrybos.

Šiek tiek vietos skirta ir klausimui, ar Dzierzynskio paveikslai turėjo nors kiek įtakos Panufniko muzikai. Dailininkas rašo: „Vieną „Lenkišką peizažą“ jis [Panufnikas] įsigijo savo studijai. Tai buvo vienintelis paveikslas studijoje, ir jis jį vadino savo „langu į Lenkiją“.