

Małgorzata WOŻNA-STANKIEWICZ (Cracow)

**Artistic attitudes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century  
and the problem of tradition  
in the auto-reflection of Baird, Kilar and Meyer**

Let us begin with the commonplace but, at the same time, special dimension of our modern experience of reality, understood both directly—i.e. as a collection of things, phenomena, people and their activities—and in the sense enclosed in quotation marks by postmodernists in order to underline that ‘no reality can exist outside of the discourse which expresses it’.<sup>1</sup> It is in this everyday experience that we immediately stumble upon phenomena associated with tradition. Indigenous tradition and that of various parts of the world, as well as time periods, tempts us at every corner, and our access to it is theoretically unlimited. Traditional peasant fare, traditional medicine of Tibet, the tailor’s workshop—a tradition since 1890; CDs with Baroque music played on authentic period instruments, mobile telephone ring tones and jingles utilizing themes from Mozart symphonies, etc.—not to mention the various areas of tradition attainable by virtual means. Tradition, understood as a world heritage, is now a broad, effectively and aesthetically packaged range of offerings

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<sup>1</sup> Joyce APPLEBY, Lynn HUNT, Margaret JACOB *Telling the Truth about History*, New York–London 1994, transl. Stefan Amsterdamski. Poznań 2000, p. 215.

addressed to the consumption-oriented inhabitant of a postindustrial city. Appealing to tradition in a world of unlimited consumption also means, however, that the goods and services being offered are valuable; it is a guarantee of quality, solid foundations, continuity of production and the experience of generations, which can be continued—the choice is yours! However, today, with such offensive action of multifarious stimuli, concentration on a chosen tradition or traditions—as Wolfgang Welsch brought out already in the 1990s—requires ‘a colossal defensive effort.’<sup>2</sup> For the omnipresence of tradition is not synonymous with automatic growth in sensitivity to its values. Using Welsch’s words—spoken in reference to the postmodernist phenomenon of aestheticization and, at the same time, anaesthetization of reality—we can say that the problem of tradition in 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century culture is ‘above all, a lens focusing on problems, flickering between beauty and paradise, decline and exit, the unbearable and the indescribable’.<sup>3</sup>

### Introductory issues

The genetic relationships of the compositional oeuvres of Tadeusz Baird, Wojciech Kilar and Krzysztof Meyer with the musical tradition and, more broadly, with European culture, have already been described by many musicologists. In my article, I focus only on those statements of composers that are in a certain measure ‘programmatic’. I reconstruct their views on tradition, based on interviews conducted with them by various authors (beginning in the 1960s), as well as on articles by Baird and Meyer concerning other artists.

Before I proceed with laying out the views of the composers of interest to us, I shall recall selected facts from their artistic biographies—facts significant in the context of the problem of tradition. These are artists born, respectively, in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, representing different types of creative personality and individual compositional idioms. All were educated as pianists. Baird did not perform publicly; Kilar did not concertize after finishing his studies, despite having prepared, among other things, the entire program for

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<sup>2</sup> Wolfgang WELSCH *Ästhetik und Anästhetik*, in: *Ästhetik in Widerstreit. Interventionen zum Werk von Jean-François Lyotard*, ed. Wolfgang Welsch, Weinheim 1991, transl. Małgorzata Łukasiewicz, in: *Postmodernizm. Antologia przekładów* [*Postmodernism. An Anthology of Translations*], selection and ed. Ryszard Nycz, Kraków 1996, p. 531.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 533.

the Chopin Competition; Meyer played in public concerts—apart from his own works—solo and chamber music by, among others, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Lutosławski, Messiaen, Mâche and Tomasz Sikorski. They deepened their knowledge in the area of music history and theory—thus, their more rational acquaintance with the music of the past, and of the present contemporary to them, as follows: Baird, by studying musicology for over three years (beginning in 1948) at the University of Warsaw; Meyer, by obtaining a diploma (1966) in music theory at the State Music College in Krakow. Meyer is, beyond this, the author of books and articles concerning, among others, Shostakovich, Lutosławski, Szymanowski, Baird, Penderecki.<sup>4</sup> They received their education in the area of composition in the 1940s–50s or the 1950s–60s. They studied the art of composition with teachers (see fig. 1<sup>5</sup>) who had great respect for musical tradition and consciously continued it in an individual manner, assimilating elements of it and carrying out creative transformation with the aid of a modern (in their time) musical language. Among them were advocates of the neoclassical style—Nadia Boulanger and Bolesław Woytowicz (who taught both our composers' professors, and the composers themselves), Stanisław Wiechowicz and Piotr Perkowski. There were also advocates of a late Romantic aesthetic language, against new currents in music—such as Piotr Rytel. There were representatives of different attitudes towards the postulate

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<sup>4</sup> See, among others, Krzysztof MEYER 'Kilka myśli o muzyce T. Bairda' ['A Few Thoughts on the Music of T. Baird'], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1982 no. 7, pp. 6–7; 'Quartetto per archi nr 2 K. Pendereckiego' ['K. Penderecki's *Quartetto per archi no. 2*'], in: *Współczesność i tradycja w muzyce Pendereckiego* [*The Modern and the Traditional in the Music of Penderecki*], ed. Regina Chłopicka, Krzysztof Sz wajgier, Kraków 1983, pp. 78–93; 'Szymanowski z perspektywy dzisiejszej. Próba innego spojrzenia' ['Szymanowski from Today's Perspective. An Attempt at a Different View'], *Muzyka* 1983 no. 2, pp. 45–50; 'Dlaczego napisałem o Szymanowskim' ['Why I wrote about Szymanowski'], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1984 no. 6, p. 9; 'O muzyce W. Lutosławskiego' ['On the Music of W. Lutosławski'], *Res Facta* no. 9 (1982), pp. 129–140; 'Kilka uwag na temat organizacji wysokości dźwięków w muzyce W. Lutosławskiego' ['A Few Observations on Pitch Organization in the Music of W. Lutosławski'], *Muzyka* 1995 no. 1–2, pp. 3–24; Danuta GWIZDAŁANKA, Krzysztof MEYER *Lutosławski. Droga do dojrzałości* [*Lutosławski. The Way to Maturity*], Kraków 2003, as well as: *Lutosławski. Droga do mistrzostwa* [*Lutosławski. The Way to Mastery*], Kraków 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Information about the composition teachers of Wiechowicz (who rarely mentioned the names of his teachers, aside from Maksymilian Steinberg and Józef Withol—professors at the Conservatory in Petrograd—and in the area of composition, considered himself to be primarily self-taught), I give according to the testimony of his students and friends (Roman Padlewski, Stefan M. Stoiński, Kazimierz Chłapowski), as quoted in: to Adam MRYGOŃ *Stanisław Wiechowicz. Działalność* [*Stanisław Wiechowicz. Activity*], Kraków 1982, pp. 132–133.

of a national style and of different methods of reinterpreting the folk tradition, e.g. Artur Malawski, Stanisław Wiechowicz, Witold Lutosławski, or the religious tradition—Krzysztof Penderecki. Strong individuality was displayed by composer-teachers who proposed novel sound solutions, new techniques for organization of musical time, and original concepts of musical form—Penderecki and Lutosławski.

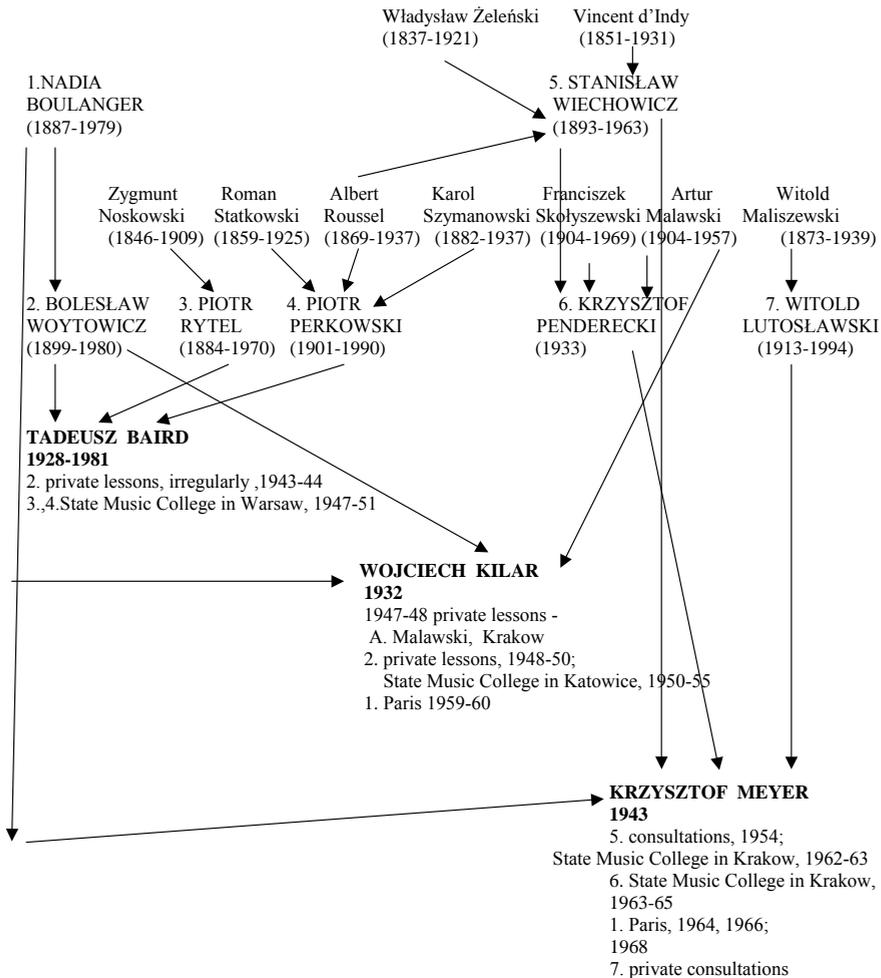


Fig. 1. Composition teachers

The **compositional debut** (first public performance of a work), for both Baird and Kilar, fell during the period just after the war, a period in the history of Polish musical culture that was not conducive to innovative explorations. Kilar, at the age of 15, in 1947 in Rzeszow, played his *Two Children's Miniatures* for piano (1947). Baird, at the age of 21, saw the first performance, in Warsaw, of his *Sinfonietta* for orchestra (1949); and in Łódź, of his *Concerto* for piano and orchestra (1949). The 17-year-old Meyer had his debut in a period of domination by avant-garde trends. This was in Krakow, in 1961—a presentation of his *String Quartet* (destroyed, performed by Eugenia Umińska's Krakow Quartet), as well as his *Introspections* op. 2 for 5 'celli (1960).<sup>6</sup> The **connections** between the composers of interest to us and **endeavors associated with the newest musical currents at the given time** are of more than symbolic significance. Baird, in 1949, together with Kazimierz Serocki and Jan Krenz, created Group 49, which 'declared a living bond with tradition, simultaneously accepted newer resources in compositional technique'.<sup>7</sup> He also brought into being two Festivals of Polish Music, in 1954 and 1955,<sup>8</sup> presenting Polish artistic achievements, especially from the years 1939–1953; on the other hand, in 1956, he was one of the main originators and organizers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music. Its aim was—as Baird said—'to acquaint the Polish audience with the most fundamental works, without which it was impossible to understand the issues and development of 20<sup>th</sup>-century music', as well as 'to present Polish art, against the background of and in confrontation with—as [is] always most fruitful—the foreign art currently being written'.<sup>9</sup> Baird (1956–1969), Kilar (1975–1982) and Meyer (1974–1988) took part in the work of the Warsaw Autumn Repertoire Commission; thus, they had the

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<sup>6</sup> Meyer's symphonic debut was the *Symphony no. 1* op. 10, performed in Cracow in 1964 (M. Tunicka, conductor); while Kilar's was the *Little Overture*, performed in Katowice in 1955 (J. Krenz, conductor).

<sup>7</sup> Krystyna TARNAWSKA-KACZOROWSKA *Tadeusz Baird. Głosy do biografii* [*Tadeusz Baird. Glosses for a Biography*], Kraków 1997, p. 238, cf. pp. 43, 58. See aims and activity program of Group 49 presented by Stefan Jarociński in the program notes to the group's inaugural concert at the Warsaw Philharmonic on 13 January 1950. Program cited in Tadeusz Andrzej ZIELIŃSKI, Andrzej ZBORSKI *Tadeusz Baird*, Kraków 1966, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> See Tadeusz BAIRD 'II Festiwal Muzyki Polskiej' ['2<sup>nd</sup> Festival of Polish Music'], in: *Muzyka* 1955 nos. 9–10, pp. 24–38.

<sup>9</sup> Janusz CEGIEŁŁA *Szkice do autoportretu polskiej muzyki współczesnej. Rozmowy z kompozytorami...* [*Sketches for a Self-portrait of Polish Contemporary Music. Conversations with Composers...*], Kraków 1976, p. 22, cf. p. 21.

opportunity to follow, by that means as well, the newest works of music in the world at large. In 1957, Kilar took part in the International Summer Courses in New Music in Darmstadt. Meyer, in the mid-1960s, collaborated and concertized with the Young Performers of Contemporary Music, a Krakow ensemble of great merits in the propagation of the musical avant-garde. Their **debuts at Warsaw Autumn** took place in 1956 and 1965. In 1956, Baird and Kilar showed neoclassical works, some of them with elements of early music stylization, as in Baird's *Colas Breugnon* suite for string orchestra with flute (1951); or of folk music, as in Kilar's *Little Overture* for orchestra (1955). Also appearing there, however, was a 'contemporary' work, Baird's cyclical *Cassazione per orchestra* (1956), written in dodecaphonic technique—a work 'opening a third phase in the reception of dodecaphony and serialism' in Poland, but without breaking its bond to the neoclassical tradition;<sup>10</sup> in 1965, Meyer presented his *String Quartet no. 1* op.8 (1963), a sonorist work of clear tripartite form—*Thesis–Antithesis–Synthesis*.<sup>11</sup> Only Kilar is not involved in **teaching composition**; Baird, from 1974 until his death, taught composition at the Academy of Music (at first known as the State Music College) in Warsaw; and Meyer, from 1987 onwards, at the Hochschule für Musik in Köln.

## I. Tradition and artistic attitudes in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries

What do I understand by 'tradition'? Tradition is that which, via the oral route or with the aid of various types of documents, is transmitted from generation to generation. Tradition is a heritage, i.e. that which is inherited, in other words 'everything in the sphere of culture, in a broad sense, left behind

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<sup>10</sup> Iwona LINDSTEDT *Dodekafonia i serializm w twórczości kompozytorów polskich XX wieku* [*Dodecaphony and Serialism in the Oeuvre of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Polish Composers*], Lublin 2001, p. 16, cf. pp. 152–154; Michał ZIELIŃSKI 'Cassazione per orchestra Tadeusza Bairda—neoklasycyzna dodekafonia' ['Tadeusz Baird's *Cassazione per orchestra*—Neoclassical Dodecaphony'], in: *Dzieło muzyczne, jego estetyka, struktura i recepcja (1)* [*The Musical Work, Its Aesthetic Language, Structure and Reception (1)*], ed. Anna Nowak, Bydgoszcz 2005, pp. 221–229. Cf. Tadeusz BAIRD, Izabella GRZENKOWICZ *Rozmowy, szkice, refleksje* [*Conversations, Sketches, Reflections*], Kraków 1982, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Krzysztof MEYER 'I Kwartet smyczkowy' [*String Quartet no. 1*], in: *Program IX Warszawskiej Jesieni* [*Program of the 9<sup>th</sup> Warsaw Autumn Festival*], Warsaw 1965, p. 64; Krzysztof Meyer. *Do i od kompozytora* [*Krzysztof Meyer. To and From the Composer*], ed. Maciej Jabłoński, Poznań 1994, p. 91.

by previous generations' as well as a 'will to inherit'—as Jerzy Szacki writes.<sup>12</sup> It is an active attitude on the part of the artist towards tradition—as Dahlhaus, Władysław Stróżewski or Michał Głowiński also emphasize—it is an 'appraisal of tradition as an authority', as a collection of values whose result is a present co-created by the past.<sup>13</sup> 'The point here is not,' says Roman Berger, 'a pious or sentimental attitude towards indoor or open-air museums, folklore, etc. The point is an internalization of life's wisdom...' <sup>14</sup> Wolfgang Osthoff and Adam Zagajewski point out that drawing on tradition is carried out with the aim of transmitting something from the past, via the present, to the future; thus, it not only 'permits us to believe in the sense of our work, gives it a craft dignity', but also designates the directions of today's explorations, 'obliges us to find better motivations for our decision, to seek new arguments and think through old ones, to evolve mentally'.<sup>15</sup> Thus, we can say that tradition is a process of receiving the past that ensures the continuity of its transmission, and at the same time, a more conscious 'navigation' of contemporary times.

To put in order the variety of threads in Baird's, Kilar's and Meyer's expansive statements concerning tradition—in the present article those concerning only musical tradition—I shall make use of a certain typology of artistic attitudes. In speaking of 20<sup>th</sup>-century art, including music, there are mentioned—especially in writings from the 1970s onward—three main types of artistic attitudes: modernist, anti-modernist and postmodernist, within each of which the necessity of describing the stance on tradition is one of the key problems to be solved. Differences in this regard, drawn within the framework of the at-

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<sup>12</sup> Jerzy SZACKI 'Tradycja' ['Tradition'], in: *Encyklopedia kultury polskiej XX wieku. Pojęcia i problemy wiedzy o kulturze* [*Encyclopedia of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Polish Culture. Concepts and Problems in Cultural Studies*], ed. Antonina Kłoskowska, Wrocław 1991, pp. 206, 207, 209 (entire article: pp. 205–217).

<sup>13</sup> Władysław STRÓŻEWSKI *Dialektyka twórczości* [*A Dialectic of Creativity*], Kraków 1983, pp. 122–123; Michał GŁOWIŃSKI 'Tradycja literacka (próba zarysowania problematyki)', ['Literary Tradition (An Attempted Outline of the Issues)'], in: *Problemy teorii literatury* [*Problems in Literary Theory*]. Series 1, selection: Henryk Markiewicz, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Wrocław 1987, p. 354.

<sup>14</sup> Roman BERGER 'Struktura i znaczenie dziedzictwa (1996)' ['Structure and Meaning of Heritage (1996)'], in: Roman Berger: *Zasada twórczości. Wybór pism z lat 1984–2005* [*The Principle of Creativity. A Selection of Writings from 1984 to 2005*], Katowice 2005, p. 274 (entire article: pp. 257–282).

<sup>15</sup> Wolfgang OSTHOFF *Zur musikalischen Tradition der Gattungen im italienischen Theater (16.–18. Jahrhundert)*, in: *Studien zur Tradition...*, op.cit., p. 121. Citation from Adam ZAGAJEWSKI 'Jesteśmy inni' ['We are different'], statement in questionnaire entitled 'Wobec tradycji' ['In Regard to Tradition'], *Student* 1975 no. 23, p. 10, special section 'Młoda Kultura'.

titudes mentioned (and not trends or eras), as well as other selected characteristics, are visualized in a simple, shorthand manner in Table 1.<sup>16</sup> The proposed ordering of these characteristics creates a certain type of model of the three attitudes and, in the present characterization of Baird's, Kilar's and Meyer's views, fulfills a heuristic function.

Table 1. Artistic attitudes of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>- century composers

	Modernist	Anti-modernist	Postmodernist
<b>Vision/ need for history</b>	Flight from history Glorification of progress	Returns to history Lack of faith in progress	Ahistoricism 'Disappearance of history' Questioning of the linearity of progress
<b>Concept of past</b>	Approved Dialectic of past and present, conflict, competition	Approved Sharp border between present and past, but past is not competitive adversary	Questioned Lack of division between sound of music of past and of present, with the procedures proper to it
<b>Practical approach of artist to heritage</b>	Radical rejection of tradition 'Sadistic' lust for novelty	Reinterpretations of past and excessive accenting of authority of tradition: 1. Retrospection, historicism, 'mechanical' transition; inclination towards traditionalism 2. original dialogue	Object of anti-systemic deconstruction, selective and equitable usage of entire heritage, even most recent; 'I can be whoever I want to be'; not critical negation of tradition but: play with tradition attempt to make impression with tradition temptation with tradition

<sup>16</sup> In reference to music, we have utilized the proposed interpretations of postmodernist phenomena presented by Jonathan D. KRAMER 'O genezie muzycznego postmodernizmu' ['The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism'], *Current Musicology* LXVI 1999, Polish translation Dorota Maciejewicz, *Muzyka* 2000 no. 3, pp. 63–72; Jean-Jacques NATTIEZ *Comment raconter le XXe siècle* as well as John REA *Postmodernisme(s)*, French translation Johanne Rivest, in: *Musique. Une encyclopédie pour le XXIe siècle. 1. Musiques du XXe siècle*, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, Paris 2003, pp. 39–67; 1347–1378. For inspiration, we have also utilized papers by the following authors: a collection of articles by various authors, entitled *Sztuka i estetyka po awangardzie a filozofia postmodernistyczna* [*Art and Aesthetics After the Avant-garde, and Postmodernist Philosophy*], ed. Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska, Warsaw 1994; Ryszard Nycz *Język modernizmu. Prolegomena historycznoliterackie* [*The Language of Modernism. Historic and Literary Prolegomena*], 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Wrocław 2002; Janusz A. MAJCHEREK *Źródła relatywizmu w nauce i kulturze XX wieku. Od teorii względności do postmodernizmu* [*Sources of Relativism in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Science and Culture. From the Theory of Relativity to Postmodernism*], Kraków 2004; Ewa REWERS *Post-polis. Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta* [*Post-polis. An Introduction to the Postmodern City*], Kraków 2005.

<b>Attitude towards tradition/heritage</b>	Superiority Crypto-relativity of 'modernity'	Nostalgia	Relativism—consciously and openly adopted as principle; egalitarianism of tradition; 'peaceful', 'ecumenical' existence of variety of traditions; approval of music from different times, places and cultural levels
<b>Relationship to avant-garde</b>	Fetishization	Aesthetic distance	Necessity of taking position on most recent modernism—neither denial, nor continuation; reinterpretation of different avant-gardes
<b>Idea of musical work</b>	Whole, unity, abstract coherence, hermetic idiom; closed form and open form	Longing for classicist order idealizing reality: whole, unity, transparency, originality; 'tame' idiom, closed form	Distance towards structural unity, fragmentation, discontinuity; radical eclecticism; intertextuality; pragmatic conditioning and references of the 'text' of the work
<b>Music audience</b>	Narrow, hermetic 'select' group; responsibility shifted onto audience	Expanded audience group, longing for communicativeness, universality	A broad audience group of personality that is the result of 'social saturation' of interwoven processes of aesthetization and anaesthetization. Inhabitants of cities and villages who share their socio-cultural and economic functions with media and virtual spaces
<b>'Symbolic' techniques, styles, trends, phenomena, ideas</b>	Dodecaphony, serialism, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> avant-garde, novelty, freedom vs. necessity, experiment, dominance of musical techniques, sonorism, aleatorism, happening	Neoclassicism, neo-styles, neo-tonality, musical craftsmanship	Avoidance of the obsession of unity, irreducible multiplicity, pluralism, eclecticism, relativism, freedom; post-avant-gardism; post-realism; intertextual techniques; repetition; minimalism; New Age; return to sources

In the last row of Table 1, I have mentioned selected aesthetic problems, names of techniques, styles and trends that are, as it were, symbols (but not synonyms) of actions resulting from adoption of the individual attitudes. Ordering of the composers' opinions in reference to these problems/symbols—aside from inclusion of comments directly concerning, for example, modernism or postmodernism—not only permits the composers' auto-reflections to be compared in a clear manner, but also shows the most essential issues associated with their relationship to tradition.

## II. Stance on novelty, experiment and compositional technique as autonomous values

‘Can the new language, can modernity at all, represent a measurable criterion? I respond with great anxiety,’ confesses **KILAR**, ‘but it seems to me that—nevertheless—it can! To have the work speak the language of the year of its birth is, in some sense, a value-adding criterion’.<sup>17</sup> ‘Avant-garde in and of itself’ is not the only value-adding criterion after all.

I am deeply convinced that a composer only has a chance to take one step forward if he thinks about the world in which he lives, if she thinks about the people who surround her, about what makes them tick. If it’s the year 1971, he tries to write in the language of 1971. [...] Until not long ago, I myself was struck by richness of sound, the search for new means of expression. Today, however, what fascinates me is the making of music from something previously considered incapable of bearing the weight of form. I have come to the conclusion that contemporaneity does not consist of a collection of noises, murmurs, etc., but of a way of thinking.[...] I always try to have my next work be further ahead, if only by a few millimeters, than the previous one. [...] I just think it is not worthwhile to write the same thing twice; the next work must bring in something ‘fresh’, the composer should aim for this with all her strength. To write each successive work differently.<sup>18</sup>

A more rigorist attitude towards the chase after novelty is declared and described in detail by **MEYER**. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ‘the role of compositional technique was sometimes fetishized, and its uncommon variety of forms and descriptions in this field represents an essential factor distinguishing between earlier music and the music of our times’.<sup>19</sup> However, Meyer considers as ‘perversion’ the use of a new technique as the principal aim of the artist, while the sound result becomes something secondary that, beyond this, often goes in tandem with a radical break with conventional means and rules of composition, so that everything is permissible. This does not mean, however, that Meyer is against experiments. Says the composer:

Exploration is for each artist an obvious necessity; walling oneself in with already existing means of expression is contrary to the sense of creativity in general, and can

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<sup>17</sup> Janusz CEGIEŁA op.cit., p. 73.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, pp. 74, 71–72, 73.

<sup>19</sup> Krzysztof Meyer. *Do i od...* [*Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...*], op.cit., p. 79.

only result in sterile academicism and epigonism. The aim of explorations and experiments is to enrich one's own language.<sup>20</sup>

Novelty only sometimes causes a 'turn of the wheel of history'; only a few succeed at it, and not always are these artists of the so-called avant-garde, 'because not every time in history is a time of the avant-garde'.<sup>21</sup> According to Meyer:

Experiment gives the composer, above all, the occasion to study such musical possibilities as lie more in the sphere of supposition than of experience, for he has as yet little knowledge of them. Experimentation concerns mainly to compositional technique; the aesthetic style and face are only the result of its application. Viewing the experiment in terms of values is a product of the aesthetic of our century, which is perhaps justified by the fact that thanks to certain experiments, several new trends have been born, among which I would mention, above all, the result of explorations from the 1950s, i.e. electronic music.<sup>22</sup>

Meyer does not accept the attitude of 'permanent avant-gardists', because he is not interested in 'modernity' achieved only by virtue of 'writing something that no one yet has written before', of constantly thinking up new, abstract ideas, or of searching for new acoustic effects whose 'main aim is [...] to impress the audience'.<sup>23</sup> Also, searching for novelties in the area of notation, just so the score will look impressive, is—in Meyer's opinion—nonsense, because 'the notation should be maximally functional and simple' and as adequate as possible for the imagination of the sound,<sup>24</sup> for the most important problem of the artist is 'the finding of her own way, the creation of his own, individual world', and not mere 'modernity' of language, 'contemporaneity' of means, their currency at the given moment.<sup>25</sup>

**BAIRD**, like Meyer, explained his attitude towards so-called absolute novelty, but he put forth even more fundamental arguments. In the history of art,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, p. 48, cf. pp. 46-47.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 48.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 56.

<sup>23</sup> 'Kompozytorzy mówią. Krzysztof Meyer' ['Composers Talk. Krzysztof Meyer']. Interview by Izabella Grzenkiewicz, *Ruch Muzyczny* 1972 no. 4, p. 4; Janusz CEGIEŁŁA, op. cit., p. 44; *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od... [Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...]*, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 50; Krzysztof Meyer: 'Quartetto per archi...', op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>25</sup> 'Kompozytorzy mówią. Krzysztof Meyer' ['Composers Talk. Krzysztof Meyer'], op. cit., p. 5.

many times attempts have been made to break with tradition, to start over, but 'this has always been,' says Baird, 'an illusion induced by lack of sufficient time perspective.' Beyond this, there exist premises of a general nature:

Whether we like it or not, a radical break with the past is as impossible for the human mind as the creation of something absolutely new; let us add that in accordance with logic, every attempt to break with previous experiences is, after all, a peculiar form of illusion. [...] Probably one of the most deeply grounded characteristics of human nature is the need for continuation in every respect.<sup>26</sup>

Baird did not accept the idea of treating development of artistic techniques or purposeful strangeness of notation (especially, a lack of precision thereof), as an aim in and of itself.<sup>27</sup> In opposition to a large proportion of artists in the mid-1970s, without paying attention to the accusation of 'anachronism', 'archaism' or 'backwardness', he stated that for him

... the technical resource—more broadly: the means of artistic expression—is [...] something ancillary, subordinate to something more important which could be called content, meaning, truth, idea, thought. [...] For this reason I make use of means which in the most perfect and useful manner possible serve my thoughts and express them. The means alone, in isolation, present absolutely no value for me.<sup>28</sup>

### III. Attitude towards avant-garde heritage

The classic dodecaphonic doctrine, which for Polish composers in the mid-1950s was 'an opening of completely new horizons',<sup>29</sup> was interpreted by **BAIRD** in an individual manner. He made use mainly of the experiences of Berg; however, total serialization of sound material was foreign to him. Polish musicologists have called Baird's manner of perceiving dodecaphony 'Roman-

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<sup>26</sup> Tadeusz BAIRD 'Czy sztuka może się rozwijać bez tradycji?' ['Can art develop without tradition?'], *Polska* 1981 no. 2, pp. 51–52. Cf. Tadeusz BAIRD 'Przez całe stulecia sztuka rozwijała się powoli' ['For Entire Centuries Art Developed Slowly']. Composer interviewed by Małgorzata Komorowska, *Przekrój* 1981 no. 1875, p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> Tadeusz BAIRD, Izabella GRZENKOWICZ, op. cit., p. 35; 'Rozmowa z Tadeuszem Bairdem' ['A Conversation with Tadeusz Baird']. Composer interviewed by Krzysztof Baculewski, *Kultura* 1973 no. 40, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> 'Szansa sztuki?' ['A Chance for Art?']. Tadeusz Baird interviewed by Krzysztof Lisicki, *Kierunki* 1976 no. 12, pp. 1, 5.

<sup>29</sup> 'Kompozytorzy mówią. Tadeusz Baird' ['Composers Talk. Tadeusz Baird'] Interviewed by Izabella Grzenkowicz, *Ruch Muzyczny* 1971 no. 6, p. 5.

tic', 'expressive', 'melodic-thematic', and even 'humanistic'.<sup>30</sup> Thus, in relation to serial technique—which was, after all, for a long time the litmus test of avant-gardeness—just as in relation to other 'fashions', Baird remained himself, in accordance with the motto: 'My aims are one-track: to cultivate that which is given to me. For better or for worse [...]. To color [the art found] in the most modest measure with the shade of my personality'.<sup>31</sup> He emphasized that 'one needs the ability to search for true difference within oneself, and not skill in "wearing" what is currently being worn', for example, in Paris, Donaueschingen, Darmstadt, New York or Moscow. Now—said Baird in 1978:

More than ever, an artist must defend freedom, his own convictions and his own thoughts, and above all—though this is a difficult teaching and requires no small dose of resistance and immunity—she must defend herself from fear of supposedly not keeping up. This is sometimes a great, authentic threat even for creative minds.<sup>32</sup>

Baird bore witness in his *oeuvre* that he also did not yield to another avant-garde tendency, consisting of 'breaking up' the form of a 'finished' work, or presenting just the process of its composition, but rather remained faithful to the 'need' inherent in the human being 'to discover and describe, in each era constantly anew, the essence of beauty and the need for contact with beauty', also in the future.<sup>33</sup>

**KILAR** became interested in dodecaphony under the influence of the 'Darmstadt-Donaueschingen movements', which permitted him to free himself from a fascination with the Neoclassical idiom of Stravinsky or Prokofiev; but this did not mean rejection of tradition and—as he himself says—'despite a different sound language, my creative personality has not changed'.<sup>34</sup> The freedom of the post-dodecaphonic avant-garde of the 1960s was—in Kilar's opinion—superficial, because it meant 'the freedom to throw overboard everything that existed previously, but—logically—as it were, with a prohibition on

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<sup>30</sup> Among others, Zygmunt FOLGA 'Dodekafonia w twórczości Tadeusza Bairda' ['Dodecaphony in the *oeuvre* of Tadeusz Baird'], *Muzyka* 1984 nos. 1–2, pp. 49–69; Krystyna TARNAWSKA-KACZOROWSKA op.cit.; Iwona LINDSTEDT op.cit.

<sup>31</sup> Tadeusz BAIRD 'Ponad codzienność' ['Beyond the Everyday']. Composer interviewed by Ewa Kofin, *Odra* 1973 no. 4, p. 90.

<sup>32</sup> Tadeusz BAIRD 'Dźwięk i słowo' ['Sound and Word']. Composer interviewed by Izabella Grzenkiewicz, *Kultura* 1978 no. 1/2, p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> Tadeusz BAIRD, Izabella GRZENKOWICZ op.cit., p. 44.

<sup>34</sup> *Cieszę się darem życia* [*I am happy with the gift of life*]. Wojciech Kilar interviewed by Klaudia Podobińska and Leszek Polony [1996], Kraków 1997, pp. 28, 30.

the use of earlier means, so (if you will pardon me) something like a socialistically understood freedom as ‘enlightened necessity’.<sup>35</sup>

**MEYER** admits that he has followed the avant-garde *oeuvre* attentively, but has not been ‘enchanted’ with it, because he really admires 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers rooted in tradition, and at the same time highly individual, e.g. Stravinsky, Bartók, Webern, Lutosławski.<sup>36</sup> Others such as, for example, Schönberg, Cage, Xenakis or Stockhausen have not ‘contributed,’ as Meyer says, ‘to the broadening of my sound imagination,’ despite the fact that, for example, Boulez (sound qualities) and Stockhausen (moment form) ‘have brought real input into the development of contemporary music’.<sup>37</sup> Serial and aleatoric techniques turned out to be inspiring in the measure that they were ‘useful’ and ‘didn’t impede’ the building of a vision for his own sound world.<sup>38</sup> What is most foreign with respect to that imagination of Meyer’s are directions of musical thought ‘resulting from excessive worry about purely structural matters—for example, post-Webernism’.<sup>39</sup> Problems of structure, however, are important to him in the area of musical form—but one shaped in accordance with the psychology of perception. For that reason, among others, his interests in sonorism in the 1960s, which coincided with the explorations of other representatives of the Polish avant-garde at that time (Penderecki, Górecki, Kilar), were aimed in a different direction. Unlike them—emphasizes Meyer—‘I arrived [...]’ at a new sound ‘via pre-determined, precise form’.<sup>40</sup>

Meyer, like Baird, does not accept the fact that

... for many 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers, the necessity of aurally imagining the music being created ceases to be important. Aleatorism, conceptual and graphic music, happening and several other directions have reduced the composer merely to the role of general designer of sound events. This is an attitude completely foreign to me, since it

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<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, p. 69.

<sup>36</sup> Janusz CEGIEŁŁA, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>37</sup> *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od...* [*Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...*], op. cit., pp. 93, 44; ‘Kompozytorzy mówią. Krzysztof Meyer’ [‘Composers Talk. Krzysztof Meyer’], op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Dwa i pół utworu rocznie’ [‘Two-and-a-half Works Yearly’]. Conversation of Tadeusz Kaczyński with Krzysztof Meyer, *Ruch Muzyczny* 1981 no. 4, pp. 12–13.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Kompozytorzy mówią. Krzysztof Meyer’ [‘Composers Talk. Krzysztof Meyer’], op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od...* [*Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...*], op. cit., p. 91, cf. p. 83. See Krzysztof MEYER ‘Forma muzyczna w aspekcie psychologicznym’ [‘Musical Form in Its Psychological Aspect’], *Muzyka* 1992 no. 1.

deprives one of the chance to take advantage of the uncommon richness of expressive possibilities brought by the combination of even a few notes. Expressive nuances must be imagined by the composer and internally heard, because free, random sonorities are generally only acoustic phenomena and have little in common with music. Meanwhile, representatives of the directions I have mentioned generally maintain that everything belonging to the broadly-understood scope of compositional activities can be considered a work of art; in so doing, they expand the borders of art even to objects existing only potentially—an issue no doubt interesting from a philosophical viewpoint, but one which to me is, from the artistic side, an obvious misunderstanding.<sup>41</sup>

Baird, Kilar and Meyer criticize the actions of the avant-garde, which—in the name of doing something absolutely new, or in the name of experiment—forgets about the audience. It does not take into account, among other things—as Meyer and Baird point out—the limits of perception in the area of pitch or duration; it forgets about certain archetypes of order, natural laws of active perception, as well as about tradition, which, as it were, ‘provokes us to make specific associations’.<sup>42</sup> Kilar admits that these words of Witold Lutoslawski are his credo: ‘I write the kind of music I would like to hear’<sup>43</sup> Baird considers that composers must convince the audience that they want to tell it something important, true, momentous, even when that music is shocking and new to the audience. Art, music ‘should be a kind of link between people, a means of interpersonal communication. If it does not have such high ambitions, it condemns itself to mediocrity and triteness’.<sup>44</sup>

After a period of the great illusion that dodecaphony and serialism are the most proper path for the new music, as well as after his experiences with sonorism and aleatorism, Kilar, like many other Polish composers, ‘returned to previously forgotten values’—among others, simplicity, repeatability, melody, regular rhythms, a ‘narrative’ dramaturgy of form. He began the conscious demolition of ‘his avant-garde Bastille’ in 1974, by writing *Krzesany*.<sup>45</sup> Meyer

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<sup>41</sup> *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od...* [*Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...*], op. cit., pp. 67–68.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 68–69, 66; Tadeusz Baird, Izabella Grzenkiewicz, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>43</sup> *Cieszę się darem życia* [*I am happy with the gift of life*], op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>44</sup> Tadeusz BAIRD, Izabella GRZENKOWICZ, op. cit., p. 32. Cf. ‘Zyciorys w partyturach. Istnienie sztuki ma o tyle sens, o ile pomaga ona ludziom’ [‘A Curriculum Vitae in Musical Scores. The Existence of Art Makes Sense in the Measure that It Helps People’]. Tadeusz Baird interviewed by Ewa Solińska and Bogdan Moźdzynski, *ITD* 1979 no. 35, p. 21.

<sup>45</sup> *Cieszę się darem życia* [*I am happy with the gift of life*], op. cit., pp. 28, 32–33, 52; 34, cf. p. 57.

assimilated elements of avant-garde techniques useful in the formation of his individual sound; but at the beginning of the 1980s, he admitted that ‘for the last several years [...] I have very much longed for a great simplicity—for the simplicity of using a small number of pitches in expressive—expressively complex—music’.<sup>46</sup> Years later, in 1994, he, as it were, confirmed himself in his conviction: ‘I feel a greater and greater longing for something enduring in art. Not for the next shock or skin-deep effect, but on the contrary—for something that would provide a new, deep experience’.<sup>47</sup> Baird, in an ‘expressive’ manner—but without negating relationships to the Classical and Romantic heritage—transformed the dodecaphonic tradition. In 1978, he confessed: ‘Sudden changes, turning points, rejection, beginning anew—these have always been foreign to me. I number among those who multiply, amplify, stratify’.<sup>48</sup> Even in the last interview he gave, in 1981, he pointed out strongly that he ‘does not number among those people who would like to tear down or destroy’.<sup>49</sup>

#### **IV. Opinions on Neoclassicism, neo-styles and Postmodernist pluralism of styles and freedom**

Each of the composers of interest to us was subject to the influence of the Neoclassical manner of reinterpreting the past, but all of them considered it to be a ‘dead end’. In MEYER’s opinion, only a few composers, e.g. Stravinsky—and that, only in a few works—succeeded in putting an individual stamp on borrowings from or references to works, styles or techniques of past eras. The ‘dream’ of Stravinsky or Hindemith—to create anew, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a ‘universal’ language—was accompanied by ‘the mistaken assumption that one can create a new convention by alluding to the past’.<sup>50</sup> Beyond this, writing in the Neoclassical style entails a necessity to possess, as Meyer rightly underlines, ‘a solid knowledge of the basics of compositional technique (traditional technique, true—but all the same, very concrete)’—in the area of, among other things, instrumentation, principles for building form, score notation, ‘about

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<sup>46</sup> ‘Dwa i pół utworu rocznie’ [‘Two-and-a-half Works Yearly’], op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od...* [*Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...*], op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>48</sup> Statement made during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Musical Encounters in Baranów Sandomierski, cit. after Krystyna TARNAWSKA-KACZOROWSKA, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Ostatni wywiad Tadeusza Bairda’ [‘Tadeusz Baird’s Last Interview’]. Interviewed by Tadeusz K. Sznajderski, *Życie Literackie* 1981 no. 39, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od...* [*Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...*], op. cit., p. 52, cf. p. 82.

which Webern's epigons often had no idea'.<sup>51</sup> **KILAR**, on the other hand, draws attention to the reasons for interest in Neoclassicism among his generation, who were students in the first half of the 1950s. At that time, 'the symbol of musical progress were [...], in Poland, the works of Bartok, Stravinsky, Prokofiev. The language we used in our work did not go outside the sound world created by these great artists. However, I rather quickly realized that in the long term, it is not possible to speak convincingly in that language—that anything which anyone would yet attempt to create in this style, all of it would now be just a duplication, a more or less deftly made copy of the original'.<sup>52</sup>

However, a question arises as to whether the various neo-styles or the so-called 'new tonality' in the music of the 1980s have anything in common with Neoclassicism. Despite the fact that **BAIRD** 'viewed with suspicion all actions whose names begin with the prefix "neo",' he did posit an apt hypothesis: 'at the foundation of Neotonalism, there could lie a healthy seed: a more and more universally felt need to restore some kind of harmonic centralism to music'.<sup>53</sup> He did not consider, however, that Neotonalism, or especially neo-styles—as none-too-creative 'secondhand solutions'—could be the cure for the difficult situation of the most recent music. These were, in Baird's opinion, 'superficial solutions which were in essence only an escape and a way of making one's life easier'.<sup>54</sup> **MEYER** interprets these phenomena in a similar spirit: the new tonality has no roots in Neoclassicism. 'I think that for many composers, the return to tonality is rather the result of a certain tiredness with the situation in which music has found itself after the exhaustion of those new means which were brought in by the avant-garde in the 1950s. It is also probably the result of a lack of acquaintance with today's possibilities and perspectives of music, a peculiar sort of taking the easy way out'.<sup>55</sup> He himself 'always composes in some sense tonally', but this is not based on the major-minor system. He understands tonality as 'centralization of sound'. The role of the center can be fulfilled by, for example, a pitch, a group of sonorities, a melodic or rhythmic structure, a sound color or articulation. To such centralization of sound, as a point of reference for the development of a work, Meyer attributes—along

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<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, p. 50.

<sup>52</sup> Janusz CEGIEŁŁA, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>53</sup> Tadeusz BAIRD, Izabella GRZENKOWICZ, op. cit., pp. 56, 58.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, p. 58.

<sup>55</sup> Krzysztof Meyer. *Do i od...* [*Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...*], op. cit., p. 82.

with repetition—an essential function in the manner of construction of a form, the imagination of which takes into account its shape, which arises in the process of perception of the musical work.<sup>56</sup>

Meyer, ‘tempering’ within himself independence with respect to changing fashions, declares that he remains insensitive to Postmodernist propositions; he is also opposed to Postmodernist post-stylistic language.

I consider it to be a new form of epigonism, all the worse even than its historic predecessors in that epigons of times past, in principle at least, tried to equal the models being imitated in their technical skills, while many of the present ‘post-stylists’ are quite irritating in their technical incompetence. The source of this problem was the avant-garde’s conviction that the idea itself is more important than skill in presenting or arranging it, which was in turn a natural reaction to previously encountered excesses of academic technique. But today, many a time, allusion to the past—in conjunction with a traditional utilization of the orchestra—brutally lays bare deficiencies in education: awkwardness in construction of form, a lack of knowledge of instrumentation and, above all, a lack of melodic and harmonic invention. I tell my students: if you want to write a symphony in the style of Mahler, or a quartet in the style of Bartok, then do it—but on the condition that you write it better.<sup>57</sup>

In the context of the problem of postmodern stylizations, Meyer’s pointers, addressed to his students, associated with the ethic and cultural aspect of their future profession, are significant:

It is [...] our task to ‘gift’, and not to ‘cheat’ our listeners, counting on their naïveté or lack of experience in listening. But we will not do this any other way except by attaining a high level of professionalism.’ Beyond this, if we come from various parts of Europe, we should remember that ‘we were born into the great European family of musicians, and we must be equal to the challenge put before us by that nobility inherited from Monteverdi, Beethoven and Shostakovich’, or other artists, whom each of us can choose for him/herself as our own ‘guild patrons’, whose ‘artistry [...] can serve as a road sign and model.’<sup>58</sup>

In his artistic and everyday life, **KILAR** considers it most important to act ‘honest[ly] before himself and before his art’, to strive for sincerity, perfection

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<sup>56</sup> ‘Kompozytorzy mówią. Krzysztof Meyer’ [‘Composers Talk. Krzysztof Meyer’], op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od... [Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...]*, op. cit., p. 94, cf. pp. 90–92.

<sup>58</sup> Krzysztof MEYER ‘O potrzebie profesjonalizmu’ [‘On the Need for Professionalism’], in: *Środowisko-kompozytor-dzieło w muzyce polskiej XX wieku [Environment-Composer-Work in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Polish Music]*, ed. Teresa Brodniewicz, Hanna Kostrzewska, Janina Tatarska, Poznań 2003, p. 10.

and, at the same time, think about the audience for which he writes music.<sup>59</sup> Kilar is struck by Postmodernist freedom, but he considers that 'Postmodernism based only on freedom is really too little; however, in conjunction with reason and free will, it probably means nothing improper.' He accepts freedom in the area of turning to a variety of styles and means; but the New Age slogan 'Do what you want', he proposes to transform into the slogan: 'Love and do what you want', as well as act with full commitment to what you are doing and take responsibility for your actions.<sup>60</sup> However, unlike the Postmodernist acquiescence to heterogeneity and incoherence of construction in a work of art, he defends—as he describes it—the 'Mediterranean' wholeness and unity of the work.<sup>61</sup> In the keeping of this value, he also sees a creative transformation in Europe of the American idea of repetitive music. However, he considers it erroneous to equate repetitive music with minimalist music, for—in Kilar's opinion—the aim of repetitive music is to obtain a maximum of expression with the aid of a minimum of means. In other words, repetitive music is maximal music.<sup>62</sup> The intensified return to various sources and values (among others, folklore, religious/nationalist) observed in many authors in the 1990s, Kilar interprets in accordance with the Postmodernist explanation: 'the past has caught up with the avant-garde, swallowed it up; and thereby, a new value was created'.<sup>63</sup>

## V. Declared heritage

Baird, Kilar and Meyer declare a 'will to inherit'. Examples of the choices made by them from the musical tradition, symbolized by the names of composers and titles of works, are presented in shorthand in Table 2.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ewa SOLIŃSKA *W salonie muzycznym* [*In the Musical Salon*] (Contains an interview with W. Kilar), Bydgoszcz 1986, p. 25; Maria JANOS-KŁOPIDOWSKA 'Krzesany z życiem' ['Krzesany with Life'] (interview with W. Kilar), *Twój Styl* 2002 no. 8, p. 115; Eugenia WYBRANIEC 'Nie chcę uchodzić za kogoś kim nie jestem' ['I Don't Want to Be Taken for Someone I Am Not'] (interview with W. Kilar), *Poglądy* 1976 no. 24, p. 7. Cf. *Cieszę się darem...* [*I am happy with the gift...*], op. cit., pp. 78–79.

<sup>60</sup> *Cieszę się darem...* [*I am happy with the gift...*], op. cit., pp. 68–69.

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, pp. 52, 61–62, 70.

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem, p. 70.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem, p. 33.

<sup>64</sup> The examples have been taken from statements of Baird, Kilar and Meyer that are cited only in the present article.

**Table 2.** Choice of traditions

Value/ authority/ fascination/ inspiration/ influence	B A I R D	K I L A R	M E Y E R
BACH <i>Magnificat</i> <i>Mass in B minor</i>	+		+
BACEWICZ <i>Concerto for string orchestra</i>		+	
BAIRD		+	
BARTÓK <i>The Miraculous Mandarin</i>		+	+
BEETHOVEN Piano trios			+
BERG <i>Lyric Suite</i> <i>Wozzeck</i>	+		
BOULEZ <i>Le Marteau sans Maître</i>		+	+
BRAHMS <i>Symphony No. 2</i> string quartets	+		+
DEBUSSY <i>Arabesques</i> <i>Preludes</i> <i>Nocturne for orchestra no. 2</i>	+ last quartets	+	+
De FALLA <i>Fire Danse from El Amor brujo</i> for orchestra		+	
KAGEL			+ last works
LIGETI			+ pieces for piano
LUTOSŁAWSKI <i>Concerto for orchestra</i> <i>Little suite</i>		+	+
MAHLER	+ songs		
MALAWSKI <i>Symphonic Studies</i> <i>Toccata and Fugue in Variation</i> <i>Form</i>		+	
MESSIAEN <i>Quatuor pour la fin du</i> <i>Temps</i> <i>Turangalila</i>			+
MOZART		+	+ symphonies
PROKOFIEV		+	

SCHÖNBERG <i>Erwartung</i>	+		
SCHUBERT			+ string quartets
STRAVINSKY <i>Histoire du Soldat</i>		+	+ middle period
<i>Symphony of Psalms</i>		+	+
SHOSTAKOVICH <i>Symphony No. 5</i>		+	+
<i>Symphony No. 7</i>			+
SZYMANOWSKI <i>Mazurka op. 50 no. 1</i>		+	
<i>Violin Concerto No.1</i>		+	
<i>Symphony No. 3</i>			
<i>Stabat Mater</i>	+		
<i>King Roger</i>			
RAVEL <i>Gaspard de la nuit</i>		+	
<i>Bolero</i>			
<i>La valse</i>			
<i>Daphnis et Chloe</i>			
WEBERN Op. 21–31			+
<i>Second Cantata op. 31</i>	+		

Omitting the more detailed motivations for the choices visualized in shorthand, we can determine their compass, which has a characteristic in common: the selected legacy of other composers, as it were, contains elements of the individual world of each of the artists of interest to us. In them is ‘everything for which I aim,’ says Kilar; they are related to my personal ideal of music and, in some measure, ‘they have contributed to the broadening of my sound imagination,’ states Meyer; it is the music about ‘which I dream, which I would like to compose myself,’ confessed Baird.<sup>65</sup> We also observe certain peculiar gravitations in the needle of that compass. Meyer, for example, underlines that the musical choices he has made from past eras, and especially from the 20<sup>th</sup> century—in which there is no common ‘convention of the era’—are linked by one characteristic: these are the few artists who ‘act, as it were, against the grain of their times, at the same time playing a significant and inspiring role’. They are independent, because they have ‘uncommon individuality’; they turn their

<sup>65</sup> *Cieszę się darem...* [I am happy with the gift...], op. cit., pp. 14, 18, 25; *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od...* [Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...], op. cit., p. 93; Tadeusz BAIRD, Izabella GRZENKOWICZ, op. cit., p. 30.

backs on even the most progressive directions; they create 'their own unique sound world', which is 'one of the most precious values of truly great art'.<sup>66</sup> Baird often pointed out that he expected from art, above all, something 'that would stir him to the core'.<sup>67</sup> About his own works, however, he said that the majority of them

are, as it were, successive chapters of my most private autobiography. These are the successions, preserved in musical scores, of my experiences, spiritual states, impressions layered upon one another. That autobiography differs from a literary one in this: that it is completely legible only to me...<sup>68</sup>

Kilar is fascinated that which is modern, shocking but 'not disordered'—rather, distinguished by mastery of the compositional craft.<sup>69</sup>

The aim of this creative desire associated with the need to maintain relationships with tradition—as Baird admitted—is not, however, a comparison of one's own actions with an unattainable model, for it is obvious that 'then we become aware of our own insignificance; and this is a feeling which, while advantageous for our psychological hygiene, is highly unpleasant...'<sup>70</sup> Meyer, as it were, adds: the point is not to compare oneself with, for example, Brahms or Beethoven; this would be a 'suicidal attitude'—'after all, the point in art is not to take aim at already existing music, but to express oneself in one's own language, to convey one's own sound imagination'.<sup>71</sup> To create and preserve one's own individuality—as Kilar says, 'to be the best Kilar'—is the aim of each of the artists mentioned.

### **Conclusion: need to maintain continuity of tradition as part of artistic credo**

The eldest of our composers, Tadeusz Baird, was convinced that

... in art, the most certain guarantee of true progress is the combination, so infrequent, of talent, intellectual restlessness and artistic honesty, with a knowledge of and respect for tradition. The lack of any one of these elements often leads to a lack

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<sup>66</sup> *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od...* [*Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...*], op. cit., pp. 54, 55.

<sup>67</sup> Janusz CEGIEŁA, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25, cf. p. 30.

<sup>69</sup> *Cieszę się darem...* [*I am happy with the gift...*], op. cit., pp. 17–18, 59–60.

<sup>70</sup> Janusz CEGIEŁA, op. cit., pp. 28–29.

<sup>71</sup> 'Dwa i pół utworu rocznie' ['Two-and-a-half Works Yearly'], op. cit., p. 13.

of originality, or effects aimed only at making an impression, to the so-called avant-garde, to opportunism.<sup>72</sup>

Wojciech Kilar, only four years younger, confesses:

I have absolutely never had the feeling of rejecting anything. This may sound megalomaniacal, but it has always seemed to me that I write my music with complete awareness that it is in some way connected to the past.<sup>73</sup>

The youngest of the three composers, the presently 62-year-old Krzysztof Meyer, underlines that

‘The work of art is built from various elements of tradition and of the contemporary, as well as from those [elements] which are a product of the personality of the person creating the art,’ but ‘in adoring the greatest masterpieces of early or new music, I always try to maintain a certain distance to them: while being enchanted or moved by them, I have attempted to discern that which is foreign to my psyche. It seems to me that such a view from a distance helps in the building of one’s own independent sound world. [...] Without a good knowledge of tradition and a proper orientation in the contemporary, today one cannot compose.’<sup>74</sup>

There is no question of the existence of an association with tradition on the part of Baird, Kilar and Meyer—not only declared, but also effectively embodied in their music. All of them went through a phase of avant-garde fascinations, and drew individual benefits from various modernist experiments. Postmodernist tendencies are more visible with Kilar; while anti-modernist tendencies, albeit not in an academic-conservative form, but rather in the form of an original, as it were, modernization and transformation of tradition, are more perceptible with Baird and Meyer. Respect for tradition and the necessity of a creative approach to it, as well as the need to preserve its continuity, as it were, our composers took from the instruction of their teachers, but they also undertook a fruitful discussion with them.

Nadia Boulanger was an erudite person; it was difficult to ‘resist her influence and amazing charm’, and ‘her gift of communication [was] unbeliev-

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<sup>72</sup> Tadeusz BAIRD ‘Czy sztuka może się rozwijać bez tradycji?’ [‘Can art develop without tradition?’], op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>73</sup> *Cieszę się darem...* [I am happy with the gift...], op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Dwa i pół utworu rocznie’ [‘Two-and-a-half Works Yearly’], op. cit., pp. 9, 13.

able. Almost every student immediately believe[d] in her every word'.<sup>75</sup> We know that despite having declared tolerance, she 'imposed' the Neoclassical way of musical thinking.<sup>76</sup> However, what is important is the fact that, within the framework of the lessons and lectures she gave (during which she characterized and analyzed music from ancient Greece, through Gregorian chant, works of, among others, Machaut, Monteverdi, Rameau, Lully and Bach, to Chopin, Reger, Mussorgsky, Fauré, Debussy and Stravinsky), she presented to students—as Zygmunt Mycielski reminisced—'one music [...] throughout the centuries'.<sup>77</sup> In discussing works from various eras with students, she placed emphasis on and also required students to observe the relationships appearing between the musics of various eras, the continuity of tradition or the disappearance thereof. In Boulanger's opinion,

The artist never expresses himself via protest [...], this is not how music is created. It is created from resources existing in the consciousness of the artist, in her intellectual and musical formation, which is a result of constant evolutionary development.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Janusz CEGIEŁŁA, op. cit., p. 44. Cf. Krzysztof MEYER 'Fontainebleau lato 1964' ['Fontainebleau in the Summer of 1964'], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1965 no. 2, p. 11.

<sup>76</sup> Krzysztof Meyer. *Do i od...* [Krzysztof Meyer. *To and From...*], op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>77</sup> Zygmunt MYCIELSKI 'Wspominając wykłady Nadii Boulanger' ['An Account of the Lectures of Nadia Boulanger'], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1947 no. 17, p. 4 (entire article: pp. 2–7). Cf. Maria MODRAKOWSKA 'Wspominając studia u Nadii Boulanger' ['An Account of Studies with Nadia Boulanger'], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1958 no. 11, pp. 11–14; Tadeusz KACZYŃSKI 'Dwie rozmowy z Michałem Spisakiem' ['Two Conversations with Michał Spisak'], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1964 no. 18, p. 7; Marek PODHAJSKI 'Studia kontrapunktu Tadeusza Szeligowskiego u Nadii Boulanger' ['Tadeusz Szeligowski's Studies of Counterpoint with Nadia Boulanger'], in: *Tadeusz Szeligowski. W 10. rocznicę śmierci kompozytora* [Tadeusz Szeligowski. *On the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Composer's Death*], Gdańsk 1973. Concerning the manner and program of N. Boulanger's teaching, as well as her opinions on some of her students, see statements of N. Boulanger herself in: Bruno MONSAINGEON *Mademoiselle. Entretiens avec Nadia Boulanger*, Luynes 1981, pp. 52–96.

<sup>78</sup> Danuta SKOBAŁO 'Dokumentacja materiałów pośmiertnych M. Spisaka' ['Documentation of Posthumous Materials of M. Spisak'], in: *Wokół słowa, sensu i struktury w muzyce*. Academic Notebook of the Analysis and Interpretation Group, Kraków 1978, p. 62. N. Boulanger conducted pedagogical activity for over 70 years; she had over 3000 students from various parts of the world. Among her first Polish students in the 1920s were Zygmunt Mycielski, Kazimierz Sikorski, Stanisław Wiechowicz, Tadeusz Szeligowski, Bolesław Woytowicz; among the last, in the 1970s, Piotr Moss, Grażyna Pstrokońska-Nawratil. During the interwar period, N. Boulanger supported the activity of the Association of Young Polish Musicians in Paris; after that, among other things, she was guest of honor at the 1<sup>st</sup> Warsaw Autumn Festival in 1956 and, along with Karol Szymanowski, was, as it were, its patron. She was also interested in the Polish musical *oeuvre*, especially that of her own students. See Maria WOZACZYŃSKA *Wybrane zagad-*

Beyond this, they had Boulanger to thank for the conviction that

the most important moment in the process of composition is the striving for absolute naturalness and flexibility via unrelenting self-observation of [...] whether the composition has been written in the simplest, most direct and communicative manner possible.<sup>79</sup>

Bolesław Woytowicz developed in his students a need for broader humanistic knowledge and interest in the *oeuvre* of, in particular, the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>80</sup> Stanisław Wiechowicz often underlined that he was not an opponent of ‘modernist’ directions in art, but he considered that one cannot, uncritically or ‘by force’, adopt or imitate them in the name of ‘superstitions and false ambitions’, in defiance of indigenous traditions and current conditions for creation and reception of music in Poland. As Wiechowicz said, music should not be divided into avant-garde and conservative at all, but into good and bad. He considered it useful, permitting the preservation of ‘artistic hygiene’, to listen especially to early music, written before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>81</sup> He did, however—as Meyer recounts and as is underlined by, among others, Krystyna Moszumańska-Nazar—encourage his students to acquaint themselves with 20<sup>th</sup>-century music, including the most recent (e.g. Honegger, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Bacewicz),

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*nienia nauczania kompozycji w europejskim szkolnictwie muzycznym I poł. XX wieku [Selected Issues in Teaching of Composition at European Music Schools in the 1<sup>st</sup> Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century]*, Gdańsk 1987, p. 175; Krzysztof MEYER ‘Nadia Boulanger w Polsce’ [‘Nadia Boulanger in Poland’], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1964 no. 9, pp. 3–4; Zygmunt MYCIELSKI ‘Nadia Boulanger w Warszawie’ [‘Nadia Boulanger in Warsaw’], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1968 no. 3, pp. 10–11; Tadeusz KACZYŃSKI ‘Młodzi kompozytorzy polscy w Paryżu w latach 1926–50, a stosunki muzyczne francusko-polskie’ [‘Young Polish Composers in Paris from 1926 to 1950, and French-Polish Musical Relations’], *Muzyka* 1967 no. 2, p. 106, as well as ‘Ostatnia wizyta’ [‘The Last Visit’], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1980 no. 2, p. 16, as well as *Warszawska Jesień [Warsaw Autumn]*, Kraków 1983, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> Leon MARKIEWICZ ‘Po powrocie z Paryża. Rozmowa z W. Kilar’ [‘After Returning from Paris. A Conversation with W. Kilar’], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1961 no. 5, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> *Cieszę się darem... [I am happy with the gift...]*, op. cit., pp. 22, 25. Cf. Baird’s statements concerning Woytowicz, in: Tadeusz BAIRD, Izabella GRZENKOWICZ, op. cit., pp. 87–88.

<sup>81</sup> Stanisław WIECHOWICZ ‘Skąd i dokąd?’ [‘Whence and whither?’], in: *Muzyka Polska* 1936 bk. 7, pp. 208–217; ‘II Koncert symfoniczny’ [‘2<sup>nd</sup> Symphony Concert’], *Kurier Poznański* 1932 no. 428, p. 4. Cited from Adam MRYGOŃ, op. cit., pp. 102, 108.

even that which he himself did not accept; he was also tolerant with respect to the innovative propositions of his students.<sup>82</sup>

Characteristic of Baird and Kilar is an—as it were, ‘carried on’ through the different generations of Polish artists—attachment to the authority of Szymanowski or—as in the case of Meyer—a need for a ‘sober’ look at the phenomenon of this composer.<sup>83</sup> Especially for the interwar generation, the initial fascinations with the (for them) innovative *oeuvre* of Szymanowski, and later often critical look at it, lay at the source of the individual artistic path of, among others, Piotr Perkowski, Aleksander Tansman, Andrzej Panufnik, Roman Palester or Witold Lutosławski.<sup>84</sup> Expression of sincere enthusiasm for the art of Szymanowski was also given by, among others, Stanisław Wiechowicz, in journalistic statements and in his *oeuvre*.<sup>85</sup> And the point is not, after all, only Szymanowski’s ‘discovery’ of folklore, but the (as Teresa Chylińska aptly put it) triad, confessed by him: freedom, responsibility and effort—a freedom

<sup>82</sup> Krzysztof MEYER ‘Z głosów uczniów S. Wiechowicza’ [‘From the Voices of S. Wiechowicz’s Students’], *Ruch Muzyczny* 1963 no. 24, p. 5; ‘Stanisław Wiechowicz—pedagog. Wspomnienie o Stanisławie Wiechowiczu’ [‘Stanisław Wiechowicz—Pedagogue. A Memoir of Stanisław Wiechowicz’], in: *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od... [Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...]*, op. cit., p. 17–28; Statement of Krystyna Moszumańska-Nazar, in: *Muzyka polska 1945–1995 [Polish Music 1945–1995]*, ed. Krzysztof Droba, Teresa Malecka, Krzysztof Sz wajgier, Kraków 1996, pp. 383, 385. See also statements of, among others, Krystyna Moszumańska-Nazar, Juliusz Łuciuk and other students, in: *Stanisław Wiechowicz in memoriam*, ed. Jerzy Kurcz, Kraków 1996, pp. 63–70.

<sup>83</sup> See statements on Szymanowski by T. Baird, in: Janusz CEGIEŁŁA, op. cit., p. 24; ‘Czy sztuka...’ [‘Does Art...’], op. cit.; ‘Muzyka Szymanowskiego znaczyła dla mnie zawsze bardzo wiele...’ [‘The Music of Szymanowski Has Always Meant Very Much to Me’], foreword to book: *Begegnung mit K. Szymanowski*, ed. Ilona Reinhold. Leipzig 1982, pp. 5–7, reprint in: Krystyna TARNAWSKA-KACZOROWSKA, op. cit., pp. 201–202; by Wojciech Kilar, in: *Cieszę się darem życia... [I am happy with the gift of life...]*, op. cit., pp. 18, 35; K. Meyer see footnote no. 4.

<sup>84</sup> See Lutosławski’s statement on Szymanowski, among others: Witold LUTOSŁAWSKI ‘Tchnienie wielkości’ [‘The Breath of Greatness’], in: *Muzyka Polska 1937* book 4, pp. 169–170; Tadeusz KACZYŃSKI *Rozmowy z Witoldem Lutosławskim [Conversations with Witold Lutosławski]*, Kraków 1972, pp. 44; Bálint András VARGA *Lutosławski Profile*. London 1976, pp. 5, 19–20; *Szymanowski i jego Europa. Festiwal Muzyczny Polskiego Radia. 21–26 kwietnia 1997 [Szymanowski and His Europe. Polish Radio Music Festival 21–26 April 1997]*. Warszawa 1997, pp. 109–110; Irina NIKOLSKA *Muzyka to nie tylko dźwięki. Rozmowy z Witoldem Lutosławskim [Music Is Not Only Notes. Conversations with Witold Lutosławski]*, Kraków 2003, p. 26, 32.

<sup>85</sup> See Adam MRYGÓŃ, op. cit., pp. 94–95, 106, 136; Leon MARKIEWICZ ‘Wiechowicz-Szymanowski. Z historii wzajemnych kontaktów i stosunków’ [‘Wiechowicz-Szymanowski. From the History of Their Mutual Contacts and Relations’], in: *Stanisław Wiechowicz in memoriam*, op. cit., pp. 23–38; statement by Krystyna Moszumańska-Nazar, in: *ibidem*, p. 64.

also shown in the 'eternal dispute between old and new'; a freedom, 'and not a normative restraint; an obligation to only one thing: solicitous attention to the highest quality of compositional craft, to the purest possible *metier*', which was for Szymanowski 'as much surety as purity of hand'—moral purity, including patriotic duties as well.<sup>86</sup> A second analogous great authority, pointed out by Polish composers in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is Witold Lutoslawski.

In the artistic attitude of Baird, Kilar and Meyer, the following are characteristic: not yielding to the 'terror of the avant-garde', but creatively confronting its propositions; not accepting the commandment to break with tradition or the enforcement of novelty. Somehow enduring is the Romantic tradition—of the work of music as a highly individual and emotional expression. Related to Classical and Romantic sources is the idea, recurring in the auto-reflections of all three composers, of the work as a whole—both when it is shaped in a dramaturgical manner, as an alternation of tensions of the different and the similar, and when repetitiveness is given preference. All three artists are distinguished by solicitous attention to form, despite different individual propositions in this area, as well as by an apologetic of perfection in compositional craft. Associated with a Classical and Romantic pedigree, beyond this, is their love for goodness, love and beauty. Their striving to create and preserve their own unique idiom is a need both Romantic, and thoroughly contemporary. Also still current is the desire to create music engaged—via the use of various ways and means—in national and religious problems, and associated with the identity of an indigenous, but not hermetic culture. Said Baird,

It is my intention that what I am trying to do represent the result of conscious allusion to the Polish artistic tradition. In its history, Polish art displays characteristics that differentiate it from the art of other countries. In it, means fulfill a subservient role with respect to the expression of content and aims. It is an open culture. It has assimilative strength, thanks to which it has adopted new artistic stimuli, artistic techniques, and made them its own.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Teresa CHYLIŃSKA 'Czy Roman Palester był emigrantem?' ['Was Roman Palester an Émigré?'], in: *Między Polską a światem [Between Poland and the World]*, ed. Marta Fik, Warszawa 1992, p. 197, 198.

<sup>87</sup> 'Ostatni wywiad Tadeusza Bairda' ['Tadeusz Baird's Last Interview'], op. cit., p. 12.

Meyer, remembering the obligations entailed by membership in the ‘great European family of musicians’, recalls Lutoslawski’s words: ‘Every work, every product of our abilities and talents, becomes a common good; it becomes a part of the good which is the national culture’.<sup>88</sup> For the Polish artistic tradition and the character of Polish artists, it is proper—as Kilar states—that their

... *oeuvre* has always been linked with matters of religion and nationality. Pure artistic formalism—play with sounds, words, pictures—never satisfied us. We wanted it to speak to someone, to serve our fellow human being and our fatherland.<sup>89</sup>

Without doubt, a common characteristic of the artistic attitudes of Baird, Kilar and Meyer is the conviction that a contemporary and authentic work of music reveals the variety of its roots in tradition, even when the composer does not bring out the intertextual dimensions of the work in a demonstrative manner.

The musical heritage of the past, alongside the most recent *oeuvre*, also occupies a prominent place in the teaching of composition in the studios of Baird and Meyer. This is, as it were, an offer addressed by them to young people—an offer of rationally- and practically-based values—and, at the same time, an encouragement towards conscious and committed continuation of the tradition. Baird placed ‘high aims’ before his students:

the composer ‘should be [...] ‘something more than just a person comprehensively educated in the compositional craft’; the artist is to be ‘the contemporary equivalent of the former humanist—an enlightened person, deeply and comprehensively educated, knowing the past and, with an open mind, searching for the shape of the future.’<sup>90</sup>

Thus, the task of the composition pedagogue is—as Meyer emphasizes –

... to skillfully direct the development of talent, to show the young person ways of gaining experience—and this both via precise discussion of his own works, and via analysis of important contemporary and classic works, from which the adept can draw conclusions essential to her own art. This is a task ‘immeasurably delicate and difficult. First of all, it is a dialogue of representatives of two generations, which could imply

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<sup>88</sup> Krzysztof MEYER ‘O potrzebie profesjonalizmu’ [‘On the Need for Professionalism’], op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>89</sup> Wojciech KILAR ‘Na Jasnej Górze odnalazłem wolną Polską... i siebie’ [‘On Jasna Góra, I found a free Poland... and me’]. Interviewed by Fr. Robert Łukaszuk OSPPE, Częstochowa 2003, p. 21.

<sup>90</sup> Tadeusz BAIRD, Izabella GRZENKOWICZ, op. cit., p. 104.

difficulties in coming to mutual understanding. Secondly, transmission of one's own experiences to the student is not at all necessarily advantageous, because s/he may be treading a completely different path and need other experiences. Bronislaw Rutkowski once said, 'Artistic youth who obediently walk in the ways of their elders, who do not seek their own ways, who do not make any trouble for their educators—from such youth, one cannot expect much.'<sup>91</sup>

Baird, Kilar and Meyer postulate in words—and bear witness in their musical *oeuvre*—that we have been connected with tradition by our own, experience of that tradition, current as of the given moment. The critical view of it from the perspective of the 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century is to be closely linked to a fully conscious, creative mistrust with respect to artistic trends, as well as to aesthetic and commonplace experiences of the contemporary. This is not only a contemplation of tradition, nor only an entrance into the spirit of tradition—but above all, a recognition of oneself in tradition. The so-called real (authentic) image of tradition will no longer return. Every present is a new reading of it. It can also make tradition into material or a tool for a variety of games; but at the same time, every present—as Walter Benjamin points out—represents a threat to the existence of tradition.<sup>92</sup> Thus, we can say—traversing the words of Nietzsche, already utilized once upon a time by the aforementioned connoisseur of modern city culture<sup>93</sup>—that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 'we need tradition, but we need it in a different way than a spoiled lazy bum in the garden of knowledge needs it', or a spoiled consumer in the over-aestheticized aura of the supermarket of tradition.

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<sup>91</sup> *Krzysztof Meyer. Do i od... [Krzysztof Meyer. To and From...]*, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>92</sup> Polish ed. Selection and prep. Hubert Orłowski, transl. Krystyna Krzemieniowa, H. Orłowski, Janusz Sikorski, Poznań 1997, p. 415.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 421 (as motto of article 'O pojęciu historii' ['On the Concept of History']).

