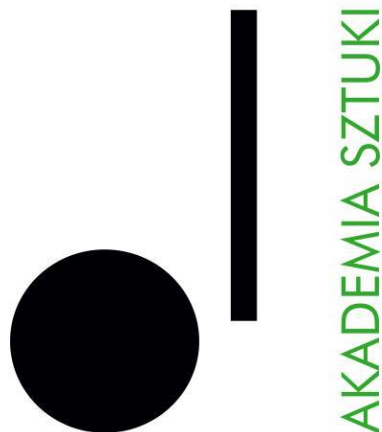




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Instrumental Department

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***Musical language and performance issues of solo violin pieces
and selected chamber works by Artur Cieślak***

Description of the work

Promoter:
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Entry

The impulse for the creation of the work above was interest in the works of the Szczecin composer Artur Cieślak. The actions taken are aimed at promoting the composer's artistic output, with particular emphasis on solo violin and violin and accordion duo¹ pieces. A thorough interpretation of selected items, both in terms of performance and descriptiveness, can certainly be very helpful material for people who will reach for them in the future.

Considering the fact that the author of this work is the first violinist to cover all the above-mentioned works, the premieres were preceded by a thorough analysis (both in terms of performance and theory), carried out in close cooperation with the currently living composer. The final effect is a summary of many years of artistic activities initiated in 2018.

In order to guide the recipient in a coherent and logical way in the descriptive form of the work, the following order of individual chapters has been adopted.

The first of them focused on the historical aspect and the changes that took place in Polish music in the second half of the 20th century. In order to trace the aforementioned changes, it was important to look at their precursors and continuators in turn. Based on the above, the artistic profile and characteristics of Artur Cieślak's creative language were presented.

The second chapter presents all works which performance issues are the main area of interest. Due to the fact that these are both compositions for solo violin and for a duet composed of violin and accordion, the works for solo violin are discussed first in the following order: *Violifonia*, *Cadenza*, *Intermezzo I*, followed by selected chamber examples: *Dialogue* and *Postmodern Toccata*. During the description of each of the works, special attention was paid to the structure, characteristics, and secondary contexts that were not written down in the text, but only emerged during conversations with the composer. Moreover, a key role was also played by performance problems that may arise while working on the pieces, and the methods contributing to their elimination.

¹ The description of the work includes two selected works for violin and accordion duo (*Dialogue* and *Postmodern Toccata*). The concert, recorded on DVD, has been additionally enriched with *Paraphrase No. 1*, *Paraphrase No. 2* and *Paraphrase No. 3* by Artur Cieślak, making it a complete collection of the composer's violin and accordion works.

The conclusion is a summary and a description of the findings that emerged while working on pieces for solo violin and selected ones for violin and accordion duet by Artur Cieślak. It presents arguments proving that the composer's work and figure deserve special attention, and a thorough consideration of the issues mentioned above brings many benefits both for the composer, performers, and every recipient of artistic music created in recent times.

Chapter I. Characteristics of Polish music of the second half of the 20th century

1.1. Evolution of compositional styles. Overview of the main phenomena and artistic profiles of leading representatives

It is difficult to assess the phenomena that took place in the artistic music of the second half of the 20th century with the use of one basic compositional direction, which is synonymous with the changes of the period. As a whole, it is customary to call it contemporary music. The development of Polish music was additionally hindered at that time - fresh memories of the just ended war (which brought an inevitable stagnation), helped by the present socialist realism. As a result of the events taking place in the USSR, the internal policy of the People's Republic of Poland saw the so-called Gomułka's thaw. Many political prisoners were released under the terms of the amnesty, but the totalitarian system did not collapse, and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe still had to wait a long time for the longed-for freedom². In connection with the events mentioned above, the pursuit of world standards by Polish composers was a complex matter that required time.

The year 1956³ became a certain breakthrough when they made a sudden turn towards new compositional techniques, using dodecaphony, serialism and punctuality in their works. These phenomena additionally contributed to the gradual development of an original, own style in Polish music, of which the superior feature and basis for shaping was timbre⁴. It was coined as *sonorism*. With the development of new means of artistic expression, the concept of beauty in musical works also expanded.

The premiere of Witold Lutosławski's *Funeral Music* was an introduction to the changes taking place at that time. A piece that is an important pillar of the composer's work, in which he initiated work on shaping his own musical language. The next stage was the discovery of twelve-tones and, finally, *controlled aleatorism*, which, as a response to the creative concepts

² <https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/dla-mediow/komunikaty/180018,70-lat-temu-zmarl-Jozef-Stalin-przywodca-Zwiazku-Sowieckiego-tyran-despota-i-mor.html> [access: June 1, 2023, 09:36]

³ In 1956, the International Festival of Contemporary Music "Warsaw Autumn" was held in Warsaw for the first time.

⁴ The search for new sound categories led to the fact that at some point Polish composers reached a point where the possibilities of further, simple development of Schönberg's dodecaphony were exhausted. Each subsequent step towards a new technique required resolving basic compositional problems. As a result of this procedure, harmony and timbre became the element binding the structure of the work, and consequently new sound qualities. Michalski G., *Dzieje muzyki polskiej w zarysie*, Warszawa 1983, p. 189.

of John Cage⁵, turned out to be one of Lutosławski's basic compositional techniques. The characteristic features of the composer's work from this period include: rigorous, but not based on a scheme, technical discipline, transparent development of form related to the sound material, modern form of all factors of the work and unconditional subordination of its basic construction to aesthetic and expressive concepts⁶.

The development of the "Polish school of composition" was also significantly influenced by the activity of Kazimierz Serocki, whose area of interest were experiments based on *dodecaphony* and *punctuality*, aiming at obtaining a variety of timbre. In each of his works, the composer tried to introduce a new kind of tones and murmurs, extracted from standard instruments in an unconventional way⁷. The main factor in the process of shaping the work was the tone colour influencing the arrangement of tensions and loosening, as well as having a final impact on the emotional character of the piece.

The generation of young artists of that period, whose activities could not be overlooked, took on new challenges with extraordinary commitment. Among them, the most expressive figure turned out to be Krzysztof Penderecki, a composer initially perceived as a synonym of the avant-garde. This was due to the fact that the area of Penderecki's interests (focused on the search for an unusual sound produced on traditional instruments) resulted in the composer often breaking the basic principles of ordering sound and textural categories. His searches very often led to treating the instrument in a percussive way, using such methods of sound production as: playing behind the bridge or tapping the shaft against the resonance box. Furthermore, Krzysztof Penderecki introduced a method of using clusters and symbols denoting the performer's presentation of the highest and lowest possible pitch on the instrument. These phenomena contributed to the composer developing his own individual musical language, based on the percussive sound of non-percussive instruments and the expression of intermixing sound planes. Krzysztof Penderecki's works were astonishing with their peculiarity and the techniques of artistic expression he introduced allowed him to express new sound content⁸.

In the 1970s, after a period of experimentation and constant search for new paths of artistic expression, there was a turn towards the traditions of past eras. The need for simplicity, both in terms of musical language and genres, led to the emergence of a trend called

⁵ Ibidem, p.168

⁶ Ibidem, p. 169.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 176-178.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 171-172.

postmodernism. The multitude of changes taking place during this period could be seen in the works of many Polish composers. Witold Lutosławski fully rehabilitated consonance and harmony, moreover, the composer used complex consonances based on a twelve-note scale less frequently in favor of simple and coherent sound configurations. The importance of the aleatoric technique gradually decreased so that its melodic aspect could play a superior role in the work.

The period of *postmodernism* also saw significant transformations in Krzysztof Penderecki's work. The composer slowly began to move away from unconventional methods of producing sound on instruments and to lean towards the accepted rules regarding the texture, harmony and melody of a piece. A good example of the aforementioned transformations is *Violin Concerto No. 1* from this period, which is a widely developed, although one-movement form, based mainly on the traditional sound⁹. The composer's new creative language also contributed to the creation of great vocal-instrumental works in which symbolism played a large role. *Passion according to St. Luke* and *Paradise Lost* constitute a specific stage in the crystallization of Krzysztof Penderecki's compositional style. The chords of tritones and seconds present in the work, juxtaposed in emotional rapture with consonances, are a compositional device with a symbolic meaning¹⁰, having an impact on the great value of the work, both in terms of aesthetics and meaning.

The 1980s and 1990s were mainly the period of activity of composers born after World War II. Among them, Eugeniusz Knapik and Paweł Szymański deserve special attention. In his work, the first of them found the perfect balance between modernity and tradition to such an extent that it is sometimes difficult to assess whether his musical language was based on the possessions of past eras, or whether by using elements of the late-Romantic and Impressionist tradition he entered the creative framework of modernity.

On the other hand, Paweł Szymański, whose own style was hailed by the composer himself and Stanisław Krupowicz as *surconventionalism*, chose sound material taken from the past (usually from the Baroque era) as the starting point in the process of shaping the work. Historical conventions, however, were not used as a quotation, but as a recomposed sound structure constituting the construction basis of the new work¹¹.

⁹ Ibidem, p.192.

¹⁰ In *Paradise Lost*, the interval structures: fifths, tritones, thirds, symbolize individual God, Satan and Man. Ibidem, p. 191-192.

¹¹ Rudziński W., *Muzyka naszego stulecia*, Warszawa 1995, p.180-181.

1.2. Artur Cieślak - creative attitude and characteristics of the composer's musical language

The last decades have undoubtedly been a period of composers' activity with a crystallized artistic profile, as evidenced by the works of Paweł Szymański and Eugeniusz Knapik. Artur Cieślak also belongs to the group of artists who have based their search on both the latest compositional techniques and history. In the composer's works, we can find many phenomena that are a continuation of postmodern changes. In addition, the fundamental aspect of his work is the search for an emotional medium. Emotions are a factor that the composer describes as extremely important and he subordinates all artistic intentions to them, even those based on deep intellectual analysis¹².

A characteristic feature of Artur Cieślak's works is the composer's precision in choosing the tempo, his mobility is additionally supported by sudden changes, sometimes taking place in one-bar spaces. The metro-rhythmic aspect is of fundamental importance for the composer, on the basis of which the performer should shape other important interpretative issues¹³.

The composer strives to develop his own artistic language guided by both logic and flexibility. He manifests the influence of Witold Lutosławski in his work, especially in the aspect of *controlled aleatorism* and Iannis Xenakis¹⁴, however, he does not use non-musical

¹² „If I were to define/locate myself, I feel the greatest connection with the phenomenon that has recently been called postmodernism, the postmodernism which assumes the possibility of referring to any techniques and creating some new quality out of it. Even in extreme cases, the possibility of using or borrowing techniques typical of the Baroque, not on the basis of neoclassicism, but on the basis of a quote or putting it in some other context. It is reaching for a solution or melodic figure, which is typical, for example, of the Baroque and embedding it in the musical style characteristic of, say, Krzysztof Penderecki. Contrasts are important here. Perhaps the example I gave is quite exaggerated, but it may illustrate a little why I feel a connection with Romanticism somewhere. On the one hand, I consider myself a composer who attaches great importance to the intellectual sphere, form, precision of notation, all this is very important to me, and is rather characteristic of composers of the 1960s or the classics, or others operating years ago, for whom it was intellect that was very important. Nevertheless, if I analyze what the song is really about, emotions are definitely in the foreground. Therefore, I would say about myself - it is rather a mixture, and in postmodernism this very mixture is acceptable.” Artur Cieślak, interview with the composer, April 10, 2021.

¹³ „It is important that the performer carefully reads the musical text, which is described in detail, adds something from himself in turn, but never in reverse order” Ibidem.

¹⁴ Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001) composed using mathematical methods, i.e. based on probability calculus, game theory, set theory and mathematical logic, [in:] Chodkowski A., *Encyklopedia Muzyki PWN*, Warszawa 2001, p. 963.

methods, such as computer programs or mathematical systems, but uses elements that influence the mechanics and repetitive (often taken from *minimal music*) nature of the works.

In the context of shaping the form, the composer willingly draws inspiration from past eras. So far, his area of interest has included: Liszt's concept of synthetic form, the idea of open form by Boulez, Cage and Stockhausen, and its variants represented by Sierocki and Lutosławski. Artur Cieślak's artistic profile was also indirectly influenced by the *spectralists* - by bringing closer the possibilities inherent in the modifications of the time perspective of the musical material, the *postmodernists* - who pointed to the impact of a properly used and processed quote, and finally Webern's aphoristic style, which made him realize how much content can be contained in one sound and silence¹⁵.

¹⁵ https://www.polmic.pl/index.php?option=com_mwosoby&id=366&view=czlowiek&litera=3&Itemid=5&lang=pl [access: April 26, 2023, at 1:45 pm]

Chapter II. Performance issues of selected works by Artur Cieślak

2.1. Pieces for solo violin

2.1.1. Violifonia

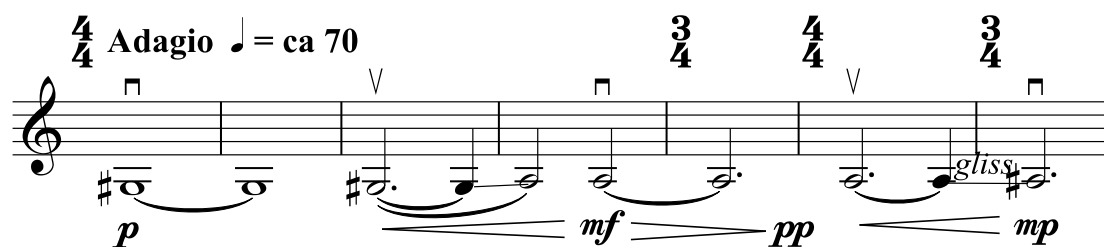
Violifonia is a piece that was originally composed by Artur Cieślak for another string instrument - the cello¹⁶. In 2019, the composer refocused on the prototype, creating a work on its basis with a multi-faceted texture, rich in various means of artistic expression characteristic of the latest compositional techniques of the 20th and 21st centuries. With all this, there were numerous references to the patterns and traditions of past eras. This is how *Violifonia* was created, a piece for solo violin representing the entire spectrum of possibilities of extracting sound from the instrument.

While working on *Violifonia*, it is worth paying attention to the essence of tone color. Cantilena and expressive motifs are interspersed with murmur and rhythmic fragments achieved by extracting distorted, forced sound. The main problem throughout the work is quarter tone distances, for the proper interpretation of which one must demonstrate an extremely sensitive musical hearing. Due to the small distances between the fingers, it is often possible to obtain the correct distance between two notes only by slightly changing the angle of the finger. In order to thoroughly analyze the *Violifonia*, both in terms of construction and performance issues, one should focus on each of its individual fragments in turn.

The work has a tripartite arc structure ABA'. Part A can be divided into three so-called *architectural segments*¹⁷, through which the composer builds tension in the song. The opening fragment (bars 1 to 18) is a short, one-voice introduction with slight dynamic changes, developing and closing in just a few bars (Example 1).

¹⁶ The piece for solo cello, on the basis of which the composer created *Violifonia*, comes from 2014 and functions under the name *Cellofonia*

¹⁷ The terminology above was used after consultation with the composer.

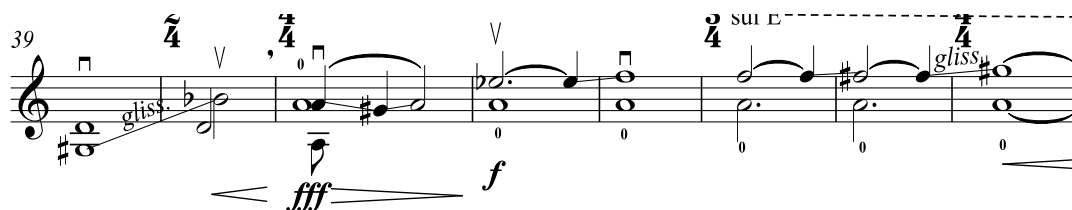


Example 1. Artur Cieślak - *Violifonia*, t. 1-8

In measure no. 19, the second section of Part A begins, here Artur Cieślak introduces two voices. The superior melodic line, which rises and constantly evolves, dynamically changes into a duet with a drone sound d. This procedure lasts until measure no. 40 (Example 2).

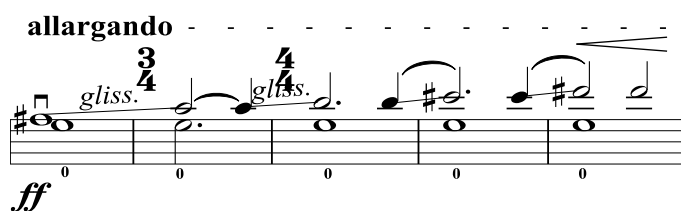
Example 2. Artur Cieślak - *Violifonia*, t. 19-38

In bar 41 the first culmination takes place. The composer introduces the dynamics *fff*, the drone sound d changes to a (Example 3). The tension in the work continues to grow, despite the dynamic descent in bar 42. The melodic line consistently rises, appears in higher and higher registers, thus heading towards the proper culmination, which we can specify only in the last - third segment of the first movement A.



Example 3. Artur Cieślak - *Violifonia*, t. 39-46

The culmination of the third level of the first part A is the introduction of the drone note e. This procedure, together with the *crescending glissandi* leading to the dynamics *fff*, is aimed at the maximum expressive intensification of the level (Example 4).



Example 4. Artur Cieślak - *Violifonia*, t. 55-59

An important feature of the first fragment of the composition is the maximum possible continuity of the sound. Long successive notes should be performed smoothly, and changes of direction of the bow should be inaudible. It is important to consciously operate the speed of the bow from the very beginning of the piece. Often, during long whole-note processions, the composer gives us additional tasks in the form of rapidly changing dynamics, which intensifies the difficulty of the piece. Dynamic differences and *microtonal* distances should transform each other so that no nervousness or unnecessary accent would disturb the supposed one large legato of the first fragment. What is important here is the appropriate division of the bow with the alignment of intensity and sound quality in all its parts, and the control of the movements of the right hand in dynamically differentiated sections. When performing rising dynamics such as a *crescendo*, after initially using a small plane of bristles, increase both the movement of the wrist and the pressure of the fingers of the right hand over the duration of the note to maintain the

same sound quality while changing the dynamic level conversely, when making a *diminuendo*, gradually reduce the pressure and speed of the bow as the note continues.

Another important feature of the first section of the piece is the conscious use of vibration. In the moments when the tension increases with the crescendo, the speed of the presented vibration should similarly increase, and vice versa, with the advent of sustained sections in piano dynamics or those in which the tension is relaxed, a wider and calmer vibration should be used, sometimes even imperceptible. An important feature of the vibration characteristic of this passage is its emotional character. It differentiates the timbre of the sound, gives the legatos a singing character, and also allows the continuity of the phrase to be maintained. The first note in a piece can be started non vibrato, allowing for even greater variety of timbre to be presented later. Vibration is an extremely important factor. Use of it allows the performer to add beauty to the sound and depth. It emphasizes the nuances characteristic of *Violifonia*. It is one of the main factors thanks to which the performer introduces the listener to a world full of contrasts and emotions: from the muffled, "dead" sound presented in the first bars, to the emotional and brilliantly colored closing quotes of the first part of the work.

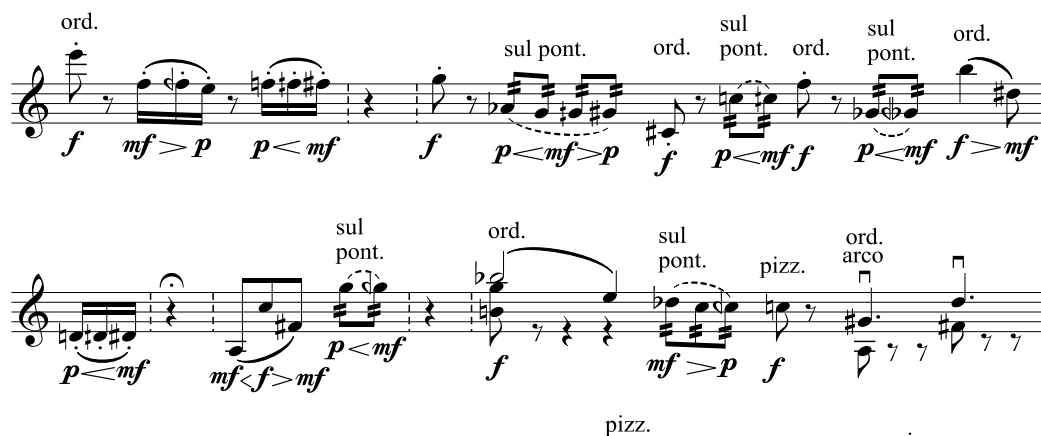
The middle section (B) is set in contrast to the outer parts, in which the continuity and fluency of the sound play an overriding role. Its' essential feature is stylistic variability. Diversity and multifacetedness, which are characteristic of the whole work, are most emphasized in this part. It begins with a tremolo performed using the *sul ponticello* technique. This way of extracting the sound from the instrument is usually used to show a sharp and piercing tone, but the dynamics and register suggest that the composer's intention was to present a murmur effect enriched by dynamic changes undergoing tension and relaxation on very short sound sequences (Example 5).

Più mosso ♩ = ca 120

The musical notation shows two measures of music. The first measure is marked 'sul pont.' and the second 'sul tasto'. Both measures feature a tremolo pattern. The first measure has a dynamic marking of *p*, *mf*, and *p*. The second measure has a dynamic marking of *p* and *mf*. The tempo is marked 'Più mosso' with a quarter note equal to approximately 120 beats per minute.

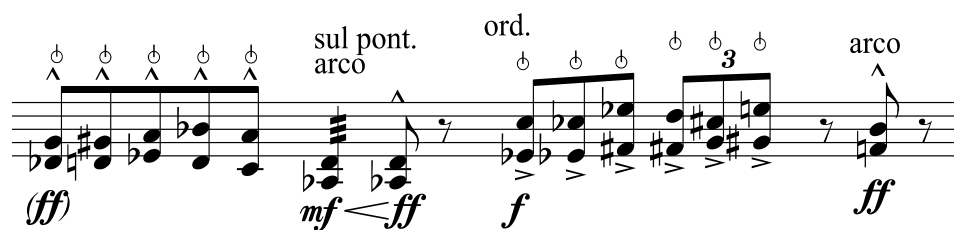
Example 5. Artur Cieślak - *Violifonia*, t. 62, *piu mosso* (beginning)

The dominant role of the central section of *Violifonia* is played by the colors. The composer abandons the bar lines for a moment and, like a painter, shows a rich palette of colors and possibilities of extracting sound from the instrument. The motifs are juxtaposed on the principle of contrast: cantilena fragments maintained in the Romantic convention are adjacent to structures typical of modern compositional techniques. In relatively short sections, *sul tasto*, *ordinario* and *sul ponticello* appear alternately. The difficulty of this fragment, in which the violinist undoubtedly has many tasks to perform at one time, is intensified by the strictly defined duration of individual sounds, which was precisely defined by the composer. Another performance problem that can be observed is contrasting and extremely rapidly changing dynamics. Frequently *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, as well as transitions from *forte* to *piano* dynamics occur over sections consisting of only two adjacent notes. The dynamic tension is additionally supported by the mobility of the melodic line, which alternately rises and falls. The lack of implementation of the dynamics by the performer or even its inaccurate reflection deprives the work of its proper character. The implementation of all dynamic signs is a real challenge, moreover, it is not the only difficulty faced by the performer at a given time. The violinist must additionally produce sound in different parts of the string and bow. What is extremely important here is full concentration, control of the movements of the right and left hand, as well as the appropriate input, which must be put into the work long before its public presentation (Example 6).



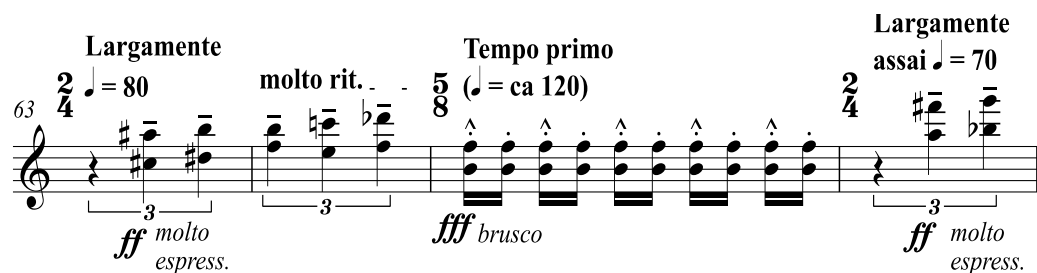
Example 6. Artur Cieślak, *Violifonia*, t. 62, *piu mosso*

In the central fragment of *Violifonia*, articulation is also of great importance. We can detail *staccato* and *spiccato* passages here. The composer also uses *Bartokian pizzicato*, characteristic of the 20th-century compositional techniques, which consists in extracting sound with the fingers in such a way that the vibrating string hits the fretboard (Example 7). At the same time, it does not give up the natural sound of the instrument, thanks to which the middle fragment of *Violifonia* shows the whole spectrum of possibilities of extracting sound from the violin.

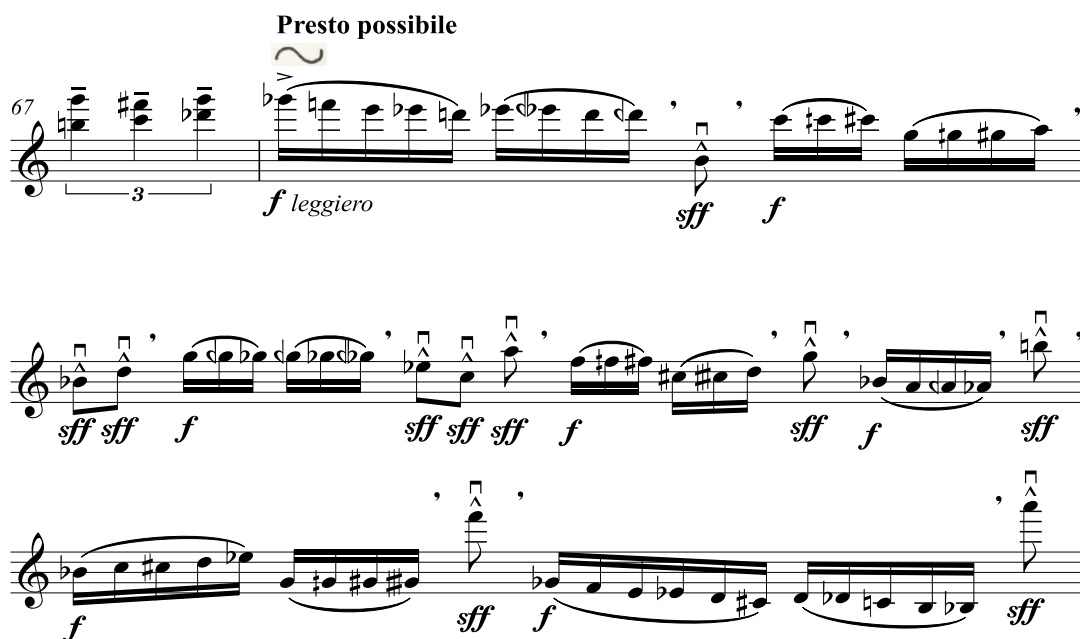


Example 7. Artur Cieślak, *Violifonia*, t. 62, *piu mosso*

An opportunity to show exceptional expression is provided by the fragment entitled *Largamente*, in which the chromatic introduction evokes the impression of a lament (Example 8). In this fragment, the ascending chords are characterized by great sonic richness, in order for their expression to be in line with the composer's expectations of the performer, maximally intensified vibration should be used. The sound sequences systematically slow down to surprise the listener with heavy staccatos leading to the so-called cadenza section of *Presto Possibile* (Example 9).

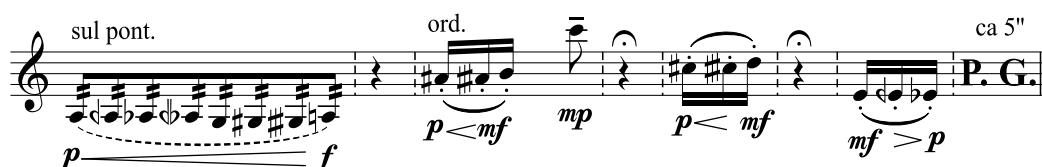


Example 8. Artur Cieślak, *Violifonia*, t. 63-66, *Largamente*



Example 9. Artur Cieślak, *Violifonia*, t. 67, *Presto possibile*

The *Presto Possibile* cadenza takes the form of figurative motifs that are separated from each other by sharp-sounding quavers. In this section, the performer may feel more at ease for a while, as the rhythmic passages are less controlled. This effect is achieved by using commas, which allows more freedom than just pauses, the duration of which is strictly defined. The biggest challenge faced by the performer in the discussed fragment is the juxtaposition of airy quarter-tone passages with accented quavers, each subsequent presentation of which must be shown at a higher dynamic level. The cadenza section, which is also the final element of the central section B (according to the principle of the work's arch construction), ends with a fragment referring to the opening quotes of the middle section B. A general pause marks the boundary between the end of the second section of the *Violifonia* and the appearance of the third section (A') (Example 10).



Example 10. Artur Cieślak, *Violifonia*, t. 68 - final fragment

The last section of *Violifoni A'*, maintained in an *adagio* tempo, is a reference to the first fragment of composition A. The common elements of both sections are fluidity and calmness. Their continuity determines the occasional occurrence of pauses and a complete lack of commas. In addition, according to the principle of arc construction, the common feature of the beginning and the final fragment is the same sound being both the first and the last in the piece. An important factor shaping the melody is filling the spaces between the sounds with *microtones* as well as *glissandi*. It is also worth noting that in part A' there are significantly smaller dynamic contrasts than in all the sections preceding it (*mf* is the maximum). In the last fragment of the work, the *harmonics* constitute an additional difficulty. Already in the first measure, the composer uses the consonance of the naturally sounding note B with the harmonic. The other problems are analogous to those faced in the initial -A snippet.

The feature that distinguishes the extreme parts of the work is the composer's way of building tension. In the first one, it is constantly growing and evolving, in the final one we can observe striving for maximum emotional discharge structurally and dynamically and obtaining the last sounds in the piece on the verge of audibility (Example 11).

Adagio ♩ = ca 70

69 $\frac{4}{4}$ sul E $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ sul D $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

sul A p > pp sul G p > niente p

75 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

mf *gliss.* p

82 $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

88 $\frac{4}{4}$

molto legato al fine

93 *poco a poco sul tasto*

100 *lunga ad lib.* niente

Example 11. Artur Cieślak, *Violifonia*, t. 69-103

2.1.2. Cadenza

Cadenza is widely known as a virtuoso piece of an improvisational nature that is part of a larger work. Artur Cieślak, by naming his stand-alone composition *Cadenza*, wanted to show a certain analogy and reference to its standard concept, but the performer is not necessarily to understand this in a literal way, as if the piece is in its present form completely out of the context of the larger work. The essential common feature between the classical cadenza and the Artur Cieślak piece in question is its virtuosic nature. Moreover, the improvised style of the work's fragments, which are not included in the traditional bar measures, alludes to the arbitrariness that is one of the main features of cadences characteristic of, for example, Romantic concertos¹⁸

In the piece, we can distinguish technical passages with bravura marches, as well as lyrical and cantilena passages that expose the singing qualities of the instrument. The overriding feature of *Cadenza* is its multifacetedness, which the composer achieves through, among other things, rapid agogic and dynamic changes, the use of extreme registers, contrasting articulation and a wealth of use of means of artistic expression. *When creating a piece for piano or organ, where I have two hands and a lot of keys at my disposal, the matter is simpler. When composing for violin or cello, where I can't go beyond four strings, moreover, simultaneous consonance of four sounds is rather impossible, I have certain limitations, which I make up for with other means of artistic expression*¹⁹.

The fundamental difficulty facing the performer when working on *Cadenza* is the skillful handling of these contrasts. In the relatively short duration of the entire piece, the performer has to show the entire spectrum of emotions, tensions and discharges that occur over the course of very short sections, usually in immediate succession. Artur Cieślak himself admits that contrasts are something he likes to use often in his work and his *Cadenza* is a good example of this²⁰.

¹⁸ Interestingly, just as the virtuoso cadence implies a certain freedom and improvisation on the part of the performer, the composer also describes the circumstances of the piece's creation as spontaneous:

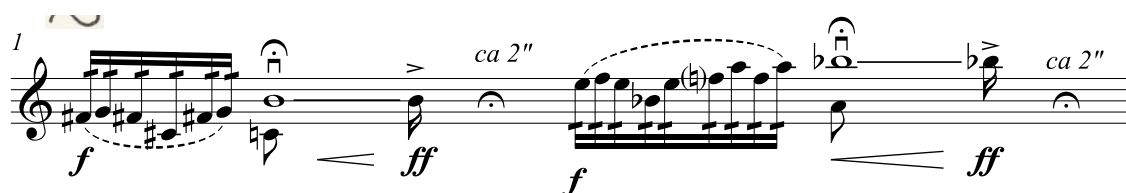
"In the year, perhaps, 2004, when the then director of the State Music School of the Second Degree in Szczecin, Mr. Stanisław Sadłowski (cellist) was retiring, I was asked to compose something especially for the occasion. I accepted the proposal very eagerly, because Mr. Sadłowski was a person to whom I owed a lot, and I will always remember him warmly. That's how *Cadenza* was created, which in its original version functioned only as a piece for solo cello. It was certainly not a piece I had thought about for years." Interview with Artur Cieślak, 1.04.2021.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ibidem.

The piece has a tripartite arch structure. We can distinguish the following fragments in it: an introduction of an improvisational character with a rhythmic *ben accentuato*, the climax of the piece (*allegro*) and the final movement, in which Artur Cieślak uses key motifs from all the previous fragments.

In the introduction, the composer does not use bar division, he only specifies the tempo. The piece begins with two displays of alluding motives juxtaposed in the seventh interval. Between them the composer used fermatas, which are pauses, with a specified duration. This fragment shows Artur Cieślak's characteristic eager use of dissonant consonances. Already the first of the *Cadenza's* double notes is a major seventh, while the next, which is the conclusion of the second motif, is a minor ninth (Example 12).



Example 12. Artur Cieślak, *Cadenza*, t. 1

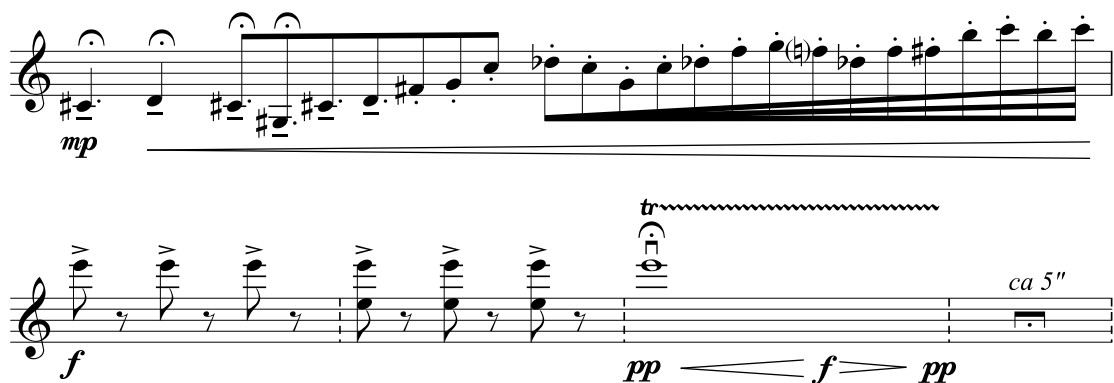
The beginning of *Cadenza* should be played in a very decisive way. Dynamics play an important role here. *Forte*, on the first notes should occur even at the expense of sound quality²¹, and in addition, the performer must dose the changes in intensity in such a way as to immediately after the first expressive sequence leave the so-called "dynamic reserve", which is necessary to perform the *crescendo* on the whole note.

After an exuberant, expressive opening, however consisting of only two melodic-rhythmic arrangements, the performer is tasked with introducing the listener to a completely different world. With the use of *mp* dynamics and fermatas over quarter note values, the singing character of the piece is emphasized for a short section. For a warmer tone, it is recommended to perform this passage *sul tasto*, so that the dynamic progression and rhythmic fragmentation, which occur in a relatively short period of time, will be further enhanced by a variety of timbres.

²¹ The composer's recommendation, which emerged during the joint interpretation work.

This procedure will make it possible, in the space of even such a short passage, to highlight the entire spectrum of emotions through which a properly interpreted piece should constantly guide the listener.

In addition to the key problem of proper interpretation and accurate realization of the text (which was described in detail by the composer), the performer must face technical difficulties compounded by sudden articulatory changes. Thus, it is essential to have adequate control over the movements of the right hand and to be aware of which part of the bow is assigned to certain notes of the course (Example 13).



Example 13. Artur Cieślak, Cadenza, t.1

In his *Cadenza*, Artur Cieślak very often defines the silence in a piece using seconds instead of traditional pauses. Immediately after the short first section of the improvised introduction, which is rich in agogic, dynamic and articulatory changes, this silence is supposed to last about 5 seconds. In order for the listener to best experience it, the performer should keep his stage movement to a minimum and spend this time mentally preparing for the next section, where the expressive and virtuosic character returns.

The next section consists of accented, heavily pitched eighth-note groups dialoguing with figurative sixteenth-note progressions. Technical proficiency is essential here and can be given a demonstration in *presto possibile*. Chromatic hexadecimal progressions are carried out within the octave interval, up to *ben accentuato* abounding in eighth-note consonances of tritones and seventh intervals. The composer's use of these intervals is intended to maximize the impression, which he describes as crucial: *the essence in this excerpt was not to produce a nice,*

strong sound, the intention was directed at strong brutal, sometimes overdubbed²². The general pause marks the end of the part of the piece that is its introduction (Example 14).

Example 14. Artur Cieślak, *Cadenza*, t. 1

The first general pause is followed by the *Grave* section, where the composer begins to use the traditional bar division. The beginning of the *lugubre* (Italian for gloomy, somber, mournful), should be performed without vibrato, thus better reflecting the intended austere character of the passage. From bar 7, with the appearance of the *cantabile* notation, this character is overcome in favor of greater melodiousness and emotionality, which also allows the use of varied vibrato. The composer builds sound structures based on dissonant consonances once more, as a result of which the performer must show great attention to intonation in order for the harmonic relationships to be interpreted correctly during the work's public presentation. In the first phase of the work on *Cadenza*, it was therefore necessary to select the appropriate *appliqué*, the development of which, carried out by the author of the work, was included in the sheet music²³.

²² Ibidem.

²³ A violin voice arrangement of all works by Artur Cieślak for solo violin and for chamber ensemble of violin and accordion has been made. Thanks to the cooperation with the Publishing House of the Academy of Art in Szczecin, the nearest activities are aimed at publishing the above works. The sheet music materials appended to this work have been enriched in the above study, however (due to waiting time and the complexity of the publishing process itself) in the form of handwritten sketches.

The overriding feature of the *Grave* part is the continuity of sound. In the case of instrumental problems that make it difficult or impossible to maintain fluidity during changes in the direction of the bow, it is recommended to refer to the methodological literature of Tadeusz Vronsky, which is a compendium of knowledge on the problems of violin playing²⁴. As in the case of the introduction, the end of the movement is marked by a general pause (Example 15).

2 **Grave** ♩ = ca 45

mp lugubre *mf*

7 *cantabile* *p* *f*

12 *mp* *p* *pp*

17 *poco rit.* *pizz.* *PPP* **P.G.**

Example 15. Artur Cieślak, *Cadenza*, t. 2-22

In bar 23 (*allegro*) there is an expressive change, the entirety is arranged by an eighth-note rhythm in a 3/4 meter. The accents are important here, through which the composer marks the coexistence of two dialoguing melodic lines (Example 16).

²⁴ See Tadeusz Wroński, *Zagadnienia gry skrzypcowej*, vol. IV, Kraków 2015 pp. 32- 43.

Allegro ♩ = ca 130

23 (pizz.) *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* arco

27 *mp* *mf* *f* *f* *fmp* *mp* *mp*

32 *f* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

Example 16. Artur Cieślak, *Cadenza*, t. 23-36

At bar 44, the climax of the piece begins, marked by a *crescendo* and agogic changes. The performer must therefore build tension so that the movement and volume gradually increase up to bar 53 included, where the piece reaches its climax (Example 17).

52 (cresc.) *f* Ad libitum

Example 17. Artur Cieślak, *Cadenza*, t. 52-54

The final third movement of *Cadenza* is a kind of summary of the work. The composer uses references to earlier passages throughout its length. Besides the initial structures, which already begin the final passage as a climax, we can see references to the rhythmic *ben accentuato*, virtuosic sixteenth-note marches borrowed from the introduction, as well as reminiscences of the singing parts of *Grave*. These elements intertwine to create a new quality. They are often juxtaposed in extreme registers, occurring immediately after each other in rapid succession and without any pauses, which is why maintaining an unwavering pulse is a key challenge for the performer. The bar division is used consistently by the composer until the end

Tempo primo ♩ = ca 120

74

f

ff

Example 18. Artur Cieślak, *Cadenza*, t. 74-77

2.1.3. Intermezzo I

This piece is one of the two paragraphs of the same name, which are located in *Paraphrase No. 2* by Artur Cieślak²⁵. Being intermezzos²⁶, they are solo showpieces of individual instruments, organizing the sequences of the essential parts of the chamber work. *Paraphrase No. 2* has a three-movement structure, and the structure of its individual parts is divided successively by *Intermezzo I* (for solo violin) and *Intermezzo II* (for solo accordion)²⁷.

Paraphrase as an instrumental piece involves shaping musical material using already created motifs²⁸. Artur Cieślak in his *Paraphrase No. 2* adopted a way of executing a piece of work based on a *collage*²⁹ of his own. This way of organizing the sound material by the composer is applied throughout the work. However, the area of interest in the work above has been focused exclusively on the section of *Intermezzo I* intended for solo violin.

When composing *Intermezzo I* Artur Cieślak mainly drew inspiration from his piece called *Monologue*³⁰. However, given that the newly created work does not explicitly use borrowed material, *Intermezzo I* as a whole represents a new quality. An important common feature of both works is the metaphor of an internal conversation with oneself - a monologue, a battle of arguments, as indicated, for example, by the way the composer organizes the sound material. The reference to the essence of words, the exchange of thoughts, moreover poses as a connection with the piece *Dialogue* by Artur Cieślak, the characteristics and issues of which will be discussed in the next subsection.

²⁵ *Paraphrase No. 2* (Artur Cieślak) - a chamber piece, composed in 2021, for violin and accordion duet.

²⁶ *Intermezzo, intermedium*, a musical insertion of a cheerful character between acts of a play or opera of more serious subject matter [in:] Chodkowski A., op. cit., p. 387.

²⁷ When organizing the succession of the various sections of the work, Artur Cieślak adopted the principle: Part 1, *Intermezzo I*, Part 2, *Intermezzo II*, Part 3.

²⁸ *Paraphrase*, an instrumental work, usually of a showpiece nature, in the form of a free fantasy based on the themes of another musical work [in:] Chodkowski A., op. cit., p. 667.

²⁹ *Collage* (*French* = gluing together), a technique taken from the fine arts (P. Picasso), consisting in combining various materials, phenomena and elements in a piece of music, usually aesthetically incoherent, blending them into a new artistic situation [in:] ibidem p. 162.

³⁰ *Monologue* (Artur Cieślak) - a piece for alto saxophone solo (2008 version) and for clarinet solo (version from 2012).

Intermezzo I is an example of a work in which we can distinguish the occurrence of three fundamental sections, throughout which the composer uses three different sound structures³¹.

Overarching the first passage (from bar 1 to 34) are two of the above. Consequently, its structural basis consists of figurative hexadecimal groups dialoguing with accented and rhythmic motifs (Example 19).

Impetuoso ♩. = 60

1

vn

ff

Veloce ♩. = 80
molto accel.

5

vn

p *ff*

Tempo primo ♩. = 60

8

vn

ff *ff*

Veloce ♩. = 80
molto accel.

Tempo primo ♩. = 60

12

vn

p *ff* *ff*

Example 19. Artur Cieślak, *Intermezzo I*, t. 1-14

³¹ During the meeting with the composer, a very interesting conversation arose, in which Artur Cieślak compared this way of shaping sound material to the accounts of three different people from the same event/phenomenon (given that the degree of involvement/influence on a given situation of each of them was different). One participated directly, another observed from a close distance, while the last was limited only to registering that the phenomenon took place.

The performance difficulty throughout the first section is compounded by rapid changes in tempo and dynamics, as well as the successive polymetry present (Example 20).

Example 20. Artur Cieślak, *Intermezzo I*, t. 15-20

Figurative motifs, depending on their character, adopt a varied interval movement. Very often, based on the chromatic range, they are juxtaposed in semitone distances (Example 21).

Example 21. Artur Cieślak, *Intermezzo I*, t. 21-22

In bar 25 a third melodic-rhythmic structure is introduced for the first time, which is simultaneously the one least frequently used by the composer throughout the entirety of the work. The choice of intervals (predominance of consonances), tempo and dynamics bear witness to the contradictory nature of its character compared to the previous two. The smooth progression of the new sound material is disrupted by emerging echoes of earlier motifs. This phenomenon is preserved until bar 33 exclusively, which at the same time marks the end of the first section of the piece (Example 22).

vn 24 *f* *mp* *mp*

28 *Più mosso* $\text{♩} = 90$ *rall.* *Adagio cantabile* $\text{♩} = 50$

31 *f* *mp* *rit.*

3 *sotto voce*

Example 22. Artur Cieślak, *Intermezzo I*, t. 24-33

The central section of *Intermezzo I* (from bar 34 to 64) throughout its length is characterized by the use of sound material taken from the two dominant structures in the piece. As a whole, it presents a peculiar sonic mixture created on their basis. It takes the form of figurative motifs dialoguing with accented structures and hexadecimal groups arranged using larger interval distances. The entire piece is maintained in a virtuoso character, and therefore, in addition to the performer's appropriate technical skills, the selection of an appropriate appliqué in advance is crucial (Example 23).

vn 40 *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

3

Example 23. Artur Cieślak, *Intermezzo I*, t. 40-41

The last passage, beginning at bar 65, is a kind of summary, in which the composer refers in turn to all three characteristic, melodic-rhythmic structures present in the piece. A short final section appears in bar 81, in which, until the end of the piece, Artur Cieślak limits himself to only the two structures that dominate throughout the work (Example 24).

The musical score for violin (vn) from Artur Cieślak's *Intermezzo I*, measures 66-85, is presented in five systems. Each system includes tempo and dynamic markings.

- System 1 (Measures 66-70):**
 - Measure 66: **Più mosso** (♩ = 70), *mf*, triplet of eighth notes.
 - Measure 67: **Quasi Adagio** (♩ = 60), *mf*, half note.
 - Measure 68: **Impetuoso** (♩ = 60), *ff*, quarter note with accent.
 - Measure 69: **Più mosso** (♩ = 70), *mf*, triplet of eighth notes.
 - Measure 70: *f*, triplet of eighth notes.
- System 2 (Measures 70-74):**
 - Measure 70: **Adagio** (♩ = 50), *mp*, quarter note.
 - Measure 71: **Più mosso** (♩ = 70), *mf*, triplet of eighth notes.
 - Measure 72: **Adagio** (♩ = 50), *mp*, quarter note.
 - Measure 73: **Doppio movimento molto accel.**, *ff*, eighth notes.
 - Measure 74: *molto espressivo*, *ff*, quarter note with accent.
- System 3 (Measures 75-79):**
 - Measure 75: **Quasi Adagio** (♩ = 120), *mp*, half note.
 - Measure 76: *cantabile*, *mp*, half note.
 - Measure 77: *mp*, half note.
 - Measure 78: *mp*, half note.
 - Measure 79: *mp*, half note.
- System 4 (Measures 81-83):**
 - Measure 81: **Con brio** (♩ = 100), *f*, eighth notes.
 - Measure 82: *f*, eighth notes.
 - Measure 83: *f*, eighth notes.
- System 5 (Measures 84-85):**
 - Measure 84: *f*, eighth notes.
 - Measure 85: *ff*, quarter note with accent.

Example 24. Artur Cieślak, *Intermezzo I*, t. 66-85

Artur Cieślak's *Intermezzo I* for solo violin is an illustrative piece. Taking into account the composer's way of organizing the sound material and the fact that it is a piece based on his *Monologue*, it can be interpreted as a metaphor of an internal discussion, a battle of arguments, related to a person's making of certain life decisions. Very often, having a seemingly deep conviction of the rightness of our own specific intentions, we succumb to internal doubts and dilemmas. This state of affairs is often influenced by the opinions of others reaching us, whose perception is mainly related to the degree of involvement in a given situation. The enumeration of three differentiated melodic-rhythmic structures in the piece is a metaphor for the various doubts with which a person struggles when making important life decisions. In turn, the occurrence of three main episodes, in which the role of these structures varies, symbolizes the opinions coming to us from outsiders, whose degree of involvement in a given situation is mainly subject to their individual perception³².

³² Interview with the composer about the piece, 04/04/2023.

2.2. Selected pieces for chamber violin and accordion

2.2.1. Dialogue

Dialogue is in other words a form of speech, participation in a discussion by two or more people. The term is mainly associated with the spoken or written word. Conversation, debate, discussion, or conversation are just some of the closely related terms. The types of these interpersonal expressions encountered in everyday life can take on many different faces. From consensual, coherent, based on the same arguments, to contradictory, far divergent, representing a negating, even mutually exclusive point of view on a given topic.

For centuries, the metaphor of expression has been reflected in all fields of artistic endeavor commonly referred to as art. Great literary works have long been one of the key sources of inspiration for composers. There is no doubt that sound and word are closely related. Composers use sounds to externalize their feelings, reflections, points of view, inner dilemmas or sorrows; they conduct a narrative in which they recall memories, observed or heard situations and events. As the cast of performers of a given work expands, their artistic expression gains new participants, is enriched with new conclusions, insights or points of view.

In Artur Cieślak's piece *Dialogue*, the discussion takes place between two instruments. The piece was composed in 2018 for a saxophone-piano duet. In a relatively short period of time, its version for clarinet and piano also appeared, which, due to the peculiarities of sound production on both instruments, was strictly preserved with regard to the original³³. In 2021, through his collaboration with a violin and accordion duo, the composer reached for *Dialogue* anew, creating a version for the abovementioned instrumental composition. In this case, however, the peculiarities of the two instruments differed significantly from the previous ones, so Artur Cieślak made numerous changes throughout the work. The method of sound production on the violin made it possible to enrich its part with double notes, while in the sound of the accordion sometimes modifications were necessary to adapt the texture to the sound shaping possibilities of the instrument³⁴.

In turn, the changes brought by the possibility of operating a variety of registrations on the accordion, allowed to give a new and varied quality to the presented timbre.

³³ Information, which was obtained during an interview with Artur Cieślak, 04.04.2023.

³⁴ The specifics of playing the piano are largely different from the ability to produce sound on a keyboard accordion. Mirroring the piano part would be unfeasible on the accordion in many passages

We can divide the piece into sections, the construction of which is based on a single interval from the dissonance group. The construction of the first is based on the distance of the minor second, and the structural basis is chromatic hexadecimal progressions (Example 25).

The musical score for Example 25, Artur Cieślak, Dialogue t. 1-7, is presented in three systems. The first system features a Violino (vn) part and an Accordion (acc) part. The Violino part begins with a tempo of 90, followed by an acceleration (accel.) leading to a tempo of 110, and then a very slow section (molto rit.). The Accordion part is initially silent, then enters with a piano (p) dynamic. The second system continues with the Violino part, marked 'poco a poco sul tasto', and the Accordion part, marked 'mf'. The third system begins with a 'Più mosso' section at a tempo of 110, followed by a 'molto rit.' section and another 'poco a poco sul tasto' instruction. The Violino part is marked 'p' and 'mf', while the Accordion part is marked 'mf' and 'mp'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 25. Artur Cieślak, *Dialogue* t. 1-7

In the first section, listed from bar 1 to 48, the relationships between the voices were based on the mutual transmission of sound configurations. The way they are treated, however, testifies to a motivic correspondence presenting different points of view on a given aspect³⁵. While the violin's voice, based on the components of the chromatic range, adopts an ascending direction, the accordion, in response, staggers a kind of circle around a few selected notes undergoing numerous repetitions (Example 26). There are also noticeable passages in which the instruments take over sound material taken from each other. However, these references are not preserved in such a way as to be described as any kind of mutual imitation (Example 27).

3 poco a poco sul tasto

vn *mf* *ppp*

acc *mf* *pp*

Example 26. Artur Cieślak, *Dialog* t. 3-4

44 molto rit. 7

vn *mf* *p* *ppp*

acc *f* *p*

Example 27. Artur Cieślak, *Dialogue* t. 44-45

³⁵ The conclusions that arose during a conversation with Artur Cieślak about the piece. They were in line with the composer's concept, and as a result, he accepted them with approval, 04.04.2023.

Many important characteristic elements of the work are reflected in all the sections that we can specify in the work. The dynamic, undergoing violent tensions and expansions, gives a final image and character to the entirety of the piece. At a time when melodic-rhythmic structures are not texturally clear, dynamics is an extremely important formative aspect. Artur Cieślak described all dynamic relationships in great detail, and in this matter throughout the work he left no room for the performers' own creative invention. Another important feature of the work is the agogic changes, which, like the dynamics, are characterized by extraordinary mobility. Often the difficulty is further compounded by the fact that the composer often determines them using the exact tempo of a short motif (Example 25), moreover, the accurate reproduction of them during the presentation is described as an extremely important factor³⁶. And finally, successive polymetry, which is one of the main features of *Dialogue*: metrical changes taking place more than once over the course of every single bar, compound the challenge of chamber collaboration. Despite the impression of incompatibility and lack of a common concept, in the process of organizing the sound material in the voices of the two instruments, full cooperation and precision (within the metric verticals) must absolutely be maintained (Example 28).

Più mosso ♩ = 110

The musical score for Example 28 consists of two staves: violin (vn) and accordion (acc). The tempo is marked 'Più mosso' with a quarter note equal to 110 beats per minute. The violin part begins at measure 10 with a 'ord.' (ordinario) marking. The accordion part begins at measure 16. The score is characterized by frequent changes in time signature, including 3/8, 2/8, 16/8, and 4/8. Dynamics such as *mp* (mezzo-piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *p* (piano) are indicated throughout the piece. The violin part features a melodic line with various intervals and rests, while the accordion part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

Example 28. Artur Cieślak, *Dialogue* t. 10-15

³⁶ Information, which was obtained during an interview with Artur Cieślak, 04.04.2023.

In bar 49, the composer introduces new sound material and with it larger dissonant movements. The interval that was mainly used to construct the central passage is the tritone (Example 29).

Example 29 shows a musical passage for Violin (vn) and Accordion (acc) starting at measure 49. The Violin part features a complex rhythmic structure with triplets and changing time signatures (3/8, 3/4, 2/8, 7/8, 3/8). The tempo markings are 'Maestoso' (♩ = 90), 'molto rit.', 'A tempo' (♩ = 90), and 'molto rit.'. The dynamics include 'f' (forte). The Accordion part provides a harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment, also featuring complex rhythms and dynamics like 'f'.

Example 29. Artur Cieślak, *Dialogue* t. 49-52

An important role is played by passages in which Artur Cieślak reaches for semitone hexadecimal structures, characteristic of the first section. Using them, he makes numerous references, both to previously and newly introduced sound material, which is interwoven in different voices at the same time. This procedure is one of the basic features of the piece, which was initiated in the central section and continues until the end (Example 30).

Example 30 shows a musical passage for Violin (vn) and Accordion (acc) starting at measure 53. The Violin part features complex rhythmic structures, including semitone hexadecimal structures, and dynamics like 'ff' (fortissimo). The Accordion part provides a harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment, also featuring complex rhythms and dynamics like 'fff' (fortississimo) and 'f'.

Example 30. Artur Cieślak, *Dialogue* t. 53-56

Artur Cieślak's third and final way of treating sound matter in *Dialogue* are sound series, the first performance of which appears in bar number 57. They are similar to *dodecaphonic series*³⁷, however, they are not used in a strict manner, but treated freely and subjected to numerous transformations. In the passages where the composer used their full realizations (in order to strengthen certain sounds), in addition, he introduced octave consonances in the violin part. After the full presentation of the first serial structure, up until the end of the central section, there are numerous references to all the ways of shaping sound matter that were presented in the piece (Example 31).

57 $\text{♩} = 40$

vn

acc *fff*

59 $\text{♩} = 70$ *poco accel.*

vn

acc

Example 31. Artur Cieślak, *Dialogue* t. 57-60

³⁷ *Dodecaphony, a twelve-tone or twelve-tone technique*, a compositional technique involving the arranging of chromatic sound material in isolation from the traditional (19th-century) functional and tension relationships between sounds. In the dodecaphonic technique, the basis for arranging the sound material is a series (series), covering (without repetition) all 12 pitches in any succession [in:] Chodkowski A., op. cit., p. 195.

Secondary hexadecimal structures, tritone-constructed relationships and sound series appear in both voices, both at different and the same times, creating a new quality. The last run of the sound series (from bar 112 to 129) marks the end of the central paragraph (Example 32).

The image displays a musical score for two instruments: violin (vn) and accordion (acc). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 119 to 125, and the second system covers measures 126 to 129. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/8. The tempo is marked as 60 bpm. A box containing the number 6 is present in the second system. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and tritone relationships. The violin part is written in treble clef, and the accordion part is written in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Example 32. Artur Cieślak, *Dialogue* t. 119-129

The full presentation of the series of sounds is followed by a connecting fragment in which the composer abandons the bar division. This fragment is intended to transition to the closing section of the composition using the second movement typical of the first part of the piece (Example 33).

Example 33. Artur Cieślak, *Dialogue* t. 130 (łącznik)

In bar 131, the closing section of the piece begins. It uses the sound material presented throughout the work, but it differs in character. The violin voice features flageolets in second-note motion, while the accordion part is primarily constructed using tritones and quartets. The whole strives for maximum unloading, both structurally and dynamically, and the overall closure of the work (Example 34).

Example 34. Artur Cieślak, *Dialogue* t. 131-135

2.2.2. Postmodern Toccata

Postmodern Toccata is undoubtedly the work that, of all those analyzed in this thesis, most fully reflects the influence of the premises of postmodernism on the composer's silhouette. The very title of the work is irrefutable proof that Artur Cieślak feels a strong connection with the premises of the trend, the formation of which dates back to the 1970s.

*Postmodern music does not so much preserve the past as radically transform it, simultaneously embracing history and denying it*³⁸.

These words most accurately define the essence of postmodernism, which Artur Cieślak has also given irrefutable expression to in his toccata. The premiere of the *Postmodern Toccata* took place on October 25, 2021 in the Chamber Hall of the Palace under the Globe in Szczecin. The first performers were Edyta Wolańska (violin) and Oleg Wolański (accordion) - a duo to whom Artur Cieślak simultaneously dedicated the work. In the same cast of performers, it was also recorded as part of a CD release by the pedagogues of the Instrumental Department of the Academy of Art in Szczecin³⁹.

The era, the influence of which is most clearly marked in the work is the Baroque. Quotes taken from the works of its leading representative Johann Sebastian Bach are a symbol of longing and nostalgia for the stylistics of that era. With all this, Artur Cieślak does not abandon compositional solutions that are characteristic of the latest times, which is mainly due to the shaping of his artistic expression under the influence of the phenomena taking place here and now - in the modern world.

*The astonishingly rapid change from one technique and style of music to another, which we have been witnessing for about a century, is undoubtedly in connection with the spread of historical thinking, that is, with the belief that the time of creation of a work belongs to the substance of that work, that art, therefore, must be new to be authentic*⁴⁰.

³⁸ Kramar J. D., On the genesis of musical postmodernism [in:] *Music* 2000, no. 3, p. 17.

³⁹ National Scientific and Artistic Conference "Polish Chamber Music," *Acte Prealable*, 2022.

⁴⁰ Dahlhaus C., *The idea of absolute music and other studies*, PWM, Kraków 1988, pp. 362-363

The composition's designation for violin-accordion duet is in itself a postmodern solution. The composer repeatedly builds melodic-rhythmic structures in the accordion part so that it imitates Baroque organ melodic structures as clearly as possible. This relatively young instrument of even-tempered tuning, the version of which is most similar in design to the representative of the present day, dates its creation to 1829⁴¹. With the use of variable registers, it has a whole range of possibilities for producing sound with a variety of timbres, making these references very illustrative.

Since the *Postmodern Toccata* is an example of a chamber piece, the descriptive form of the work above is mainly focused on the relevant issues of construction, proper interpretation, relationships between instruments and affinities with the Baroque era. Before addressing the issues above, however, it is first necessary to familiarize oneself with the meaning and genesis of the word *toccata*, as numerous analogies to the key motif of percussion and rhythmicity appear throughout the work⁴².

The piece is in the fundamental key of A minor, and its structure refers to the cycle of secular *sonatas da camera* developed in the Baroque period⁴³. In it we can distinguish a clear division into three independent movements and a coda.

The work begins with a section that, as an independent whole, is also a *toccata*. Over the course of its first 27 bars, the composer uses a *basso ostinato* in the lower voice of the accordion. This fixed melodic-rhythmic motif can also be interpreted (given the numerous organ affinities) as a processed pedal note, as Artur Cieślak, while creating the accordion part, was mainly inspired by the sound of this characteristic Baroque instrument, which he also wanted to indicate at the very beginning of the piece⁴⁴.

An important feature of the first section is the main motif, appearing at the same time in the voices of both instruments. Throughout the entire canon (including in other stand-alone sections), frequent references to this characteristic sound structure are noticeable (Example 35).

⁴¹ Dastych J., Galas S., Powroźniak J., Puchnowski W.L., *Accordion from A to Z*, PWM, Kraków 1966 pp. 18.

⁴² *Toccata* Italian [*toccare* = to strike] instrumental form of improvisational character, intended for a keyboard instrument (organ, clavichord, harpsichord, piano) created in the 16th century [in:] Chodkowski A., op. cit., p. 895.

⁴³ Chomiński J., Wilkowska-Chomińska K., *Formy muzyczne*, vol. II PWM, Kraków 1987, pp. 26, 167.

⁴⁴ The composer's hint that came during their joint work on the piece. It had to do with the selection of appropriate accordion registers that would most clearly convey a certain idea.



Example 35. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* - main theme of part one

While the lower accordion system is based on *basso ostinato*, its melodic part, together with the violin voice, perform sonic performances in which one can see motifs indicative of the composer's shaping of sound material based on *heterophonic thinking* (the melody is broken up between the voices of both instruments) (Example 36).

Example 36. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 20-22 (an example of heterophonic thinking)

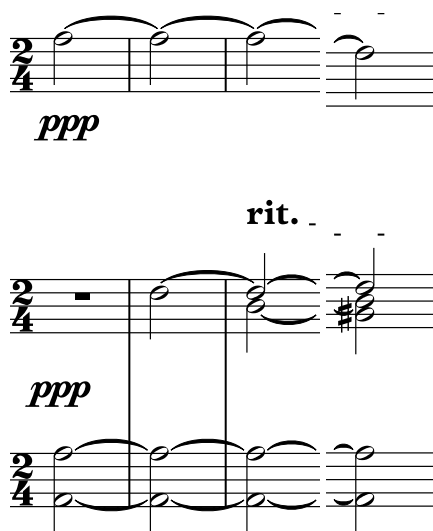
In bar 30 the composer introduces a new sound substance. A short, six-bar chorale-like fragment (up to and including bar 35) takes over the overarching role. This episode is a foreshadowing of the *chaconne*, in the character of which the next part of the piece is maintained. The structural basis of the first chorale motif is a cluster, with the help of which the

basic key of the piece is marked. Its beginning is contained in the voice of the violin, while the accordion, based on the components of the diatonic scale, completes the harmonic structure (Example 37).

The musical score for Example 37, measures 31-35, is presented for Violin (vn) and Accordion (acc). The time signature is 2/4. The violin part begins in measure 31 with a half note G4, followed by a quarter rest in measure 32, a quarter note A4 in measure 33, a quarter note B4 in measure 34, and a quarter note C5 in measure 35. The accordion part begins in measure 31 with a half note G4, followed by a quarter rest in measure 32, a quarter note A4 in measure 33, a quarter note B4 in measure 34, and a quarter note C5 in measure 35. The dynamics are marked *pp* (pianissimo) in measures 31, 32, and 33. Accents are placed over the notes in measures 31, 32, and 33.

Example 37. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 31-35

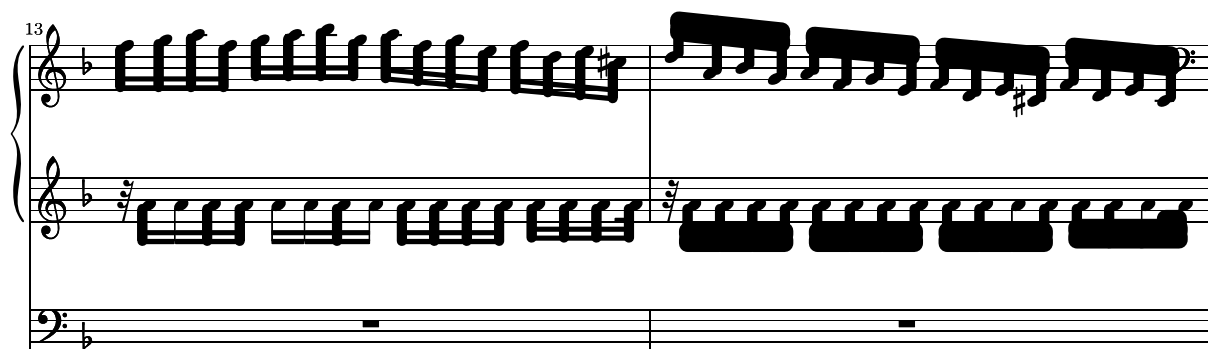
The short chorale-like section is interrupted by a one-bar sound structure built on the rhythmic *main motif of the toccata* (bar 36). In bar 37 the composer once more uses a cluster of chorale-like character. This time the consonance structure (a diminished septimal chord) is intended to intensify the phenomenon proving that despite the omnipresent echoes of the Baroque era, the composition is firmly rooted in the style accompanying modern times (Example 38).



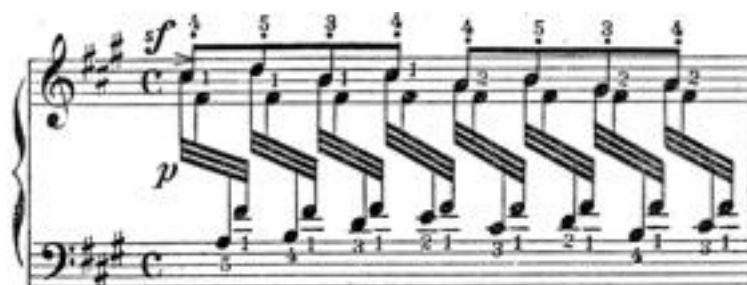
Example 38. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 37-40

Immediately after another chorale-like motif, the composer returns to the rhythmic *toccate* (vol. 41). Again, many affinities with the phenomena that were included at the very beginning of the piece are noticeable. The whole is ordered by a *basso ostinato* in the lower voice of the accordion, the main motif of the movement appears simultaneously in the voice of the violin and accordion, the sound structures between the voices indicative of elements of *heterophonic thinking* are noticeable. In bar 71 a sound material is introduced that has a very symbolic meaning. Artur Cieślak quotes a characteristic melodic-rhythmic motif from Johann Sebastian Bach's *Toccata and Fugue* BWV 565. It is worth mentioning that the composer is not the only artist who has used this sound material in his work. From music literature we can cite the example of Roman Statkowski⁴⁵, who in his *Toccata in A major, Op.33*, reached for exactly the same characteristic motif and used it already in the first bar of the piece (Example 39, 40 and 41).

⁴⁵ Roman Statkowski (1859-1926) student of Władysław Żeleński in 1922-1925, deputy to Henryk Malcer as director of the Warsaw Conservatory. Many outstanding students came out of his composition class [in:] Swolkień H., *Dzieje muzyki polskiej w zarysie*, Warsaw 1983, p.116.



Example 39. Johann Sebastian Bach, *Toccata and Fugue* BWV 565, t. 13-14

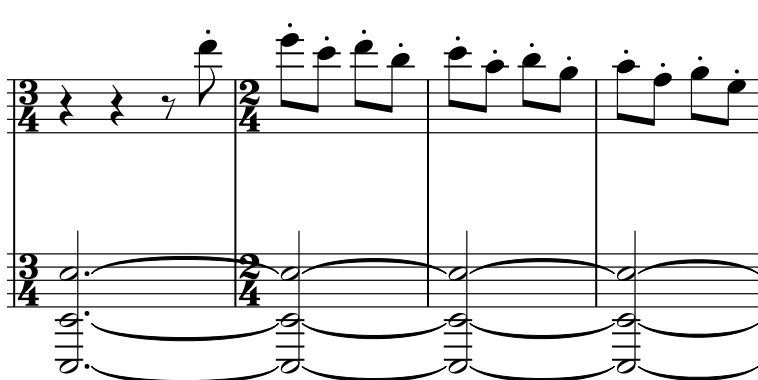


Example 40. Roman Statkowski, *Fuga* op. 33 t. 1

Prestissimo ♩ = 180



Prestissimo ♩ = 180



Example 41. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 71-74

Artur Cieślak quotes the Baroque master in his own musical language, as evidenced, among other things, by the distance of a second that separates the voices of the two instruments. The distinctive structure is the last echo of a bygone era noticeable in the first part of the piece. Immediately after the quotation, the composer introduces rhythmic double notes in the voices of both instruments constructed from characteristic dissonances. The harmony is maintained in both parts until the end of the first part of the piece (*toccata*), up to and including bar 97 (Example 42).

The musical score for Example 42 shows measures 91 to 97 for violin (vn) and accordion (acc). The violin part begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a series of eighth notes in measures 91-93, followed by a half note in measure 94, and a quarter note in measure 95. The accordion part, which includes both treble and bass staves, mirrors the violin's initial pattern. Dynamic markings of *mf* and *fff* are indicated with hairpins. A 'ca 4"' marking is present in the final measure of both parts.

Example 42. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 91-97

Immediately after the first paragraph, which is rhythmic, energetic and maintained in a solemn character, a movement of an opposite nature appears. Melodious, singing chorale motifs, built on the principle of descending sound structures contained between the voices of both instruments, mark its beginning. The mood, the tripartite metrical division (from bar 116) and the harmonic structure based on the descending voice in the bass are irresistible proofs that the central part of the piece is a chaconne. From musical literature, it is worth mentioning here of the famous *Chaconne in G minor* by T. A. Vitali, the violin-accordion duet cover of which is nowadays one of the most frequently performed pieces by chamber ensembles with this composition.

While the harmonic structure characteristic of the *chaccone* is built up in the accordion voice throughout the entire section, a *quasi-improvisatory* section appears in bar 117 in the violin part. An important feature of this passage is that, despite the many restrictions placed on the text by the composer, the performer conveys as realistically as possible the idea of freedom characteristic of improvised Baroque ornamentation⁴⁶ (Example 43).

Largamente ♩ = 55

116

vn

p

mp

Largamente ♩ = 55

acc

pp

120

vn

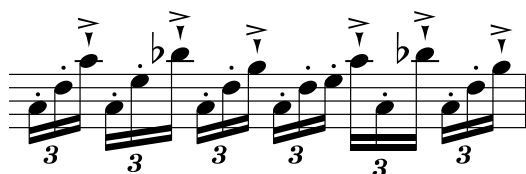
3 3 3

acc

Example 43. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 116-122

⁴⁶ Interview with the composer, 04.04.2023.

In bar 134, using accents, the composer exposes the main motif of the first movement of the piece (Example 44) in the violin part.



Example 44. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 134-135 (main theme of part one)

From bar 137, due to the melodic descending structure and triple meter (also in the violin part), the *chaconne* character is detailed in the voices of both instruments. It is preserved until the end of the central section, up to and including bar 166 (Example 45).

Example 45. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 137-141 (*chaconne*)

From bar 167 begins the last movement we can detail in the piece: the *fugue*. Among its most characteristic features are regularity and rhythmicity. The construction and melodic structure are based on a close imitation of eighth-note runs interspersed between the voices of the two instruments. The beginning of the section is the marking of the main key in the accordion voice, immediately followed by the leading motif in the violin part and the first execution of the theme in the key of A minor (Example 46).

167 **Precipitato** ♩ = 140

vn

Precipitato ♩ = 140

acc

f

ff

Example 46. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 167-172

While the construction of the violin voice is mainly based on eighth-note structures alluding to a distinctive frontal motif oscillating around the work's fundamental key, in bar 174 the composer once more reaches for a quotation from *Johann Sebastian Bach's Toccata and Fugue* (it is placed in the melodic manual of the accordion's right hand) (Example 47).

173

vn

p

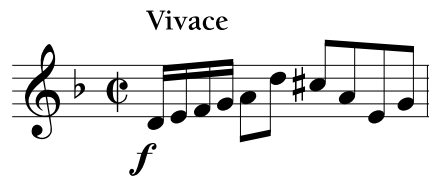
acc

p

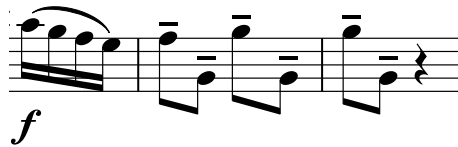
Example 47. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 173-176

Following the rules of Baroque fugue, the leading motif in the third movement appears not only in different voices, but also in different keys. In bar 209 there is a clear change of key to D minor, and with it the composer reaches for another quotation from the Baroque master. Already the aforementioned change has a symbolic meaning in this case, combined with the

characteristic sound structure contained in the violin voice, it is a kind of veiled quotation of the first notes of *Johann Sebastian Bach's Double Concerto in D minor* (Example 48 and 49).



Example 48. Johann Sebastian Bach, *Double Concerto in D Minor* BWV 1043 t. 1



Example 49. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 209-211

Significant motifs testifying to the formation of texture in the accordion's voice through the prism of organ thinking can be detailed, among others, in bars 221-222. Accented eighth-note juxtapositions in the octave interval placed in its voice, provide a very clear reference to the bass structures performed by organists on the foot keyboard (Example 50).



Example 50. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 220-222

Throughout the fugue, there are also reminiscences of the first section of the piece (including in the melodic manual of the left hand of the accordion voice - bar 215) (Example 51).



Example 51. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 212-215

A complete detachment from the Baroque comes with the change in rhythmic structure in bar 231, a point we can describe as a detachment from Baroque stylistics and a move into the realm of XX/XXI century music. Bar 238 represents the last echoes of the *quasi-baroque* style. From bar 249 onward, the overriding role in the voices of both instruments is taken over by sound structures firmly rooted in modern times, as evidenced by the complete detachment from tonality and the composer's construction of interval structures based on repeated, dissonant consonances. With the dynamic, harmonic, structural development and increasing register, the proper climax of the piece is reached (from bar 269 to 276 inclusive). The climax, is a fugue motif detailed in the accordion voice, which is also a renewed analogy to organ pedal notes (Example 52).



Example 52. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 277 - 278

The characteristic fugue motif contained in the melodic manual of the left accordion hand opens the work's coda. This passage is a synthesis of all the characteristic quotations appearing throughout the *Postmodern Toccata*. In bar 299, the composer further enriches the coda with figurative motifs appearing in the melodic manual of the right hand. From bar 307 onward, components are included in the voices of both instruments to consolidate and emphasize the fundamental tonality of the piece (Example 53).

306

vn

3

3

3

fff

A tempo ♩ = 130

acc

3

3

fff

Example 53. Artur Cieślak, *Postmodern Toccata* t. 306 - until the end

Artur Cieślak's *Postmodern Toccata* is a work of exceptional artistic merit, both in terms of expression and texture. The way melodic-rhythmic structures are shaped, the numerous analogies contained in the work testify to the highly intellectual factor that guided the composer in the creative process. The very choice of the performing cast, which is a duet consisting of violin and accordion, turned out to be an extremely thoughtful and successful decision, considering, if only the very nature of the work. The idiom of the accordion, as an instrument that can most realistically reproduce the Baroque organ sound, allows one to be transported repeatedly throughout the work to the era of Bach. A prerequisite for this idea to take on an even more realistic image in individual moments was the insightful collaboration between the first performers and the composer, taking place long before the first public presentation. As a consequence of the measures taken, the selection of appropriate registers for the accordion part

was made, and in the melodic line of the violin special attention was paid to the way the sound was shaped. Despite the pompous character, which often comes to the fore in the work, a moderate, sometimes even inaudible vibrato is recommended (with special attention to the sound structures characteristic of the *chaconne* part).

The descriptive form of the work has mainly been focused on aspects related to the construction of the work and the relevant analogies to the era, with which it has a strong relationship. Conscious handling of these relationships is a key prerequisite for a proper interpretation of fundamental importance in the work.

End

The violin, as an instrument with a rich palette of sound production possibilities, is able to bring out a form of expression in a remarkably diverse way, which is the main area of exploration for composers creating in modern times. Newly created works introduce new issues into violin performance, of which only accurate and insightful interpretation makes it possible to reproduce a reliable image formed in the consciousness of the composer. Superficial treatment of works by performers can have a significant impact on the public's hurtful opinion of the entire creative output of a given composer, where the fact is that each work carries a certain content, the mediator of which between the composer and the recipient is the performer.

The works of Artur Cieślak included in the dissertation above are a collection of items that have been thoroughly analyzed on theoretical and performance grounds, showing the different perspectives of the extremely talented contemporary Szczecin composer on violin performance.

The new ways of producing sound on this instrument, brought by the 20th century, are closely related to greater playing capabilities in the area of presented timbre. In addition, the introduction of quarter-tone distances into the sound system, contributed to the need to improve *microtonal technique* and broaden the horizon of performers' awareness. In view of the above, an undoubtedly apt example of a work with a multifaceted texture, rich in various means of artistic expression characteristic of the latest compositional techniques of the 20th and 21st centuries, is *Violifonia* for solo violin by Artur Cieślak.

The significant similarity between *Violifonia* and *Cadenza* (a piece in which both virtuosic and cantilena passages can be specified, and in which the composer used more traditional ways of arranging the sound material and the timbre presented) confirms that in order to achieve a correct interpretation of each, the performer must have versatile artistic abilities and skills, as well as a great sensitivity to intonation.

The composer provides an interesting perspective on the chamber aspect of a duo composed of violin and accordion in his *Paraphrase No. 2*. The work as a cohesive whole combines movements in which the performers have the opportunity to showcase their solo and chamber skills. *Intermezzo I*, which exemplifies the movement for solo violin, is a relatively short, however multifaceted piece of showpiece character, in which awareness of the presence of illustrative plans is an extremely helpful aspect on the way to achieving the best form of artistic expression.

Another example of a multifaceted work in which the composer used a similar method of shaping sound material is *Dialogue*, a piece for violin and accordion. For its performance, it is extremely important to be aware of the construction of the composition, which is closely related to the unusual motivic correspondence contained between the voices of the various instruments.

His own compositional style, characterized on the one hand by atonality and a penchant for dissonance and on the other by numerous references to tonality, tradition and history, Artur Cieślak most clearly demonstrated in the *Postmodern Toccata*. This piece with a precise tonality and numerous references to the Baroque era is the clearest picture of how strongly the ideas contained in 20th-century postmodernism have influenced the composer's artistic silhouette.

The collaboration with Artur Cieślak has certainly succeeded in expanding access to originally written literature for violin and accordion duet. In addition to the two chamber works, the essential aspects of which are concentrated in the description of the work, the composer's oeuvre additionally included a series of paraphrases intended for the duets above. The concert, recorded on DVD, was enriched with *Paraphrase No. 1*, *Paraphrase No. 2* and *Paraphrase No. 3*⁴⁷ by Artur Cieślak, thus illustrating a complete collection of the composer's chamber works dedicated to violin and accordion performance. A thorough analysis of the performance issues of works for solo violin and those selected for duo, will allow subsequent performers to take a broader look at their issues based on a source created in close cooperation between composer and performer. The forthcoming activities aimed additionally at recording a CD with all the works, the source of which is based on the cooperation above, will perhaps further allow to reach an even wider circle of performers, audiences and enthusiasts of Artur Cieślak's work.

⁴⁷ The recorded DVD also includes Paraphrase No. 3 (for solo accordion). The performance of Artur Cieślak's Three Paraphrases in the form of a complete cycle during a single public performance, is in keeping with the to the composer's conception. The concert featured their world premiere.

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Sheet music

Cieślak A., *Violifonia for solo violin* (2014/2019) unpublished material

Cieślak A., *Cadenza for solo violin* (2004/2019) unpublished material

Cieślak A., *Paraphrase no. 1* for violin and accordion (2021) unpublished material

Cieślak A., *Paraphrase no. 2* for violin and accordion (2021) unpublished material

Cieślak A., *Dialogue* for violin and accordion (2018/2021) unpublished material

Cieślak A., *Postmodern Toccata* (2019) unpublished material

DVD - doctoral dissertation in the form of a concert

Edyta Wolańska - violin

Oleg Wolański - accordion

Artur Cieślak

1. *Paraphrase No. 1* for violin and accordion (2021)
2. *Paraphrase No. 2* for violin and accordion (2021)
 - *Part I* for violin and accordion
 - *Intermezzo I* for solo violin
 - *Part II* for violin and accordion
 - *Intermezzo II* for accordion solo
 - *Part III* for violin and accordion
3. *Paraphrase No. 3* for accordion solo (2021)
4. *Cadenza* for solo violin (2004/2019)
5. *Violifonia* for solo violin (2014/2019)
6. *Dialogue* for violin and accordion (2018/2021)
7. *Postmodern Toccata* for violin and accordion (2019)