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## Texts of the *Psalter of King David* in an Intermedial Composition by Krzysztof Knittel

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### Abstract

Krzysztof Knittel, a composer who has been writing at the turn of the 20th and 21st century, is faithful to his artistic vision that bears testimony to his affiliation to the trans-avantgarde aimed at synthesizing the codes of modernity and tradition. One of its manifestations is the phenomenon of intermediality, picturing the relationships emerging between a given object (action) and media. Novelty in Knittel's works is based on composing intuitive music, described as free improvised music, and recycled, or ecological, music. The 1970s saw increased interest in the sacred and the spiritual in Polish music. The song cycle *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...* ('Out of the depths I cry to thee, O LORD!', 2000) for choir and electronic media, the first religious composition by Knittel, was written, as the composer claims, 'to express the truth and the strength of faith'. The songs were written to texts of the *Psalter of King David* from *Biblia Tysiąclecia* ('The Millennium Bible'). The aim of this article is to assess how the source of inspiration influenced the structure and aesthetics of the intermedial work being discussed.

**Keywords:** intermediality, Krzysztof Knittel, 20th- and 21st-century Polish music, the Book of Psalms, religious music.

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## 1. Introduction. Biblical inspiration

As of the 1970s, with the emergence of the post-modernist trend in music, Polish composers increased the intensity of writing sacred music. This fact is confirmed by Mieczysław Tomaszewski, who stated that ‘the return, “after all these years”, to the sacred tradition in the music of leading Polish composers, initiated by Krzysztof Penderecki, was more than an only artistic act”.<sup>1</sup> As the musicologist claimed, ‘one may say that, in this musical genre, all those previously omitted ones returned to the constituent properties of the work’<sup>2</sup> in the time of avant-garde and pursuit of novelty. The increased interest in religious music was also generated by the historical and political events in the country and the papal election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, who took the name of John Paul II. For instance, H.M. Górecki reacted to this fact, dedicating the Holy Father his psalm *Beatus Vir*, or Penderecki, composing a work using the text of the thanksgiving hymn *Te Deum laudamus*. According to Krzysztof Droba, Górecki’s *Beatus Vir* (1979) is in line with the composer’s ‘religious music phase’.<sup>3</sup> This music fulfils a double function; on the one hand it directly refers to the liturgy of the Church and, on the other hand, leads the listener to the sacred elements in music, such as e.g. the connection with liturgical, Latin text, the use of verses from psalms or citing the original, chorale hymn melody or the use of monodic passages.

Biblical themes have become one of the main sources of artistic and spiritual inspiration for the composers. The Holy Scripture itself is the principal source of theological reflection on music. As Fr Jacek Bramorski writes, ‘music in the Bible is not really an “aesthetic addition” in conveying the truth about salvation, but rather a privileged carrier of the content related to this message’.<sup>4</sup>

The Book of Psalms, as a poetic and musical Hebrew testimony to the Old Testament containing various, in terms of genre, supplicatory and praiseful psalms, has inspired many composers. Among the Polish composers, apart from Mikołaj Gomółka, whose *Melodie na Psalterz polski* (‘Melodies for the Polish Psalter’, printed in 1580) stand as a lasting monument of Polish Renaissance, to

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<sup>1</sup> K. Kiwała, *Elementy sakralne w wybranych utworach polskich kompozytorów współczesnych*, [in:] *Polska muzyka religijna – między epokami i kulturami*, red. K. Turek, B. Mika, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2006, p. 131. All the quotations from the Polish sources have been translated into English for the purposes of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. M. Tomaszewski, *Muzyka w poszukiwaniu wartości zastłoniętych i zagubionych*. Paper delivered at the International Scholarly Session “The Spirituality of Central Europe in the Late 20th-century Music”, Academy of Music, Kraków, 2000; [unpublished].

<sup>3</sup> K. Droba, *Górecki Henryk Mikołaj*, [in:] *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM. Część biograficzna efg*, ed. E. Dziębowska, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Kraków 1987, p. 429.

<sup>4</sup> J. Bramorski, *Teologia muzyki według Księgi Psalmów*, “Collectanea Theologica” 2012, vol. 82, no. 1, p. 33–34.

name only a few, is Krzysztof Penderecki (*Psalm Dawida* for mixed choir, string instruments and percussion, 1958), Tadeusz Paciorkiewicz (*2 psalmy na głos wysoki i organy*, 1974), Edward Bogusławski (*Psalm Dawida* for mixed a cappella choir, 1997–1998), Krzysztof Baculewski (*Miserere* for mixed a cappella choir, 1999) and Krzysztof Knittel, whose cycle of four compositions *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...* (2000) was chosen as the subject of this article.

Importantly, this penitential Psalm 130 'De profundis' ('Out of the depths I cry to thee, O LORD!'<sup>5</sup>) is one of the most well-known and beloved – by the Catholic Christian tradition – psalms, and is willingly chosen by contemporary Polish composers for musical setting, as confirmed by the best-known and most frequently performed pieces by e.g. Andrzej Krzanowski (*De profundis*, a cantata for baritone and orchestra, 1974), Marcin Tadeusz Łukaszewski (*De profundis* for mixed choir, 1997), Krzysztof Penderecki ('De profundis' from *Siedem bram Jerozolimy*, 1998), Bogusław Schaeffer (*De profundis* for soprano and chamber orchestra, 2000), Józef Świder (*De profundis clamavi*, 2002), Marian Sawa (*De profundis* for soprano and organ, 2002), Marek Czerniewicz (*De Profundis* – cantata per coro e orchestra, 2016).

## **2. *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...* by Krzysztof Knittel from the perspective of the theory of intermediality**

Knittel's music is characterized by novelty and experimentation. He is viewed, first of all, as a composer of electro-acoustic music combined with live electronics, improvisation, performance art and sound installations. Yet he is faithful to his own artistic vision, which bears testimony to him following the trans-avantgarde trend<sup>6</sup> aimed at synthesizing the codes of modernity and tradition. Trans-avantgarde, according to the author of the manifesto, Achille Bonito Oliva, 'tends to bring art back to a place of satisfying contemplation where the mythic distance, the far-away contemplation, is brimming over with eroticism and energy originating in the work's intensity and in its internal metaphysics'.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> All the biblical quotations in English used in this article come from the Revised Standard Version-Catholic Edition Bible.

<sup>6</sup> Italian *la transavanguardia* – a direction in art, shaping in the 1970s and 1980s simultaneously in several countries (Italy, France, United States, Scandinavia, Germany and Poland), whose nomenclature was proposed by the Italian art critic Achille Bonito Oliva. For more on trans-avantgarde in music, see M. Karwaszewska, *From research on the musical "Transavantgarde". A contribution to the discussion on the terminology concerning the historiography of the 20th century Polish music*, "Avant. The Journal of the Philosophical-Interdisciplinary Vanguard" 2016, t. 7, nr 1, pp. 75–88.

<sup>7</sup> A.B. Oliva, *The Italian Trans-avantgarde. La Transavanguardia Italiana*, Milano 1980, p. 54. [tr. Miłosz Wojtyna].

Novelty in Knittel's artistic output is based on composing intuitive music, termed 'free improvised music',<sup>8</sup> and recycled, or ecological, music.<sup>9</sup> One of the manifestations of trans-avantgarde is the phenomenon of intermediality, demonstrating the interrelationships between a given object (action) and the media, which may be understood multidimensionally, as means of expression, artistic genres and electronic media. It is not without reason that Knittel likens the intermedial relationships in his works to a synthesis of painting and photography, as the American artist Robert Rauschenberg employed in his paintings (this information was supplied by the composer).

Intermediality, as phenomenon of postmodern culture, is one of the more important paradigms of contemporary comparative studies. The term 'does not mean either the sum of various media concessions or the placement, among the media, of particular works, but the integration of the aesthetic conceptions of particular media in the form of a new media context'.<sup>10</sup> Intermediality scholars (e.g. Irina O. Rajewsky, Chiel Kattenbelt) refer it to a very broadly defined conception not merely limited to particular phenomena, media or specific research objectives. Rajewsky assumes that 'intermediality may serve foremost as a generic term for all those phenomena that (as indicated by the prefix inter) in some way take place between media'.<sup>11</sup> Chiel Kattenbelt thinks that the notion of intermediality, like the notion of multi- or transmediality, is used in different (media and artistic) discourses and with different meanings, assuming mutual affect, the redefinition of the relationships among media, and freshened perception.<sup>12</sup>

The author of the term 'intermedial', Dick Higgins uses it in reference to works 'in which the materials of various more established art forms are "conceptually fused" rather than merely juxtaposed'.<sup>13</sup>

Intermediality may be likened to combining different ways of conveying information (intermedial references). By contrast, in art, intermediality is not only

<sup>8</sup> This notion comes from the composer; *Krzysztof Knittel – Wokół Free Improvisation*, 2007. Source: [http://www.sme.amuz.krakow.pl/wyklady2007\\_2018/FreeImprovisation.pdf](http://www.sme.amuz.krakow.pl/wyklady2007_2018/FreeImprovisation.pdf) [accessed on October 10, 2021].

<sup>9</sup> The notion according to K. Baculewski, *Historia muzyki polskiej*, vol. VII, part 2: *Współczesność 1975–2000*, e-book, Narodowe Centrum Kultury, Warszawa 2014, pp. 272–273.

<sup>10</sup> J.E. Müller, *Intermedialität als Provokation der Medienwissenschaft*, "Eikon. Internationale Zeitschrift für Photographie & Medienkunst" 1992, vol. 4, pp. 12–21; tr: *Intermedialność jako prowokacja nauki o mediach*, [in:] *Od projektora do komputera. Współczesna niemiecka myśl filmowa. Antologia*, ed. Andrzej Gwóźdź, Katowice 1999, p. 152.

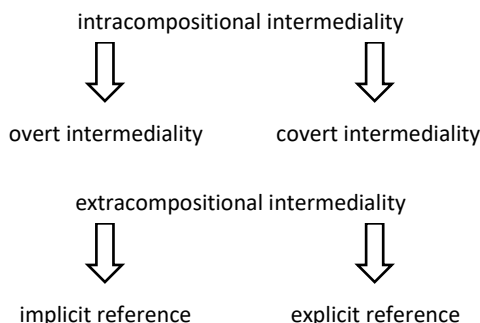
<sup>11</sup> I.O. Rajewsky, *Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality*, „Intermedialités / Intermediality” 2005, nr 6, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup> Ch. Kattenbelt, *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance: Definitions, Perceptions and Medial Relationships*, „Cultura, Lenguaje y Representación / Culture, Language and Representation” 2008, vol. 6, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> Cp. Eric Vos, *The Eternal Network. Mail Art, Intermedia Semiotics, Interarts Studies*; [in:] *Interart Poetics. Essays on the Interrelations of the Arts and Media*, ed. U.-B. Lagerroth, H. Lund, E. Hedling, Amsterdam – Atlanta – Rodopi 1997, p. 325.

a synthesis of different art forms – different media such as painting, visual art, music, sculpture, film, theatre, literature, television, photography – but, first of all, artistic work which causes a change in the traditional ways of creating art and of its reception, thanks to which innovative artistic works are created, being an integrated artistic message.

In interpreting an intermedial work, Werner Wolf's<sup>14</sup> theory of intermediality is fundamental, assuming the presence of different references emerging between a given medium and other media, illustrating the case of intermediality, the so-called media hybrids. The author of this theory differentiates between intracompositional intermediality, pertaining to a work with more than one medium participating in the signifying process, and extracompositional intermediality which, besides intracompositional references, pertains to reflections on the interrelationships among different media.<sup>15</sup> Intracompositional intermediality may be overt, pertaining to a work in which it is possible to isolate the media that participate in the creation of the artefact, or covert, where only one of the media used is explicit, and the other is implicit (cp. Diagram 1).



**Diagram 1.** The typology of intermedial references, cp. W. Wolf, op. cit., p. 28.

It is commonly thought in the artistic milieu that the medium of art is ‘conventionally understood, classical, manual means of artistic expression [...], characterized, in principle, by the matter in which the work – artistic expression – is being shaped’.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> W. Wolf, *Intermediality Revisited Reflections on Word and Music Relations in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality*, [in:] *Word and Music Studies: Essays in Honour of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, ed. S.M. Lodato, Amsterdam – New York 2002, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> M. Wasilewska-Chmura, *Przestrzeń intermedialna literatury i muzyki*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2011, pp. 36–37.

<sup>16</sup> R.W. Kluszczyński, *Estetyka sztuki nowych mediów. Międzyuczelniana specjalność multimedialna*, UMFC, Warszawa, p. 27. Source: <https://docplayer.pl/6755862-Ryszard-w-kluszczyński-estetyka-sztuki-nowych-mediów.html> [accessed on September 10, 2021].

Taking into account said matter of the work being a synthesis of different arts and material, one may claim that Knittel used in his composition three different media, creating hybrid media:

- the classical musical medium (mixed choir),
- the literary medium (texts from the Book of Psalms from *Biblia Tysiąclecia* translated by Fr Augustyn Jankowski OSB and Fr Lech Stachowiak),
- the modern musical medium (electronics).

The composer employs – in accordance with Wolf's conception – more than one medium for creating a specific artistic work, which may be directly identified. This piece is thus an example of overt intracompositional intermediality.

The use of the 'musical' meaning of a biblical text, e.g. Psalm 150, in the fourth movement of Knittel's composition, directly and as expressive experience of text in a musical work, illustrates a new type of the intermedial phenomenon: ekphrasis<sup>17</sup> (verbal interpretation of music; the use of a verbal medium for representing a nonverbal medium) and its opposite, inphrasis<sup>18</sup> (internal musical rendition of biblical text; the use of nonverbal medium for representing a verbal medium). Selected motifs illustrating the musical instruments mentioned in the text are not ordinary musical motifs *per se*; by the 'musicality' of the verbal text, they create new sound spaces, carrying added dimensions (enhanced by a network of intermedial references) which, in theoretical and terminological terms proposed by e.g. S. Bruhn, Claus Clüver, James A. W. Heffernan<sup>19</sup> and Chiel Kattebelt,<sup>20</sup> represent the range of the phenomenon of intermediality.

<sup>17</sup> *Ekphrasis* – according to James A. W. Heffernan (a scholar of this phenomenon) – uses one medium designed for representation (word) to represent other medium which is itself representative (image); 'verbal representation of graphic representation'. Cp. J.A.W. Heffernan, *Ekphrasis and Representation*, "New Literary History" 1991, vol. 22, p. 299. The term 'musical ekphrasis' introduced at the end of 20th century by the American scholar Siglind Bruhn in her musical work research based on Claus Clüver's definition of ekphrasis, cp. S. Bruhn, *A Concert of Paintings: „Musical Ekphrasis” in the Twentieth Century*, "Poetics Today" 2001, vol. 22, nr 3, p. 560. On its basis, Stefan Drajewski, exploring the relationship between music and choreography in the choreographic productions of Conrad Drzewiecki, coined the term 'choreographic ekphrasis'. Cp. S. Drajewski, *Ekfrazja dzieła muzycznego w choreografiach Conrada Drzewieckiego*, Akademia Muzyczna im. I.J. Paderewskiego, Poznań 2017, p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> Inphrasis: a neologism taken from plastic arts (a work of art inspired by verbal text). A process that is the opposite of ekphrasis (definition proposed by the author of this article).

<sup>19</sup> Cp. footnote 16.

<sup>20</sup> Cp. footnote 11.

### 3. The verbal-musical analysis of *Psalm*y

It is worth noting that the cycle *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...* (2000) written for choir and electronic media specially commissioned by the Programme 2 of the Polish Radio was Knittel's first religious composition, intended, as the composer claims, to 'express the truth and strength of faith'.<sup>21</sup> It was dedicated to Anna Szostak and the Katowice City Singer's Ensemble Camerata Silesia, who premiered this work during the International Festival of Contemporary Music 'Warsaw Autumn' 2000.<sup>22</sup> The tape part was prepared in collaboration with Tadeusz Sudnik. The composition was published in 2019 by Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne.<sup>23</sup>

For musical setting, the composer chose the passages from the following psalms:<sup>24</sup>

- penitential psalm 130 (129) 'Out of the depths I cry to thee, O LORD!'
- praiseful psalm 23 (22) 'The LORD is my shepherd'
- praiseful psalm 117 (116) 'Praise the LORD, all nations!'
- penitential psalm 51 (50) 'Prayer for Cleansing and Pardon'
- penitential psalm 102 (101) 'A prayer of one afflicted'
- praiseful psalm 103 (102) 'Bless the LORD, O my soul'
- praiseful psalm 150 'Praise the LORD!'

Penitential psalms, expressing penance and repentance, had been already prayed in St Augustin's time, and were used in penitential and funeral liturgy already at the dawn of Christianity. By contrast, psalms of praise (hymns) are optimistic prayers; they praise God, expressing faith in God the Creator and the Liberator.

The text of the psalms selected for musical setting was not random. Those psalm texts from the Hebrew Bible (*Millenium Bible*), translated by priests, inspired Knittel to write beautiful and compelling music. Knittel used the texts of psalms in modern Polish translation by Fr Augustyn Jankowski (OSB) and Fr Lech Stachowiak. The Polish translators based their work on the psalm collection from the Hebrew Bible containing 150 psalms transmitted via synagogal tradition, and on their Greek and Latin translations. In addition, they are liturgical texts perpetuated in tradition in the form of numerous musical interpretations. The division of psalms into verses, and verses into parts (usually two), determines the construction of the form continuum. The musical form – psalmodic –

<sup>21</sup> This information was supplied by the composer.

<sup>22</sup> K. Knittel, commentary to *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...* (2000). *Psalm*y na chór i taśmę, [in:] Program 43. MFMW „Warszawska Jesień”, Warszawa 2000, p. 90.

<sup>23</sup> K. Knittel, *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie. Psalm*y na chór mieszany i taśmę, PWM, Kraków 2019.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Biblia Tysiąclecia – Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu*, Pallottinum, Poznań 2014; Source: [www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org), [online] © 2001–2017 Crossway, [accessed on August 17, 2021].

similarly to the chorale, rests on the foundation of liturgical (psalm) text that defines the inner and outer caesurae. In his psalms, Knittel followed the melodic (syllabic melody) and performance (antiphonal and responsorial chant practice) styles emblematic of Gregorian chant (inspired by the singing of psalms). All the psalms are written in a syllabic style.

### 3.1. First movement – Psalm 130

Used in the first part of the piece is **Psalm 130**, a supplicatory psalm composed of four four-verse stanzas, in which the speaker, in the form of lamentation, turns to God, pleading His grace. As a conclusion of the prayerful song, the redemption of the entire nation of Israel appears. The four-phase structure of the biblical text was not literally translated into musical discourse by Knittel. Due to the textural alterations and the melodic and performance style, the composition may be divided into four phases with an introduction, whose caesurae fall on different places with respect to the liturgical original. The piece opens with a tape introduction; against its background, introduced is a solo presentation of the bass part that recites, through long rhythmic values, a poignant and meditative verse from the psalm 'Out of the depths I cry to thee, O LORD!' This passage serves the role of a message, a type of a bracket that encloses the composition cycle, as it is recalled again at the end. The slow tempo, extremely low register and dramatic backdrop of the electronic layer, which literally shows the listener the titular apostrophe of the speaker to God, i.e. crying from the depths of evil and sin. Subsequent verses of the supplicatory text (verses 2–4) are performed syllabically by the mixed choir, opening the first phase of the psalm (cp. Example 1).

The fifth verse of the psalm 'I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope' opens the second phase of the piece, in which the composer used a dialogue of two pairs of voices, ST and AB. Resembling the antiphonal chant practice, they echo the aforementioned verse. The next phase is introduced by the tape part. In this phase, Knittel musicalized the sixth verse of the psalm 'my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning' in the form of a four-part canon, in which imitation takes place with a duration of one bar in similar motion at the octave and perfect fifth (T, B, A) and in contrary motion (S). In the final verses of the psalm, in which the entire nation awaits salvation, Knittel introduces a solo soprano to the canon. The soloist realizes a supplicatory prayer against the ensemble canon background.



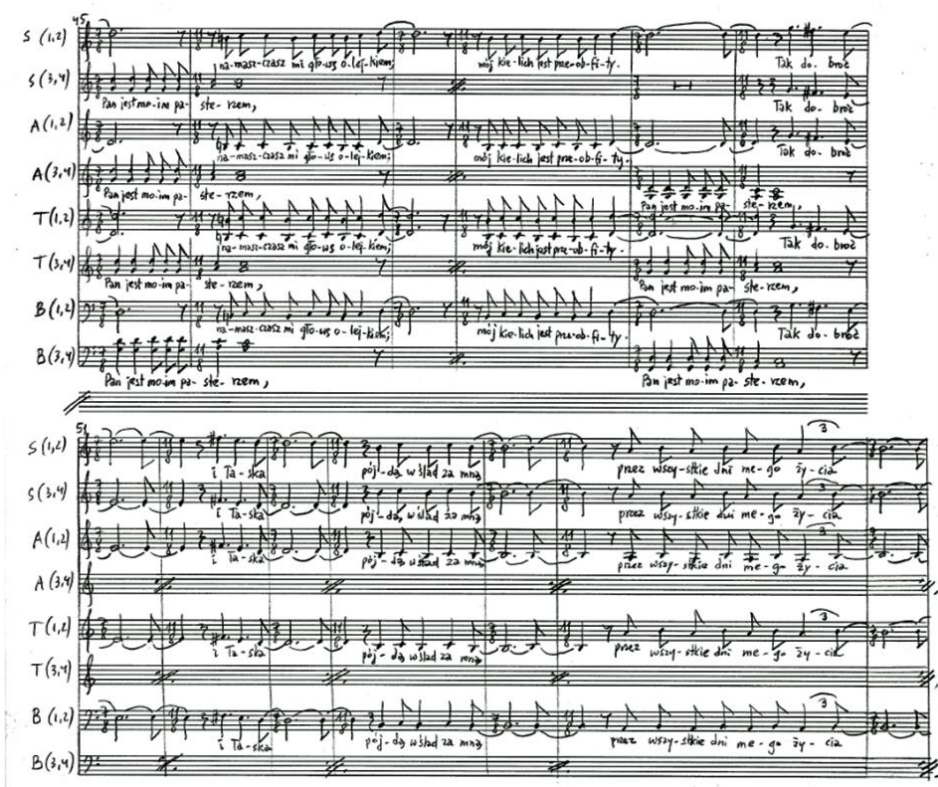
Example 1. Knittel, *Z głąbokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...*, first movement, Psalm 130 (manuscript).<sup>25</sup>

### 3.2. Second movement – Psalm 23

**Psalm 23**, a psalm of praise, alludes to the role that God fulfils; that of the Shepherd of his sheep. It has a praiseful character, being an act of trust in God’s love and goodness. The psalm is composed of a nineteen-verse stanza which has an uneven number of syllables and irregular placement of accents. The text of this psalm was musicalized in the second movement of the composition. The titular phrase ‘The Lord is my shepherd’, repeated persistently in different voices, adds a symbolic dimension. The voices to which the composer gave that text for musicalization carry the message of the beauty of this movement. The text is recited syllabically on one pitch and stated by the voices in parallel thirds and fifths (G–D). This material accompanies the remaining voices, which sing a contemplative prayer featuring small intervals in the melody. The ‘swinging’ rhythmic patterns and frequent changes of metre (7/8, 11/8, 5/8, 12/8) make the psalm resemble popular music. As it seems, there may be a connection be-

<sup>25</sup> Excerpts from the manuscript of the composition are cited in this article by courtesy of the composer.

tween that metre, rhythm and expression of the psalm, in which the main element is formed by the movement and path of man led by God: from pastures through straight paths to the dark valley of death. Knittel used in the psalm a quadruple composition of voices in the choir, suggesting a division of the part between two ensembles which realize different texts. They thus hold a musical dialogue reminiscent of antiphonal chant (cp. Example 2).



**Example 2.** K. Knittel, *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...*, second movement, Psalm 23 (manuscript).

### 3.3. Third movement III – Psalms 117, 51, 102, 103

In the third movement of the composition, Knittel used passages from four psalms contained in the Book of Psalms: 117, 51, 102 and 103, which are accompanied by electronic effects. The structure of this movement of the piece is based on five phases.

**Psalm 117** is the shortest psalm, whose Hebrew version consists of only seventeen words, of which as many as nine may be assigned a symbolic meaning. It is considered a song of praise or a hymn of love and faithfulness to Yahweh,

and opens with a calling to all the nations of the earth ‘Praise the Lord, all nations!’ The text of the psalm fills the first two phases of the third (longest) movement of the piece discussed. The musical narrative based on the word ‘Alleluja’ uses the interval of fourth in every voice of the choir in a double composition with the accompaniment of an electronic effects layer. The practice alludes to the medieval strict parallel organum led at the interval of fourth. Two pairs of voices appear with various delay, creating a polyphonic texture. Intervals of fourth, different yet constant over a given voice, presented in various rhythmic patterns may symbolize a solemn call to all the nations (basses: C–F, Bb–Eb; tenors: F–Bb, Eb–Ab; altos: Bb–Eb, Ab–Db; sopranos: Eb–Ab, Db–Gb) (cp. Example 3).

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the third movement of a piece, titled 'Alleluia'. The score is written on multiple staves, including vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and instrumental parts. The lyrics 'Al-le-lu-ja' are written below the vocal staves. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and intervals of fourth, characteristic of medieval organum. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system starting at measure 12 and the second system starting at measure 16. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings.

Example 3. K. Knittel, *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...*, third movement, Psalm 117 (manuscript).

In the second phase of this movement of the work (Psalm 117), Knittel limits the composition of the piece to one ensemble which, in the form of syllabic declamation alternating between unison and at the interval of fourth, sings the subsequent verses of the psalm. The dialogue technique between the group of soloists and the choir resembles a responsorial chant style practice.

The third phase of the movement opens with a musical interpretation of penitential text of **Psalm 51**, which 'expresses the supplication of man hurt by his own sin, and is termed *Miserere* (*Have mercy*) after the first word of the Latin translation done by St Jerome'.<sup>26</sup> Knittel used the five introductory verses of the psalm (vv. 3–8) containing two calls for the purification from sin, confession of guilt, and forgiveness. The speaker – a sinner asking forgiveness – is portrayed in the piece by means of solo recitation of the psalm by the tenor, who sings in a recitative style. In the next verses of the psalm, basses join him, stating a quasi-litany recitative, which ends in unison in the choir. The introduction of the *ad libitum* technique and the phenomenon of successive polymetry makes it possible to achieve free recitative chant, like in Gregorian chant (cp. Example 4).

Example 4. K. Knittel, *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...*, third movement, Psalm 51 (manuscript).

The next phase of the third movement of the composition is a musical interpretation of the second and third verses of the penitential **Psalm 102**. The psalm opens with a tripe call to God to listen the supplication for forgiveness. The bass recites the second verse in the low register, whereas the tenors and basses interpret the third verse in a responsorial style (cp. Example 5).

<sup>26</sup> J. Bramorski, op. cit., p. 46.

48  $\text{♩} = 60 \div 70$  (m) (2.1)

Pa-nie, słu-chaj mo-dli-twy mo-jej, a wo-Ta-nie mo-je niech do Cie-bie pra-jy - da-je !

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50 Nie kraj-prze-de mną swe-go o-bi-cza w dniu u-tra-pie-nia mo-je-go ! Na-Ktoś ku mnie Twe-go u-cha :

(2.1) (2.4)

Nie kraj-prze-de mną swe-go o-bi-cza w dniu u-tra-pie-nia mo-je-go ! Na-Ktoś ku mnie Twe-go u-cha :

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53 (2)

w dniu, w któ-rym Cis wo-Tam, słyb-ko mnie wy-słu-chaj !

w dniu, w któ-rym Cis wo-Tam, słyb-ko mnie wy-słu-chaj !

Example 5. K. Knittel, *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...*, third movement, Psalm 102 (manuscript).

In the fifth phase, Knittel musicalized the text of **Psalm 103**, a 22-verse thanksgiving hymn, a beautiful song about the great works of God. The speaker thanks the Lord for ‘all His benefits’ (‘wszystkie dobrodziejstwa’), particular grace, and then for His mercy shown to the people of Israel. The first four verses of the psalm’s text are realized by the sopranos, first solo, then with the accompaniment of the altos. The next verses of the psalm, until the end, are sung by the entire ensemble (cp. Example 6).

55 *meno mosso*

Bło-go-sław, du-śco mo-ja, Pa-na, i ca-Te mo-je wns-twe, świr-te i-mię Je-go !

---

57 Bło-go-sław, du-śco mo-ja, Pa-na, i nie za-po-mi-naj o wszy-stkich Je-go do-bro-dziej-stwach !

Bło-go-sław, du-śco mo-ja, Pa-na, i nie za-po-mi-naj o wszy-stkich Je-go do-bro-dziej-stwach !

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59 *piu vivo*

On od-puśc-za wszy-stkie two-je ni-ny, On le-czy wszy-stkie two-nie-mo-ce,

On od-puśc-za wszy-stkie two-je ni-ny. On le-czy wszy-stkie two-nie-mo-ce.

(11)

Example 6. K. Knittel, *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...*, third movement, Psalm 103 (manuscript).

### 3.4. Fourth movement – Psalm 150

The final movement of the piece by Krzysztof Knittel is a refined musical interpretation of the praiseful, most ‘musical’ **Psalm 150**. The composer, like the author of the Book of Psalms, inserted the text of this psalm at the end of the work. The ‘Alleluja’ that opens the movement, maintained in a cheerful and relaxed mood, is sung by the choir of tripled composition. A symbolic motif is built from descending intervals of perfect fourth and subjected to imitation, creating a complex, eight-part polyphonic structure.

After the 26-bar statement of ‘Alleluja’, one of the ensembles takes up the text of the subsequent verses of the psalm, ‘Chwalcie Boga w jego świątyni [...]’, while the other continues to sing ‘Alleluja’, creating a dialogue in an antiphonal style. In verses 3–5 of the psalm’s text, the psalmist shows the ways in which one may honour the Lord – through the musical activity of man who plays the instruments: horn, harp, zither, drum, strings – which means generic string instruments in the original: flute, sounding cymbals, clashing cymbals, and in the final verse of the psalm, enters voice. One may claim that this joyful psalm is directed mainly at instrumentalists, singers and dancers, the testimony being the wording of vocal and instrumental music as well as dance, with whose help the psalm calls for praising God with instruments, chant or dance.<sup>27</sup>

Each of the instruments becomes a musical symbol in the piece; Knittel illustrates it through different characteristic musical figures: the harp and the zither through chromatic sequences (up and down), the horn through the descending interval of perfect fourth, the drum and the dance in the form of repetition of a single pitch, string instruments and flute in the form of a second and a third, and the sounding and clashing cymbals in the form of intervals of fourth and fifth. In the translation, the musical illustrations of individual instruments were marked in coloured notes (cp. Example 7).

Providing a climactic finale, Knittel gives successively to the voices of one choir the text of the psalm ‘Wszystko, co żyje niech chwali Pana’, which is dialoguing with a descending melodic-rhythmic figure on the word ‘Alleluja’.

The composer ends this movement, as well as the whole piece, with the introduction material together with the titular verse recited by the bass and the tenor against the background of tape, whereupon a final, collective call ‘Alleluja’ appears on the notes of an E major chord symbolizing, according to a 19th-century interpretation, a key of joy, laughter and full delight<sup>28</sup> (cp. Example 8).

<sup>27</sup> Cp. Ł. Bergel, *Pieśń Mojżesza i Baranka. Znaczenie muzyki wokalne, instrumentalnej i tańca w tekście biblijnym na podstawie Ap 15,2–4 – studium egzegetyczno-teologiczne*, “Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia” 2018, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 11–33.

<sup>28</sup> Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart linked specific keys to the affects which had already been established in early Baroque, which he described in his treatise *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (1806), pp. 382–383.

Example 7 is a musical score for the fourth movement of Psalm 150. It features eight vocal parts: Soprano 1 (S(1)), Soprano 2 (S(2)), Alto 1 (A(1)), Alto 2 (A(2)), Tenor 1 (T(1)), Tenor 2 (T(2)), Bass 1 (B(1)), and Bass 2 (B(2)). The lyrics are in Polish, including "Al-le-lu-ja", "Chwał-cie Go", and "Chwał-cie Go na sy-m-ba-tach". The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, time signatures, and dynamics. Handwritten annotations in blue, red, green, and yellow circles highlight specific melodic and harmonic features across the different parts.

Example 7. K. Knittel, *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...*, fourth movement, Psalm 150 (manuscript).

Example 8 is a musical score for the coda of the fourth movement of Psalm 150. It features five parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and a Coda (CD) part. The lyrics are "Zgłębokości wołam do Ciebie Panie" and "Al-le-lu-ja". The score includes tempo markings such as  $\text{♩} = 50$  and  $\text{♩} = 30$ , and dynamic markings like  $f$  and  $p$ . The CD part is marked with a double bar line and a  $f$  dynamic.

Example 8. K. Knittel, *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...*, fourth movement, Psalm 150 (coda) (manuscript).

#### 4. Conclusion

Summarizing the discourse, one may claim that the music by Knittel discussed is connected with the sphere of the sacred and is not met with the listener's indifference; on the one hand it prompts emotional reaction and religious meditation

and, on the other hand it represents an example of modern approach to biblical text: musical interpretation with the use of new technologies (electronic music). Knittel, succumbing to the great charm of the beauty and the theological depth of biblical texts, combined traditional sounds with synthesized ones, delivering one integrated message. The sounds recorded on tape help to musically illustrate the narrative of the text literally read by the composer himself. To create the tape part, the composer used the sounds of the Yamaha DX7 IIFD synthesizer and the Akai S-20 sampler connected to the Yamaha CBX-KiXG keyboard. The sounds of electronic provenance were mostly realized by Knittel by experimenting with the DX7, and there is no preset factory sound to be found in the composition.<sup>29</sup>

The musical interpretation of the Book of Psalms' content in the work discussed follows the practices existing in Gregorian chant (melodic and performance styles). The phases of the narrative, based on the subsequent passages of the biblical text, use the composition of the ensemble in various ways: from syllabic declamation, through dialogue among groups of voices (imitating the practice of hocket), to sections with a polyphonic texture, to the celebratory culmination with amplification used on the word 'Alleluja'.

The collaboration among the different media taking part in constructing the narrative permitted Knittel to create the following: a new representation of the media used, new dramaturgic strategies, new principles of structuring and presenting words and sounds, developing a creative way of perception and conveying new cultural and psychological meanings.

Translated from polish by Grzegorz Hoga

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## **Teksty Psalterza Dawidowego w kompozycji intermedialnej Krzysztofa Knittla**

### **Streszczenie**

Krzysztof Knittel – kompozytor tworzący na przełomie XX i XXI wieku – jest wierny założeniom artystycznym, które świadczą o jego przynależności do nurtu *transawangardy*, który stawia sobie za cel syntezę kodów nowoczesności i tradycji. Jednym z tego przejawów jest fenomen intermedialności, obrazujący relacje, w jakie dany obiekt (działanie) wchodzi z mediami. Nowatorstwo w twórczości Knittla polega na komponowaniu muzyki intuicyjnej, określanej jako *free improvised music*, oraz *muzyki recyklingowej* czy *ekologicznej*. Lata 70. ubiegłego wieku przyniosły wzmożone zainteresowanie sferami sacrum i duchowości w muzyce polskiej. Cykl pieśni *Z głębokości wołam do Ciebie, Panie...*, napisany w 2000 roku na chór i media elektroniczne, będąc pierwszą religijną kompozycją Knittla, miał, jak twierdzi kompozytor, „wyrazić prawdę i siłę wiary”. Pieśni napisane zostały do tekstów *Psalterza Dawidowego* z Biblii Tysiąclecia. Celem artykułu jest próba oceny, w jaki sposób źródło inspiracji wpłynęło na konstrukcję i estetykę omawianego dzieła intermedialnego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** intermedialność, Krzysztof Knittel, muzyka polska XX i XXI wieku, Psalmi Dawida, muzyka religijna.