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## String Quartets by Rafał Augustyn and Their Role Within the Tradition of the Genre

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### Abstract

One of the composers of string quartets who confronted the 'memory of the genre' in the latter half of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century was Rafał Augustyn. In the composer's quartets one finds both classical influences (*String Quartet No. 1, Do ut des* for string quartet, *Dedication* for Soprano and String Quartet) and references to tradition contrasted with modern solutions (*String Quartet No. 2*). *Grand jeté. Quartet No. 2 ½ with electronics* represents a collage of diverse musical idioms, quotations, instrumental sounds, and specific sonorities. In his final quartet, the *Monadology* (*String Quartet No. 3*), Augustyn makes a loose reference to Leibniz's concept of monads, a term used to describe philosophical atoms. It consists of miniatures combined using static links. In the article, the author demonstrates, through the use of selected examples, how Rafał Augustyn reinterprets the string quartet genre while simultaneously remaining connected to the tradition via the ensemble.

**Keywords:** works by Rafał Augustyn, 20th and 21st century music, string quartet, musical genre, reinterpretation.

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In the context of Polish music, the 'memory of the genre'<sup>1</sup> was confronted by a number of prominent Polish composers of string quartets in the latter half of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century. Among these were the following: Karol Szymanowski, Witold Lutosławski, Krzysztof Penderecki, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Marek Stachowski, Krzysztof Meyer, Bogusław Schaef-fer, Zygmunt Krauze, Andrzej Krzanowski, Aleksander Lasoń, and others. The composer who has taken it upon himself to reinterpret the genre known as the string quartet is Rafał Augustyn.

Rafał Augustyn (born 1951) is a composer associated with the Wrocław music scene. He studied at the State Higher School of Music in Wrocław with Ryszard Bukowski (1971–1974) and at the PWSM in Katowice with Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (1975–1978). He also completed a degree in Polish philology at the University of Wrocław, where he taught classes on cultural studies. Additionally, Augustyn engages in the practice of music criticism, publishing his work in both the music and literary press, as well as on Polish radio and television. In the 1980s, in the *Ruch Muzyczny* and *Odra* periodicals, he promoted the work of young Polish composers, especially the achievements of *Generation '51*. He directed (along with Marek Pijarowski) the *Musica Polonica Nova* festival in Wrocław and was a member of the Repertoire Committee of the *Warsaw Autumn* festival. The work of Rafał Augustyn can be situated within the context of the decline of modernism in Poland (1976), the emergence of post-modernism (1976–1994), and the period following the turn of the century (1994 onwards), during which various influences were equally acknowledged, including both post-modern (such as surconventionalism and new romanticism) and modernist (such as new sonorism) tendencies. The essence of post-modern art is most effectively conveyed through the ironic interplay with the audience and the overt use of quotations which implies "understanding culture as an endless process of tinkering with existing meanings and texts in order to create new cultural worlds (new texts) via new metaphors"<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, these characteristics are evident in Rafał Augustyn's quartets.

For a 21st-century artist, there is a significant artistic challenge in confronting the tradition of the string quartet genre. Rafał Augustyn composed 6 works for this ensemble. Three of the compositions are designated *string quartet* and are numbered, while the remaining pieces are for a string quartet with additional members of the ensemble. Those are:

- *String Quartet No. 1* (1973),
- *String Quartet No. 2 with flute ad libitum* (1981),
- *Dedication* for soprano and string quartet (1979–1984),

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<sup>1</sup> S. Balbus, *Między stylami*, Kraków 1996, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> A. Szahaj, *Co to jest postmodernizm*, 'Ethos' 1996, vol. 33–34, p. 70.

- *Do ut des* for string quartet (1998),
- *Grand jeté. Quartet No. 2 1/2 with electronics* (2005)
- *Monadology (String Quartet No. 3)* (2015).

With the exception of *Monadology*, all of the quartets were recorded on an album entitled *Do Ut Des – Music For and With Quartet* (CD Accord) in 2010.

## Reinterpreting the Genre in Rafał Augustyn's Quartets

In order to illustrate the ways in which Augustyn's quartets connect to or rather diverge from the established norms of the genre, it is first necessary to delineate the defining characteristics of the string quartet as a musical form using the Viennese classics as a point of reference. Joseph Haydn's oeuvre presents the quartet as an exemplar of homogeneous and balanced sonority. It was there that the crystallisation of the quartet texture occurred (from homophony to polyphony, with varying degrees of tonal density). The composer employed contrasting articulation and tempos. The rhythm frequently served a structural function (utilisation of form-generating rhythmic figures). In the quartets of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the four instruments involved were of equal importance. The composer employed contrasting dynamics to evoke a heightened sense of expressive energy. The compositions of Ludwig van Beethoven represent an evolution of the textural principles established by Joseph Haydn. This was achieved through a number of factors, including the full sonoric presence in both vertical and horizontal structures, the melodic activity of all instruments, and the simultaneous use of opposing registers. Conversely, individual solutions that are idiomatic to Beethoven include the use of unison or octave doubling, chords in a concentrated and extended arrangement, the simplification of homophonic texture to a minimum, abrupt changes of register, an increase and decrease of tempo, and the dismantling of texture up to monophony. Nevertheless, the defining feature of this composer's quartet work is symphonisation, which encompasses the synthesis of thematic work, variation technique, and polyphony<sup>3</sup>.

### ***String Quartet No. 1***

The initial version of String Quartet No. 1 was composed between October 1972 and January 1973, during the composer's third year of studies at the State

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Draus, *Brzmienie i sens. Studia nad twórczością Marka Stachowskiego*, Kraków 2016, p. 374. Based on: J. Chomiński, K. Wilkowska-Chomińska, *Kwartet smyczkowy*, [in:] *Formy muzyczne*, vol. 2: *Wielkie formy instrumentalne*, PWM, Kraków 1987, pp. 288–323.

Higher School of Music in Wrocław (under Ryszard Bukowski's tutelage in the composition class). The first two movements were premiered on 3 April 1973 at the 686th Music Tuesday event held at the Academy of Music in Wrocław. The entire piece was performed on 25 June 1973 in Nowa Ruda as part of the Second Festival of Art Schools. The performers were: Krystyna Słoma (vn I), Henryk Subda (vn II), Ryszard Duż (vl) and Alicja Hankiewicz (vc). The ensemble was prepared by Zdzisław Butor. The second, corrected, version was created between 1990 and 1991.

*String Quartet No. 1* has a traditional three-movement structure (I *Allegro*, II *Canone*, III *Quasi rondo*). The work is adhering to the principles of sonata form, particularly evident in the first movement, which combines classical sonata form elements and non-classical textures (the *glissando* serves as the fundamental material for the first theme). Following the performance, which occurred on 20 February 1974 during the 10th Festival of Polish Contemporary Music at the Museum of Architecture in Wrocław, the following review was published: '[...] Courage and ambition can sometimes lead to problematic outcomes (Rafał Augustyn demonstrated this), and sometimes to embarrassment (although the performers, also students, contributed to this)'<sup>4</sup>. Augustyn's *String Quartet No. 1* is probably his first attempt at composing in this genre. It is a youthful piece, written by a student.

## ***String Quartet No. 2***

Another example of the genre in question in Rafał Augustyn's oeuvre is the *String Quartet No. 2* with flute *ad libitum*, which was composed in 1981. The inaugural performance was held on 24 September 1983 in Warsaw as part of the 26th Warsaw Autumn Festival of Contemporary Music. It was performed by the Silesian String Quartet ensemble composed of: Marek Moś (vn I), Arkadiusz Kubica (vn II), Witold Serafin (vl), Mirosław Makowski (vc) and Jerzy Mroziński (fl).

In his commentary on the piece, the composer states that:

I wrote the *String Quartet No. 2* twice. From the initial version, composed during my studies in Wrocław, only approximately twenty notes and a basic formal structure remain unchanged. It can thus be regarded as an entirely novel composition, derived from the initial concept. *Quartet No. 2* is comprised of a single movement, yet it has two distinct sections. The first section is a series of continually transformed fundamental harmonic models, while the second one is a series of brief canons that conclude with a coda. The (alto) flute part has an accompanying character and may be omitted without affecting the overall length of the piece<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> K. Kościukiewicz, *Adepci i luminarze*, 'Słowo Polskie', 22 II 1974, no. 45 (8563), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> R. Augustyn, [commentary on:] *II Kwartet smyczkowy*, [in:] Warsaw Autumn Programme Book No. 26, Warsaw 1983, p. 179. The commentary was subjected to censorship at the Ministry of

From the provided description, it can be inferred that the composition is a single-movement work. However, a closer examination reveals the presence of two internal sections, each comprising smaller sections labelled by the composer with letters (A-U). An intriguing approach is the enhancement of the first violin's voice by introducing the timbre of the great flute and subsequently the alto flute, thereby creating a contrasting effect with the great flute. The flute was subsequently added into the quartet following the compositions of Charles Ives, who incorporated additional instruments into many of his pieces. The work commences with sounds reminiscent of the chiming of bells. The narrative progresses in a gradual manner until it culminates in the letter I, at which point the violin part is doubled by the flute. The letter J represents a new section where there is a notable shift in the expressive character, manifested by an increased prevalence of shorter values and single notes. Augustyn refers to tradition by utilizing the canon. Then the tempo increases and the texture becomes more complex. In the letter O, the bell chiming from the beginning of the piece returns. Subsequently, the viola performs a solo passage characterised by a high degree of chromaticism and a relatively straightforward rhythm, with a predominant use of sixteenth notes. Nevertheless, it represents a significant challenge for the viola player. In the letter T, the poignant ascending chord progression from the culmination returns accompanied by meaningful pauses. In the concluding phase of the quartet, the flute assumes a more autonomous and independent role. The quartet assumes the role of a harmonic background, with an increased prominence of single notes in the flute part. The final three measures are performed by the string quartet alone, and chords emerge, culminating in a resolution in C major.

The structure of *Quartet No. 2* deviates from classical genre principles, as the work is comprised of a single continuous movement, albeit with two clearly distinguishable sections. The first phase is defined by a transformation of fundamental harmonic models. It is somewhat innovative that the composer has incorporated a flute into the ensemble of four string instruments. The work is distinguished by its unusual colours. The composer modernised the timbral layer of the piece, reaching for sonoristic effects such as playing behind the bridge, on the bridge, on the tailpiece, the highest possible note on the instrument, which influenced the expressive side of the work. Simultaneously, he invoked tradition through the utilisation of the technique of close imitation, the canon. The piece involves a 'stylistic journey' that leads from chromatic (in the first section) to diatonic (in the second section). The quartet represents a reinterpretation of the quartet genre, combining the traditional with the innovative.

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Culture (then the Ministry of Culture and Art) prior to its publication. A remark concerning the planned premiere of the quartet in February 1982 being prevented by 'much more dramatic events' had been removed.

The *String Quartet No. 2* is a reflection of the stylistic changes that were occurring in Polish music during the latter half of the 20th century. Augustyn initially employs the chromatic scale, subsequently transitioning to the diatonic (a characteristic of 1980s music), utilising intervals such as the perfect octave and perfect fifth. In the letter I, the composer introduces a chorale, which serves as the culminating element of the work (see Example 1).

The musical score for *String Quartet No. 2* is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-5) begins with a tempo change to *sempre marcato e pesante* and a key signature change to one sharp (F#). It includes dynamic markings like *ff* and *sf*, and a *sim.* (sostenuto) section. The second system (measures 6-10) continues the *sempre marcato e pesante* tempo and includes a *sff sempre* (sforzando) section. The third system (measures 11-15) features a tempo change to *ben tenuto* and a key signature change to one flat (Bb). It includes a *fff ben tenuto* (fortissimo) section. The score is written for four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.



Example 1. Chorale leading to a culmination in the letter I.

Source: R. Augustyn, *String Quartet No. 2*, manuscript from the composer's private collection, vol. 152–176.

## Dedication

Among Augustyn's quartet works, two compositions merit particular attention due to their distinctive titles. *Dedication* for soprano and string quartet was created between 1979 and 1984. The title dedication is addressed to Beata and Andrzej Chłopecki. The inaugural performance was held on 23 February 1984 at the 14th Festival of Polish Contemporary Music in Wrocław. The story behind the creation of the piece is very interesting. Following one of the musical performances held during the Poznań Music Spring festival in 1978, Andrzej Chłopecki introduced his future spouse, Beata, to the guests in the bar of the Bazar hotel. It took Rafał Augustyn to draw the connection between the act of sipping spirits and Guillaume Apollinaire's poem *Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon* from the collection entitled *Acools*. *Dedication* for string quartet and soprano introduces a textual element into the domain of purely instrumental music. The soprano's use of the high registers renders the text challenging to comprehend. However, the content is discernible within the music characterised by a distinctive ambience, nuance, and sensuality. There are also *quasi*-aleatoric passages. As the piece progresses, the soprano and strings ascend to the highest register, approaching the threshold of silence.

## Do ut des

Another composition for string quartet is a four-minute miniature in which the character of the piece is determined by *glissando*. The piece entitled *Do ut des* for string quartet was composed in 1998 and is dedicated to the 'Silesian

String Quartet – for the Jubilee!'. The inaugural performance was held on 13 December 1998 in Tarnowskie Góry during a concert marking the twentieth anniversary of the Silesian String Quartet in conjunction with the sixth Chamber Music Festival. The piece was performed by the Silesian String Quartet. Ten compositions, presented as gifts, were performed during the anniversary concert. The concise format of the pieces, which was necessitated by the circumstances, was employed by the majority of the artists to showcase their sense of humour. This is what Rafał Augustyn did, who had already highlighted the ambiguity of the piece in its title. The Latin title, *do ut des* (I give as you give), is an allusion to the 'barter' relationship between composer and performers. Additionally, it is a musical anagram, whereby the title can be read as the three names of the notes that make up the musical motif, namely C, C, and Des<sup>6</sup>. While occasional works, such as Rafał Augustyn's *Do ut des* for the Silesian String Quartet, usually deviate from the established conventions of the string quartet genre, it is nevertheless evident that the fundamental connection with that tradition remains the inherited ensemble for which such works were originally composed.

### ***Grand jeté. Quartet No. 2 1/2 with electronics***

The most unconventional example of a string quartet is the *Grand jeté. Quartet No. 2 1/2 with electronics* which represents a radical departure from the conventional boundaries of the genre. The work is based on music previously composed by Augustyn for the 1994 documentary film *Nie lubię lustra* [I Dislike the Mirror], directed by Zbigniew Dzięgiel, which profiles Wojciech Wiesiołowski, an esteemed ballet dancer also known as Woytek Lowski. The film's script comprises five distinct layers. One of the film's notable features is a lengthy interview with Wiesiołowski conducted during the dancer's prolonged illness, which resulted in his demise a year after the film's release. The second layer is constituted by excerpts from performances and amateur films featuring Wiesiołowski. For instance, there is an account of a class taught by Lowski during a rehearsal of the Hamburg Ballet in Monte Carlo. The third layer comprises photographic documentation of the performances, which illustrate the dancer's physical strength and acting abilities. The fourth layer consists of interviews with important people in Lowski's life. These included Maurice Béjart, Wiesiołowski's mother and a friend of his, a fan who amassed all the material, and one of his employees. The fifth layer contains snapshots from London, where Wiesiołowski lived.

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. K. Droba, *Jubileusz w pałacu*, 'Ruch Muzyczny', Warsaw 1999, no. 4, pp. 14–16.



A concert version of the quartet was created in 2005. The idea for a concert version of the piece originated from Augustyn's interest in electronic music. Furthermore, it was an expression of a profound appreciation for theatrical forms. The subtitle indicates the composition of the ensemble, but in terms of structure, the piece diverges considerably from the conventional string quartet format. Furthermore, the numbering system suggests that the quartet's structure is treated not in a *serio*, but rather a *buffo* manner. The four instrumentalists indicated in the title act as accompanists in a silent film. The quartet part is relatively modest in scope, with a lot going on in the electronic layer. The title *Grand jeté* can be interpreted in multiple ways. This is, of course, a kind of balletic figure, but it is also a metaphorical way for Augustine to describe the 'passing' into 'the other world' of the very ill (at the time of filming) Wiesiołowski. All this makes the quartet in question a symbolic piece.

The quartet is structured in ten movements, each corresponding to successive episodes of the film:<sup>7</sup>

- 1) *Londyn* (I),
- 2) *Leningrad*,
- 3) *Londyn* (II),
- 4) *Warszawa* (I),
- 5) *Bruksela*,
- 6) *Awinion*,
- 7) *Londyn* (III),
- 8) *Cannes*,
- 9) *Warszawa* (II),
- 10) *Londyn* (IV).

The first movement is entitled *Londyn*. The musical layer is characterised by the presence of short, single notes, which are interspersed with fast runs, passages, and figurations. The opening of the quartet presents the main theme in the key of *D minor* (see Example 2).

Movement II *Leningrad* presents events in Wiesiołowski's life related to his education and career development. Wiesiołowski was born during the Second World War, yet he said that he had no memories of it. After the war, he went to a school in line with his interests, and because he was an outstanding dancer, he went to the ballet school in Leningrad. Subsequently, Maurice Béjart invited Wiesiołowski to join the Ballet of the 20th Century. In Augustyn's composition, one can discern motifs that resemble the sounds of the city. They constitute a prelude to London. The action then moves to Warsaw. In this instance, the string quartet part is notably limited. In the electronic layer, the sounds of nature, specifically the sounds of birds, and, most notably, the recording of Wiesiołowski's

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. R. Augustyn, self-commentary to the piece. Archive of the composer.

speech can be discerned. Part III, entitled *Warszawa* (I), features a citation from the music of Johann Strauss II, specifically the famous waltz *The Blue Danube* (see Example 3) which Wiesiołowski danced to with Barbara Bittnerówna. The inclusion of a citation in a new work is what Tomaszewski calls a ‘situation of encrustation’, whereby ‘in-clusive’ music absorbs fragments of primary music<sup>8</sup>.

Example 2. Main theme of the quartet

Source: R. Augustyn, *Grand jeté*, computer printout of the score from the composer's own collection, Mvt. 1: *Londyn* (I), pp. 2–3, mm. 24–27.

In the subsequent movement of the quartet, Augustyn incorporates a quotation from Beethoven's oeuvre, specifically the tenor solo from the finale of *Symphony No. 9*. The aforementioned passage is presented in the electronic layer, yet its continuation resonates in the quartet part. Nevertheless, this is not

<sup>8</sup> M. Tomaszewski, *O muzyce polskiej w perspektywie intertekstualnej. Studia i szkice*, Akademia Muzyczna, Kraków 2005, p. 111.

a simple continuation, as the material from the quoted work becomes distorted, as though blurred in memory. Augustyn utilised the string quintet part from Beethoven's symphony and adapted it in his piece (see Examples 4a and 4b).

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The musical score is for a string quartet, page 8. It is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 16, and the second system contains measures 17 through 32. The music is characterized by rapid sixteenth-note passages in the upper staves and more sustained, rhythmic patterns in the lower staves. Dynamic markings include 'p' (piano), 'f' (forte), and 'piss.' (pianissimo). The score concludes with a final measure marked 'p'.

The musical score is for Johann Strauss II's 'The Blue Danube'. It is a waltz in G major, 3/4 time. The score is presented in two systems. The first system contains 10 staves, and the second system contains 5 staves. The music is characterized by a strong bass line and a melodic line in the upper staves. The score includes first and second endings, a 'Solo' section, and a 'Fine' marking. The bottom of the second system is marked 'D.S.'.

Example 3. Citation from Johann Strauss's II *The Blue Danube*

Source: J. Strauss II, *The Blue Danube*, mm. 29–53.



Example 4a. Citation from *Symphony No. 9* by Ludwig van Beethoven

Source: L. van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 9*, Mvt. IV, mm. 100–120.

Example 4b. Continuation of *Symphony No. 9* in *Grand jeté*.

Source: R. Augustyn, *Grand jeté*, computer printout of the score from the composer's private collection, Mvt. 5: *Bruksela*, mm. 8–19.

From time to time, at the commencement of a movement, an authentic camera shutter sound is emitted, which references the layer with images in the film. This is exemplified in part five, in which the action is situated in Brussels. It begins with recordings of Wiesiołowski. The majority of the statements made by the ballet soloist are featured in this movement. He discusses how, during the performance of music from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, he experiences a sense of integration with the orchestra and is drawn in by the energy of the ensemble, which permeates him. Towards the end of this movement, Wiesiołowski talks about his role as Tybalt in Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*. The subsequent movements of Augustyn's composition, *Awinion* and *Londyn*, are performed *attacca*. Here, both the quartet and electronics are present in the musical layer from the beginning. *Awignon* is a scherzo, which makes allusions to certain 'classical' elements of a quartet's structure, such as the contrast in successive sections. In *London* part two quartets overlap, one is recorded on tape. *Warszawa* (II) is an *Adagio*. It contains motifs already presented in *Warszawa* (I), *Londyn* (IV) commences with bells and electronic elements, subsequently joined by a recording of Wiesiołowski. He makes a profound observation about the nature of time, delivered by a man on the brink of death: 'If one makes the most of *today*, then *tomorrow* will be the consequence of the present day'. This final movement is the musical layer to the closing titles. It is an 'apotheosis of the city' based on the quartet's main theme.

*Grand Jeté* is an eclectic guide to the European capitals visited by the film's protagonist. Detached from the image, the composition interacts with sounds from the original soundtrack, including statements by Wiesiołowski himself. The composition oscillates between moments of levity, contemplation and astonishment, and surprises the listener with references to the works of Beethoven and Strauss. *Grand jeté* is a collage of different stylistic idioms, quotations, instrumental tones and concrete sonorities. The piece can be described as a musical fantasy with the topos of wandering as its principal theme.

There are also stylistic references to works by other artists in *Grand jeté*. In movement II *Leningrad*, one can hear Rafał Augustyn's inspiration with Steve Reich's style and the piece *Different trains*, also scored for string quartet and tape (see example 5). In accordance with Mieczysław Tomaszewski's terminology, this can be defined as a 'situation of inspiration', whereby the initial musical composition serves as the foundation for the creation of new musical works<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> M. Tomaszewski, op. cit., p. 111.



The image displays three systems of musical notation for a string quartet, specifically for Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The notation is presented in a computer printout format, showing measures 11 through 16 of the second movement, 'Leningrad', from the work 'Grand jeté' by R. Augustyn. Each system consists of four staves, one for each instrument. The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The notation is characterized by dense, rhythmic patterns, often featuring sixteenth and thirty-second notes, which are typical of Steve Reich's minimalist style. The first system (measures 11-12) shows a complex interplay of rhythms between the instruments. The second system (measures 13-14) continues this pattern with some changes in the lower strings. The third system (measures 15-16) shows a more unified rhythmic texture, with the violoncello and viola parts featuring more prominent, sustained notes. The notation is clean and professional, with clear staff lines and note heads.

Example 5. Reference to the style of Steve Reich

Source: R. Augustyn, *Grand jeté*, computer printout of the score from the composer's own collection, Mvt. 2: *Leningrad*, mm. 11–16.

### ***Monadology. String Quartet No. 3***

*Monadology. String Quartet No. 3* was created on 31 March 2015 and is dedicated to Izabela, Cezary, Jutrzenko and Amelka Duchnowski. The premiere took place on 18 April 2015 in Katowice during the 6th 'Polish New Music' Festival of Premieres. It was performed by the Silesian String Quartet ensemble composed of: Szymon Krzeszowiec (vn I), Arkadiusz Kubica (vn II), Łukasz Syrnicki (vl), Piotr Janosik (vc).

In its formal aspect, the piece draws freely on Leibniz's concept of monads, which may be understood as philosophical atoms. The work is comprised of twelve independent miniatures, connected by static epilogues. Each movement is designated with a title derived from the Greek alphabet, comprising the letters Alpha to Ksi, accompanied by an explanatory commentary at the conclusion of the musical text.

#### Movements of the work

- Alfa:* Alla Campanella,
- Beta:* Cage's Lost Brackets,
- Gamma:* '...like a quarter – or a half...',
- Delta:* Recitativo obligato *or* Labyrinth without the Minotaur,
- Epsilon:* The Vertical in the Horizontal,
- Eta:* "...there's nothing like a crank..." (Omaggio a T. S.),
- Theta:* The Horizontal in the Vertical (Omaggio a Gy. K.)
- Iota:* Untitled (...for what?...) (Omaggio a T. R.)
- Lambda:* Landscape with the Absent (Omaggio a Opus 81)  
[Landscape with an Absent],
- Mi:* Recitativo bagnato *or* Arcadius in Arcadia
- Ni:* Bees of Stone *or* Lucas in Bombay
- Ksi:* At the coal face *or* Simon the Zealous

The composer indicates that the miniatures may be performed in a different sequence than that indicated in the score, and that some may be omitted. However, it is specified that there should be at least eight miniatures. The movements may be juxtaposed based on a contrast, similarity, or evolution, with the decision ultimately resting with the performers. Augustyn regards this quartet as an open-ended composition, and it is possible that he may compose further miniatures, extending the series to encompass all the letters of the alphabet.

In composing his *String Quartet No. 3*, Augustyn was inspired by the work of composers he held in high regard. Each of the twelve miniatures that make up the structure of the *Monadology* has a title in the form of a Greek letter. A supplementary description is provided at the conclusion of each movement, offering a commentary on the musical text in a manner analogous to that observed in Debussy's *Preludes*. In some instances, the names of other composers are ref-



erenced, such as that of John Cage, whose musical language inspired one of the miniatures (*Beta*). In the Gamma movement, one can 'hear' the formal principles employed by Luciano Berio in *Rendering*, in which the composer utilized sketches of Schubert's *Symphony No. 10*. Berio fills in the gaps in the symphony with entirely dissimilar, incongruous musical elements, rendering it straightforward to distinguish between the original Schubert material and the additions by Berio. Another composer whose work Augustyn was inspired by is György Kurtág, the master of the miniatures. The miniature entitled *Lambda* has a commentary *Landscape with the Absent (Omaggio a Opus 81)*. It is a reference to Piano Sonata in E# major by Ludwig van Beethoven, also known as the *Les Adieux* sonata. The composer's sole programme sonata is a reflection of his personal sentiments and a tribute to the premature demise of his close friend, Archduke Rudolf of Austria. The composition is comprised of three movements, bearing the following titles: *Das Lebewohl (Farewell)*, *Die Abwesenheit (Absence)* and *Das Wiedersehen (Return)*.

The *String Quartet No. 3* features several miniatures that can be considered an homage to the composers who had a significant influence on Augustyn. *Eta* features the following commentary: *Omaggio a T. S.* This is a miniature inspired by the works of Tomasz Sikorski. *Iota – Omaggio a T. R.*, on the other hand, is a tribute to Tadeusz Rózewicz. In Augustyn's *Monadology*, the names of the performers – members of the Silesian Quartet – can be found in the commentaries on the three miniatures. *Arcadius in Arcadia* (an allusion to violinist Arkadiusz Kubica), *Lucas in Bombay* (an allusion to violist Łukasz Syrnicki), *Simon the Zealous* (an allusion to violinist Szymon Krzeszowiec). The commentary on the last part – *Ksi* – reads: *At the coal face or Simon the Zealous* which refers to the extremely virtuosic violin part. Augustyn compares the work of a violinist to that of a miner, which is characterised by significant challenges, including physical exertion, perseverance, and diligence, and requires considerable zeal to perform.

## Conclusion

In considering the significance of a work's title for a researcher engaged with the genre of string quartets, it is valuable to reflect upon the insights offered by Stanisław Balbus. This literary scholar posits that a title or subtitle referring to the genre functions as an "original manual," opening a field of genealogical references through which the work should be read. It signals that the work enters with tradition of the genre

[...] in meaningful correlations, coincidences or even collisions, in any case in hermeneutic contact, to some extent regardless of the nature and quality of its actual artistic structures<sup>10</sup>.

Similarly, the function of the genre title is explored in the field of genre studies, with a particular focus on reception, social context, and other related aspects. As stated by Ewa Wójtowicz:

If genre is conceptualised not only as a set of defined conventions, but also as the audience's expectations, it becomes evident that it serves as a powerful code, facilitating the connection between author and audience. By indicating the genre of the work in the title, the composer establishes a kind of 'agreement' with the listener. He or she can honour the terms of this 'agreement', or deliberately breach it, or play a game with the listener (which will be possible provided the composer and listener share the same cultural codes). The expectations associated with the title 'string quartet' relate primarily to the scale and significance of the work. We expect a meaningful statement, enclosed in an elaborate, preferably cyclical form<sup>11</sup>.

In order to provide a concise overview of Rafał Augustyn's quartet works, it is essential to highlight the artist's unique approach to this particular musical form. Augustyn views the quartet as a highly malleable medium, capable of conveying a vast array of musical ideas due to its inherent flexibility and the vast sonoristic, timbral and expressive possibilities it offers. The composer employs the string quartet genre, which can be seen as 'genre memory'. In accordance with the observations of Ewa Wójtowicz, in his quartets, Rafał Augustyn fulfils the 'contract' that he has entered into with the listener through the title in four instances. Quartet No. 1 exhibits the characteristics of a classical form, despite the presence of unconventional elements, as evidenced by the incorporation of *glissando*. *String Quartet No. 2* with flute *ad libitum* exhibits a markedly different emotional charge. In the composer's opinion, this quartet is the most significant of his oeuvre. It allows the listener to perceive the perspective of a young man reflecting on the political reality of his homeland at the time. Of Rafał Augustyn's above mentioned compositions, the *Second Quartet* is the most mature work in terms of genre. The piece is imbued with nuanced emotions, and traditional and modern elements coexist in symbiosis. *Monadology* represents a formal departure from the established classical genre archetypes, as it consists of twelve miniatures. *Grand jeté* is an arrangement of a film soundtrack in concert form for a string quartet with the use of electronic elements. It features inspirations from the works of other composers and quotations from other works. Each of the works mentioned is also a 'significant statement' (especially *Quartet No. 2*). In

<sup>10</sup> S. Balbus, *Zagłada gatunków*, 'Teksty Drugie. Teoria literatury, krytyka, interpretacja' 1999, no. 6 (59), p. 32.

<sup>11</sup> E. Wójtowicz, *Oblicza kwartetu smyczkowego w twórczości kompozytorów krakowskich*, Kraków 2021, pp. 110–111.

terms of form, Rafał Augustyn's quartets deviate from the established conventions of the genre yet remain firmly anchored to its musical tradition through the ensemble for which they were composed.

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## Kwartety smyczkowe Rafała Augustyna w kontekście tradycji gatunku

### Streszczenie

Wśród autorów kwartetów smyczkowych, którzy w drugiej połowie XX i na początku XXI wieku mierzyli się z „pamięcią gatunku”, znalazł się Rafał Augustyn. W kwartetach kompozytora można odnaleźć zarówno tendencje klasycystyczne (*I Kwartet smyczkowy*, *Do ut des* na kwartet smyczkowy, *Dedykacja* na kwartet smyczkowy i sopran), jak i odwołania do tradycji przeciwstawiane nowoczesnym rozwiązaniom (*II Kwartet smyczkowy*). *Grand jeté*. *Kwartet nr 2 1/2 z elektroniką* to kolaż różnych idiomów, cytatów, dźwięków instrumentalnych i brzmień konkretnych. Ostatni kwartet Augustyna – *Monadologia* (*III Kwartet smyczkowy*) – swobodnie nawiązuje do Leibnizowskiej koncepcji monad – filozoficznych atomów. Składa się z miniatur zespolonych za pomocą statycznych łączników. W artykule autorka przedstawia na wybranych przykładach, w jaki sposób Rafał Augustyn reinterpretuje gatunek kwartetu smyczkowego, pozostając jednak w związku z tradycją poprzez obsadę.

**Słowa kluczowe:** twórczość Rafała Augustyna, muzyka XX i XXI wieku, kwartet smyczkowy, gatunek muzyczny, reinterpretacja.