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“Cleverly Devised, Postmodern Toy”: Paweł Mykietyń’s Music in the Category of Postmodernism and Constructivism on the Example of *III Symphony for Alto and Orchestra*¹

Abstract

Works of Paweł Mykietyń belong to the most characteristic trends of Polish contemporary music. His compositional attitude was individualised in the first decade of the 21st century, and today he is recognised as one of the most original Polish composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. Andrzej Chłopecki, when characterising Mykietyń’s music after the premiere of the composer’s *II Symphony*, compared this work to a “cleverly devised, postmodern toy”. Also Mykietyń’s next, *III Symphony* (2011), can be considered in the context of the categories of postmodernism and constructivism. This work manifests the postmodern attitude, but it is also marked by strict, “cleverly devised”, constructivist thinking. Its musical language contains

¹ Text based on the fragments of BA thesis of the author “*III Symphony* of Paweł Mykietyń: Between postmodernism and constructivism, prepared under the guidance of Prof. Dr hab. Teresa Malecka (Academy of Music in Kraków, 2018).

intertextual references to hip-hop and rap music; on the other hand, it includes such typical for Mykietyń measures as “(de)gradation form”, “accelerando form”, “permanent accelerando” and dodecaphony, which can be found while analysing the work. *III Symphony* can be also interpreted in relation to techniques of deconstruction, including both concept and structure of the composition.

Keywords:

Paweł Mykietyń, postmodernism, constructivism, deconstruction, intertextuality

Paweł Mykietyń (b. 1971) belongs to the most characteristic Polish composers of a so-called middle generation. His output has a highly individual character. At the beginning he remained under the influence of main Polish artists of the second half of the 20th century and the turn of the centuries (Witold Lutosławski, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Krzysztof Penderecki, and the most importantly—Paweł Szymański), but during the first decade of the 21st century his creative attitude was individualised and he became one of the most original contemporary composers. Andrzej Chłopecki, characterising his output just after the premiere of the *II Symphony*, compared this music to a “cleverly devised, postmodern toy”, interesting through “playful joy of erudite associations” and “intelligence in constructing music”.² In terms of these two categories: postmodernism, visible through the multiplicity of stylistic references and specific choice of means, and constructivism resulting from the preciseness of musical organisation, also the next, *III Symphony* of the composer can be considered.

Many works of Mykietyń are an original junction—as the composer himself says—of speculation and intuition, leading to achieving

² Orig. “zmyślnie wykoncypowanej, postmodernistycznej zabawki [...] ludyczną uciechą erudycyjnych skojarzeń [...] inteligencją w konstruowaniu muzyki”. A. Chłopecki, *Mykietyńa budowanie świata*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” 5.07.2008, p. 26.

the basic artistic aim: “creating something beautiful”.³ Speculation, understood as the precompositional stage, is in this case the cognitive construction of abstractive although precisely fixed rules, organising the chosen parameters of the work. They most frequently concern three musical components: form, tempo and organisation of the pitches. Through intuitiveness, seen in the categories of purely musical, compositional invention, the rules assumed by the composer are supplemented by the real sonic material. As a result, the *communicative*, although internally complex music is created. Mykietyn explains the way of work on his composition in the following way:

[...] Reasonable proportions between mathematics and spontaneity must be found. [...] for me this speculative phase gives the opportunity to surprise myself. I create a rule, then I put it into music and the effect which I achieve is impossible to accomplish in any other way—neither through improvisation, nor pure intuitiveness.⁴

The starting point for Mykietyn’s compositional work is a “technical” aspect of the work; aesthetic issues are the secondary phenomenon. As he says himself:

The aesthetic layer of my compositions is less important. As a composer I am most interested in purely technical, workshop issues. [...] Of course I do not think that writing only speculative music without intuitive layer makes any sense.⁵

3 Orig. “stworzenia czegoś pięknego”. M. Herma, *Algorytmy czuję bluesa, czyli przepis na przebój idealny*, “Gazeta.pl Next” 2.04.2012, http://next.gazeta.pl/next/1,150857,11431816,Algorytmy_czuja_bluesa_czyli_przepis_na_przeboj_idealny.html [accessed: 2.12.2018].

4 Orig. “[...] trzeba znaleźć rozsądne proporcje między matematyką a spontanicznoscią. [...] dla mnie ta faza spekulatywna daje możliwość zaskoczenia samego siebie. Tworzę jakieś prawo, potem przekładam je na muzykę i efekt, który powstaje, jest niemożliwy do osiągnięcia w inny sposób – ani poprzez improwizację, ani czystą intuicyjność”. A. Kwiecińska, *W co gra Paweł Mykietyn?*, “Ruch Muzyczny” 2007, No. 10, p. 6.

5 Orig. “Estetyczna warstwa moich kompozycji jest mniej istotna. Mnie jako kompozytora najbardziej interesują kwestie czysto techniczne, warsztatowe. [...] Oczywiście nie uważam, żeby pisanie muzyki wyłącznie spekulatywnej, pozbawionej warstwy intuicyjnej miało sens”. Eadem, *Koncert fortepianowy Pawła Mykietyna w świetle estetyki postmodernistycznej*, MA thesis, Institute of Musicology, University of Warsaw, Warszawa 2006, p. 106.

Therefore, the composer's creative process can be called as two-staged. In the first stage, belonging to the phase of precomposition, he creates rules, establishing main structures of his works. On this basis—in the second stage—he then creates the sonic material.

The mentioned communicativeness of Mykietyń's music is in great part connected with his artistic openness for styles and conventions—both the newer and more traditional ones. As he claims himself, he is “a composer writing quite conventional sounds”.⁶ The perceptibly accessible sound of his works is linked to rehabilitation of such elements as melody, rhythm or tonality. Both in terms of used compositional techniques and the attitude, his output refer to the same parts of the assumptions of musical postmodernism.

Postmodernism

In Polish musicology the work of Mykietyń has been hitherto interpreted, among others, from the perspective of such trends of contemporary humanities as postmodernism and deconstruction.⁷ Despite the fact that his “putting the tradition in the brackets”⁸ represents the attitude that is typical for postmodern aesthetics, the composer himself does not pay much attention to this type of categorisation. Appreciating the achievements of modernism (as an attitude assuming—as he says—“creating music from nothing”), and postmodernism (“using what belongs to the previous generations”),⁹ he does not turn to such divisions in the compositional autoreflection.¹⁰

6 Orig. “kompozytorem piszącym dosyć konwencjonalne dźwięki”. Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Paweł Mykietyń „Herr Thaddäus”, dir. G. Kućmierz, 2018, <https://web.facebook.com/PWMEdtion/videos/1762997487097976/> [accessed: 2.12.2018].

7 B. Fiugajska, *Technika dekonstrukcji w twórczości Pawła Mykietyńa*, Kraków 2012; A. Kwiecińska, *Koncert fortepianowy..., op. cit.*

8 Orig. “branie tradycji w nawias”. M. Majchrowski, *Mykietyńa gra z czasem*, “Tygodnik Powszechny” 2017, No. 27, <https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/mykietyna-gra-z-czasem-148857> [accessed: 2.12.2018].

9 Orig. “korzystającego z tego, co jest własnością poprzednich pokoleń”. A. Kwiecińska, *Koncert fortepianowy..., op. cit.*, p. 106.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

Mykietyn's belonging to the musical postmodernism can be characterised e.g. in the context of Krzysztof Szwajgier's classification.¹¹ In his article titled *Transawangarda*, he divides postmodernism into three "after-new" trends: minimalism, postmodern style and transavant-garde. The second of them—postmodern style—is based on a so-called double coding, understood as a "co-existence of modernity and tradition in [one] work",¹² according to the author is connected with such terms as traditionalism, polystylism, deconstruction or intertextuality.¹³ In order to place Mykietyn's output and his *III Symphony* in the diverse and widely understood culture of postmodernism, the postmodern style—"only partly in opposition to modernity"¹⁴—can be regarded as the closest to this composer.

Constructivism

Constructivism, understood as a strict way of the compositional thinking, assumes the presence of all "technical" rules, restricting the element of randomness. Adapting this definition, the category should be seen as emblematic for Mykietyn, although—in the context of Polish contemporary music—a characteristic not only for him. Describing the work of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Krzysztof Droba distinguished "domination of constructivist factor" as one of the basic elements constituting his music.¹⁵ Due to this analogy in the compositional workshop of both Polish composers, justified by Mykietyn's statements (many times confirming his inspirations by Górecki's music), constructivism can be regarded as the category which links their attitudes. Already cited statement about the speculative phase, later adapted into music, can be juxtaposed with the Górecki's characteristics once created by Adrian Thomas and

¹¹ K. Szwajgier, *Transawangarda*, [in:] *Książka programowa 58. Międzynarodowego Festiwalu Muzyki Współczesnej „Warszawska Jesień”*, Warszawa 2015, p. 1.

¹² Orig. "współobecność w [jednym] utworze kodu nowoczesności i tradycji". *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Orig. "połowicznie tylko przeciwstawiającą się nowoczesności". *Ibid.*

¹⁵ K. Droba, *Górecki Henryk Mikołaj*, [in:] *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM. Część biograficzna*, E. Dziebowska (ed.), Vol. 3 (EFG), Kraków 1987, p. 424. Vide also: M. Jabłoński, *Encyklopedia muzyczna PWM. Górecki*, Kraków 2011.

presenting the process of compositional work of the *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*' author: “[he] worked in an extraordinarily methodic way: firstly neatly and logically worked out various features and parameters, only then started proper composing”.¹⁶

Despite the fact that, as a composer, Mykietyń focuses mainly on the technical and workshop aspect of his compositions,¹⁷ he usually makes rather terse statements on this topic, trying not to show the “internal” aspects of his workshop. Similarly to Górecki in the past, also the younger composer does not very often reveal technical details of his composition. As he says himself:

My final aims are beauty and message—so that music has some effect on the listener, some kind of emotions, intellectual impression. [...] the whole technical case is somehow insignificant [...], it remains my private matter.¹⁸

Comparing Górecki's constructivism to constructivist features of Mykietyń's music, the way of such thinking in the works of the younger composer can be considered. Mykietyń's constructivism seems to be based on the constant development chosen by him: he rests upon the constant and abstractive rules, containing many diverse methods of strictness and rigours, often also coexisting within one work or its chosen fragments. What is significant, constructivist techniques used by Mykietyń are more connected with the general structural strictness than the precise realisation of the given rigour, what is visible especially in the mature works of the Polish composer—such as the *III Symphony*.

16 Orig. “Postępował [on] w sposób niezwykle metodyczny: najpierw starannie i logicznie wypracowywał rozmaite cechy i parametry, dopiero potem przystępował do właściwej kompozycji”. A. Thomas, *Energia—ruch—życie. Geneza „Elementi”, „Scontri”* 2013, No. 1, p. 13.

17 A. Kwiecińska, *Koncert fortepianowy..., op. cit.*, p. 106.

18 Orig. “Ostatecznym celem jest [dla mnie] piękno i przekaz – żeby muzyka wywarła jakiś efekt na słuchaczu, jakiś rodzaj emocji, wrażenie intelektualne. [...] cała sprawa techniczna jest w pewnym sensie nieistotna [...], pozostaje to moja prywatna sprawą”. P. Mykietyń, *Paweł Mykietyń. Wywiad*, interview conducted by E. Szczecińska and J. Topolski, “Glissando” 2010, No. 16, <http://glissando.pl/tekst/wywiad-pawel-mykietyn-2/> [accessed: 2.12.2018].

"Time is the basic issue in music"¹⁹

As it has been mentioned, the constructivism of Mykietyń's works focuses on three basic parameters: form, tempo and organisation of pitches (often connected with 12-tone technique). In most of Mykietyń's works the macro- and microform is shaped on the principle of reductionism, realised through gradual shortening of the distance between rhythmic values in the area of chosen fragments of the work. These techniques, expressing the inclination of Mykietyń to "operation with time",²⁰ were called in the literature as so-called *accelerando* forms and the technique of permanent *accelerando* (the first term was introduced by Beata Fiugajska);²¹ they refer to the "temporal trend"²² in Mykietyń's work.

The essence of the form of *accelerando* is the gradual reductionism of the alternate, contrasted musical segments, linked to the faster and faster succession of them in the whole work or its chosen fragments; such a way of cumulating the sonic material leads to partly "agogic" understanding of the musical form of the composition. The so-called permanent *accelerando*, on the contrary, is the gradual fastening of the real metronomic tempo in the work.²³ The composer explains this technique in the following way:

[...] tempo is not a constant straight line, but a curve and it is getting smaller or bigger, even over a distance of a few minutes. At the moment when the tempo is twice as fast as at the beginning, the conductor starts showing its half, but it still grows.²⁴

¹⁹ Orig. "Czas jest podstawowym zagadnieniem w muzyce". *Ibid.*

²⁰ Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Paweł Mykietyń, „Herr Thaddäus”, *op. cit.*

²¹ B. Fiugajska, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

²² M. Majchrowski, *op. cit.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Orig. "[...] tempo nie jest stałą prostą, lecz krzywą, i cały czas maleje lub wzrasta, i to na odcinku paru minut. W momencie, kiedy tempo staje się dwukrotnie szybsze niż wejściowe, to dyrygent zaczyna pokazywać jego połowę, ale ono ciągle rośnie". *Ibid.*

As Mykietyń says himself, he used these “operations with time” for the first time in 2000 and he still tries to explore this way.²⁵ Plastic shaping of the agogic layer of the works, affecting the perceptive sphere of its reception, is strictly connected with dramaturgical way of understanding the work. As the composer says himself “I always compare writing music with creating a good drama [...], I think by such categories as plots, events—but I speak through sounds”.²⁶

III Symphony. Analysis

I use the light language, but it is not a trifle.²⁷

The *III Symphony* for alto and orchestra was composed in 2011 as a commission of the National Audiovisual Institute, connected with the celebration of Poland becoming the president of the European Union. Paradoxically, it is a second symphonic work of Mykietyń; he titled his proper first symphony (2007) as *Second*.²⁸ As a composition realising the external, genre assumptions signalised by the title (in the symphonic instrumentation, monumentalism and the form of cycle), *III Symphony* due to its contemporary musical language share the feature of other 20th- and 21st-century compositions, which—as Carl Dahlhaus wrote decades ago—“only under the pressure allow to subordinate

²⁵ Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Paweł Mykietyń „Herr Thaddäus”, *op. cit.*

²⁶ Orig. “Zawsze porównuję pisanie muzyki do tworzenia dobrego dramatu [...], myślę takimi kategoriami jak wątki, wydarzenia – tylko że wypowiadam się za pomocą dźwięków”. P. Mykietyń, *Komponuję autobiografię*, interview conducted by A. Grużewska, “Polityka” 2000, No. 7, <https://archiwum.polityka.pl/art/komponuje-autobiografie,363175.html> [accessed: 2.12.2018].

²⁷ Orig. “Mówię lekkim językiem, ale to nie jest błahostka”. P. Mykietyń, *Paweł Mykietyń. Prezydencja w rytmie trip hopu*, interview conducted by F. Łobodziński, “Newsweek” 27.06.2011, <http://www.newsweek.pl/kultura/wiadomosci-kulturalne/pawel-mykietyn-prezydencja-w-rytmie-trip-hopu,78530,1,1.html> [accessed: 2.12.2018].

²⁸ P. Mykietyń, *Wywiad o „III Symfonii” Pawła Mykietyna* [video], interview conducted by K. Naliwajek-Mazurek, “Ninateka”, <http://ninateka.pl/film/wywiad-o-iii-symfonii-pawla-mykietyna-pawel-mykietyn> [accessed: 2.12.2018].

to any genre".²⁹ It is the work which represents the contemporary symphonicism, and particularly, according to Hermann Danuser's classification, "hybrid", typically postmodern kind of this genre.³⁰ This modernity is visible in the work in both the musical language—multi-stylistic, using old and new conventions, techniques and styles—and the layer of the text, mirroring the picture of the 21st-century postculture.

For the genesis of the work, the conscious desire of the composer to refer to the contemporary popular music appeared significant. Mykietyn claims that the trends of rap, hip-hop and trip-hop³¹ were the important source of inspiration for him during the work on the composition.

I do not divide music into artistic and popular, these terms are quite inadequate. But as in the past I transformed classical or Baroque conventions—what resulted from my fascination by Paweł Szymański at that time—here I use the similar solutions, but based on teenage music.³²

Despite these clear inspirations, the sound material of the *Symphony* is not based on the stylisation of music originating from the culture of hip-hop. It is very heterogenic—both in terms of the musical language and style. Similarly to the "mature" compositions, in the *III Symphony* Mykietyn repeated the techniques that are characteristic for him, thanks to which the composition is

²⁹ Orig. "jedynie pod presją pozwalają się podporządkować jakiemuś gatunkowi". C. Dahlhaus, *Estetyka muzyki*, trans. into Polish by Z. Skowron, Warszawa 2007, pp. 17–18.

³⁰ H. Danuser, *Die Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Laaber 1984, p. 400; as cited in: T. Malecka, *Kwartety smyczkowe Henryka Mikołaja Góreckiego wobec tradycji gatunku*, "Teoria Muzyki. Studia, interpretacje, dokumentacje" 4 (2014), p. 53.

³¹ P. Mykietyn, *Wywiad o „III Symfonii”..., op. cit.*; P. Mykietyn, *Paweł Mykietyn o swojej najnowszej symfonii* [video], interview conducted by M. Peryt, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yiodowM-3I> [accessed: 2.12.2018].

³² Orig. "Nie dzielę muzyki na poważną i rozrywkową, to dość chybione terminy. Ale [tak] jak swego czasu przetwarzałem konwencje klasyczne czy barokowe – co wynikało z mojej ówczesnej fascynacji muzyką Pawła Szymańskiego – tak tutaj dokonuję podobnych zabiegów, ale na bazie muzyki młodzieżowej". T. Cyz, *Uwaga na kulturę! O „III Symfonii” Pawła Mykietyna*, "Dwutygodnik" 2011, No. 60, <https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/2375-uwaga-na-kulture-o-iii-symfonii-mykietyna.html> [accessed: 2.12.2018].

a kind of accumulation and summary of earlier ideas of the artist. Therefore, it represents both “mathematical” (based on the given pre-compositional structures), dramaturgical and postmodern way of shaping the big vocal-instrumental form and its sound language.

Mykietyń started the work on the *III Symphony* from the musical layer of the composition—the choice of text was made later. Both music and text of the composition mirror the current main characteristic feature of the Polish composer’s style, which is striving for a type of “lightening”.³³ In the *III Symphony* he used private, already existing texts written by Mateusz Kościukiewicz (b. 1986). As the composer says, the fact of choosing them was “rather random”;³⁴ he did it using the criteria of flexibility of the text layer, allowing to freely link to the musical layer of the work. “Outstanding” contemporary poetry, as Mykietyń says, being the “closed work” in itself, is not adequate to use it in the musical work.³⁵ Following this thought, the composer chose hermetic and quite abstract texts without the strict plot, any pathos and—as the composer says himself—“weights”, which “are maybe sometimes unnecessary”.³⁶ These texts—written primarily in the form of SMS messages—use the common and youth language. Unconventional narration, leading only to the specific situational context, mirrors the character of the presented world: the street crowd and “city jungle”.³⁷

III Symphony is a five-part cycle. In terms of the size, its internal structure has a reductive character—every next part is shorter than the previous one. Heterogeneity of the musical material is based on the adequately constructed sequence of musical segments, referring directly and indirectly to the various styles, conventions and techniques—both the ones originating from the European “high” music and the ones connected with the contem-

33 Orig. “odciążania”. P. Mykietyń, *Wywiad o „III Symfonii”..., op. cit.*

34 Orig. “dość przypadkowy”. *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*

36 Orig. “ciężarów [które] są czasami może niekonieczne”. *Ibid.*; P. Mykietyń, *Uwaga na kulturę: „III Symfonia” Mykietyńa*, interview conducted by T. Cyz, “Dwutygodnik” 2011, No. 59, <https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/2335-uwaga-na-kulturę-iii-symfonia-mykietyńa.html>.

37 Orig. “miejskiej dżungli”. *Ibid.*

porary popular music. These segments and several single sound forms are repeated and interspersed with each other during the subsequent five parts of the work. The way of shaping the form, namely alternate musical fragments of almost surconventional character, was noticeable yet in the earlier works of Mykietyn. Analysing *St Mark Passion*, in reference to such juxtaposed fragments Krzysztof Cyran proposed the term of "musics", originating from the concept of musical intertextuality created by Mieczysław Tomaszewski.³⁸ He defined them as the different "types of shaping the sonic material, [referring to] stylistic areas or musical idioms of particular epochs", different from each other in "specific cooperation of elements and the adequate performance techniques".³⁹ In the case of the *III Symphony*, these references are on the one hand to the idioms which are characteristic for the contemporary popular music (rap, hip-hop and trip-hop) and on the other the features referring to the tradition of "artistic" music. Imitating elements of these styles determinates melody and rhythm, harmony and the sound shape of particular "musics". As closed unities, these segments are compact and internally unified, what is in favour of its audible recognisability and underlines the serial, quasi-refrain structure of the chosen parts of a work (because each of "musics" becomes a kind of a refrain). Table 1 presents the juxtaposition and the basic characteristics of these "musics", distinguished based on the characteristics of sound.

38 K. Cyran, „Kanon i postmodernizm” w twórczości religijnej kompozytorów polskich przełomu XX i XXI wieku, PhD thesis, Academy of Music in Kraków, Kraków 2015, pp. 276–277; M. Tomaszewski, *Na otwarcie: dlaczego „muzyka w muzycie”*, [in:] *Muzyka w muzycie. Spotkania muzyczne w Baranowie*, T. Malecka, L. Polony (eds.), Kraków 1980; reprint in: *idem, O muzycie polskiej w perspektywie intertekstualnej. Studia i szkice*, Kraków 2005.

39 Orig. "typy ukształtowań materiału dźwiękowego, [odwołujące się] do obszarów Stylistycznych, czy idiomów muzycznych różnych epok", "specyficznym współdziałaniem elementów i odpowiednimi środkami wykonawczymi". K. Cyran, *op. cit.*, pp. 276–277.

“Music”	Characteristics of the sound material: texture, multi stops, microform	Expressive and performance markings	Dominant instruments (in order according to texture layers)	Metre and rhythm	Dominant dynamics
A	Imitation of the sound of the drums set: repeated double stops (Vni I), rhythmic accompaniment of the orchestra and short “bridge” fragments; homorhythm, progressions	<i>poco staccato</i>	Vni I, Tn, Vc, Cb, Cr, Tr, Vn II, VI	4/4; Pulsation, motorics (Vni I divisi); dotted rhythm (orchestra)	f
B	Chant-like, homo-rhythm; phrasing structure; dodecaphony	<i>cantabile</i>	Fl, Cl (+ bongos, drum, tom-tom)	Changing metre; irregular rhythm	pp
C	Sonorist fragment: dissonance orchestral chords <i>tremolo</i> and single “hits” of the brass	–	tutti (archi divisi)	Changing metre; irregular rhythm	changing
D	Imitation of rap and quasi-tonal accompaniment of the orchestra	–	Alt, Fl, Cl, Vn, VI, Vc, Cb, Tr, Vb	Triplets; equal, regular stresses	mf
E	Punctual texture; emphasised timbre, unconventional sound effects	–	tutti	Irregular rhythm, sounds isolated by rests	changing

Table 1: Sound characteristic of the “musics” in the *III Symphony*.

The scheme of succession and repetitiveness of all “musics” appearing in the *Symphony*, divided into the rows of musical segments, can be presented through the graphics mirroring the reductionist way of its formal location within the work. All “musics” are introduced for the first time yet in the part I—the longest one and at the same time synthesizing the musical material of the work, what underlines its significant role in the whole cycle.⁴⁰



Illus. 1: Graphical, approximate mirroring of the beginning and end of the part I of the *Symphony*. The illustration mirrors “(de)gradational”⁴¹ shape of its structure, in accordance with the *accelerando* form.

The formal disposition of “musics”, both in the sphere of micro- and macroform of the work, can be characterised by the term “(de)gradation form”, introduced by Beata Fiugajska referring to the earlier works of Mykietyn.⁴² This technique is connected with the already mentioned form of *accelerando* and in its main sense it is the “ennoblement of the marginal and [simultaneous] degradation of the basic feature”.⁴³ In this work, it appears in all situations in which the mutual relation between chosen elements of the musical form is changed anti-proportionally. These elements in the *III Symphony* are mainly “musics”. The change of their hierarchy takes place both within the particular parts of the work and between them. Musical “returns” of the musical segments are therefore based on the given rule: fragments playing only the “secondary” role in the part I become the basic musical material in the parts II and III. The rule of a formal (de)gradation takes place in the analogical way on the ground of microform, what is especially visible in the

40 P. Mykietyn, *Wywiad o „III Symfonii”...*, op. cit.

41 B. Fiugajska, op. cit., p. 35.

42 *Ibid.*

43 Orig. “nobilitacji cechy marginalnej i [jednoczesnej] degradacji cechy zasadniczej”. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

structure of the part I of the work: presented at the beginning in the longer fragments (“musics” A and B), in the further development of this part are replaced by faster series of the remaining “musics” (C, D and E).

The closer characteristics of two contrasted segments opening the part I of the work—“musics” A and B—makes it possible to emphasize the diverse and quite surconventional character of the musical material of the *III Symphony*:

- “Music” A, presented just after the introduction, is based on the imitation of the standard sound of the drum set, used in the popular music. The composer himself compares its first presentation to the “rhythm of the whole drum set transported into the symphonic instruments”, calling it as a “rhythmic formula”, situated in the melodic and rhythmic context.⁴⁴ As he says, it is the “simplest rhythm played on the traditional percussion, but without percussion”.⁴⁵ “Music” A, played by the string and wind (woodwind and brass) instruments, is based on the repeated rhythmic scheme of a clear pulsation. The base of its multi stops are repeated, rhythmised chords of the orchestra parts; they are accompanied by the repeated double stops (in the constant interval of three semitones) of two *Violini I divisi* in the high register. In every of these two layers there are frequent, irregular movements up or down by a second (Example 1).

What seems paradoxical, with the aim to imitate the sounds of the drum set—so the sound characteristic for the contemporary popular music—the composer used the basic instrument of the traditional symphonic orchestra (strings and winds), depriving the “drum style” of its natural sound context.

44 Orig. “rytmu całego zestawu perkusyjnego przetransportowanego na instrumenty symfoniczne”, “formułę rytmiczną”. P. Mykietyń, *Wywiad o „III Symfonii”..., op. cit.*

45 Orig. “najprostszy rytm grany na tradycyjnej perkusji, ale bez perkusji”. *Idem, Uwaga na kulturę!..., op. cit.*

A (♩ = 74)

pece three, tempo *

Ex. 1: P. Mykietyn, *III Symphony*, part I, bb. 19–23. The beginning of the first presentation of the “music” A.

- The sound base of the second “music” (B) is formed from the cantilena, irregular phrases of four wind instruments. They move homorhythmically, although with changing stressing. The structure of their pitch is based on the eight-part dodecaphonic over-series: twenty-four four-note chords (bb. 41–55) create eight vertical tone rows. They are constructed in the way that every three following chords of the instruments use the whole twelve-tone scale. Melodic lines of the opposite voices of the ensemble (flute I and clarinet II), being the result of the vertical rows, also create four simultaneous linear rows (Example 2).

Ex. 2: P. Mykietyń, *III Symphony*, part I, bb. 41–57. The first presentation of "music" B.

The precise structure of the pitches in the above-shown fragment can be presented in the table 2 (on the next page).

In the final, culminating moment of the part I of the *III Symphony*, the next technique characteristic for Mykietyń's compositional workshop has been used: the permanent *accelerando*. This is a fragment in which orchestral chords, homorhythmic from the beginning, together with the constant raise of the tempo become gradually simplified in terms of harmony, yet to achieve the "clear" B_b minor chord finishing the culmination (Ex. 3 on the pages 22 and 23).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8																
FII	e♭	c	f	b	g♯	c♯	d	g	b♭	a	f♯	e	b♭	g	e	g♯	c	e♭	f	f♯	a	c♯	d	b
FII	b	a	c♯	d	d♯	e	a	e♭	f♯	a♯	b	c	f	b	g♯	d	f♯	e	c	b♭	d	g	a	e♭
CII	g	e	g♭	f	g	b♭	a♭	c	e	f	c♯	g♯	f♯	d♯	c♯	a	b	c♯	g♯	e	g	c	b♭	g
CI	d	a♭	b♭	g♭	a	c	f	c♯	b	e	g	e♭	d	c	a	f	b♭	g	b	e♭	d♭	a♭	e	f♯

Table 2: Part I, bb. 41–57. The first presentation of “music” B: sound structure of eight vertical 12-tone rows. Four simultaneous linear rows (FII, CI) are marked in grey.

P *mezzo-forte*
acc.

$\text{♩} = 78,6 \dots \text{♩} = 83,5 \dots \text{♩} = 88,7 \dots \text{♩} = 94,2 \dots$

Zuzanna Daniec, "Cleverly Devised, Postmodern Toy"...

A musical score for orchestra and piano, page 251. The score consists of 18 staves. The instruments listed from top to bottom are: Picc (Piccolo), Fl I (Flute I), Fl II (Flute II), Cl I in B (Clarinet I in B-flat), Cl II in B (Clarinet II in B-flat), Fg (French Horn), Cr I in F (Corno I in F), Cr II in F (Corno II in F), Tr I in B (Trombone I in B-flat), Tr II in B (Trombone II in B-flat), Tn I (Tuba I), Tn II (Tuba II), Tmp (Timpani), CmptII (Cimbalom II), XII (Xylophone), Vn I (Violin I), Vn II (Violin II), VI (Viola), Vc (Cello), and Cb (Double Bass). The tempo is indicated at the beginning of each staff: Picc = 100, Fl I = 50, Fl II = 53, Cl I in B = 56, Cl II in B = 4, Fg = 59, Cr I in F = 9, Cr II in F = 63, Tr I in B = 7, Tr II in B = 7, Tn I = 7, Tn II = 7, Tmp = 7, CmptII = 7, XII = 7, Vn I = 7, Vn II = 7, VI = 7, Vc = 7, Cb = 7. The score shows a continuous sequence of sixteenth-note patterns across all staves, with the tempo increasing sequentially from 50 to 100.

Ex. 3: P. Mykietyn, *III Symphony*, part I, bb. 246–255. Finale: the beginning of the permanent accelerando.

The gradual, regular acceleration of tempo within this segment is connected with the rhythmic changes of a character of diminution in the score. At the beginning, every bar contains four quarter notes, then eight eighth notes, sixteen sixteenths etc. With every change the numeral value of the metronomic tempo is diminished twice; it makes it easier to read it for the performers. Thanks to the increase of metronomic tempo, there is the feeling of constant, unstoppable acceleration of the rhythmical values without any clear metre and stressing divisions (Table 3).

Rhythmic values written in particular segments	Metronomic tempo for a quarter note in the particular segments (amount of quarter notes per minute)						
	(74)						
♩					78,6	83,5	88,7
♪	100	106,2	112,8	119,8	127,4	135,2	143,6
♫	200	212,4	225,6	239,6	254,8	270,4	287,2
♩	400	424,8	444,8		305,2	324	344
					365,6	388,4	388,4
					592		

Table 3: Part I, bb. 246–277: the scheme of the increase of tempo in the segment constructed by the rule of the permanent *accelerando*.

Such an increasing row of numbers is based on the rule close to the mathematical geometrical row (Mykietyń himself recognises *accelerando* as an example of the “geometrical” compositional thinking).⁴⁶ However, it is not strict in terms of mathematical rules—the composer adapted it to some extent to the practical requirements, writing the following metronomic values in only approximate way, through shortening to one number after coma.

III Symphony: Interpretation

Through not recognising the divisions into so-called art and popular music Mykietyń is included into the trend connected with the idea of diversity, pluralism and going beyond the traditional, valuing barriers in the art. Conscious and intentional joining the low and high style—popular with concert—indicates the presence of the open aesthetics of possibilities, commonness and environment in his music, typical for postmodernism.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the belief in the equality of different “voices”, and also that “all traditions are important”, is connected with the contemporary view on the world as consisting of many equal perspectives.⁴⁸ As Jonathan D. Kramer wrote, postmodern music is approving, not excluding; it accepts the diversity of music around the world, includes many musics.⁴⁹ This sentence mirrors the composer’s views, from the beginning explaining the idea and aim of his *III Symphony* in the interviews. Transferring the sounds originating from “non-elite” hip-hop music into the sphere of the concert artistic music, the composer erased the original function of the former, its aim and aesthetic genesis. Besides the concept of linking a so-called high style with popular mass music, pluralism—typical for postmodernism—is visible in the *III Symphony* through the co-existence of different modes and compositional techniques. This diversity

46 M. Herma, *op. cit.*

47 *Idee modernizmu i postmodernizmu w poetyce kompozytorskiej i refleksji o muzyce*, A. Jarzębska, J. Paja-Stach (eds.), Kraków 2007, pp. 7–14.

48 J. Pasler, *Postmodernism*, [in:] *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie (ed.), Vol. 20, New York–London 2001, p. 213.

49 J.D. Kramer, *O genezie muzyki postmodernizmu*, trans. into Polish by D. Maciejewicz, “Muzyka” 2000, No. 3; as cited in: *Idee modernizmu..., op. cit.*, pp. 43–44.

contains both the adaptation of the elements of the contemporary popular music and the use of the musical techniques that are characteristic for the avant-garde and the later 20th-century trends. Several fragments of the work, through the presence of musical repetitions and accompanying progression, refer to the shaping the material which is typical for minimalism. Among *stricte* postmodern compositional techniques there are exposing melody and the clearness of the rhythm and stressing.⁵⁰

Postmodern pluralism is also visible in the *III Symphony* in the juxtaposition quasi-tonal “music” D, imitating the sound of rap and trip-hop, “music” B based on the strict, dodecaphonic structure and “music” E, using almost punctual sounds. In the vocal part, the type of declamation which is typical for rap intertwines with the “Romantic-like” fragments, exposing the lyrical element, as well as segments of a clearly “contemporary” character. In terms of harmony, in the *III Symphony* traditionally constructed, quasi-tonal chords, as well as dissonant and microtonal multi-stops are present.

III Symphony as a work of intertextual contexts and references—indicated partly by the composer himself—belongs to the contemporary musical “discursive universe of culture”.⁵¹ Direct and indirect references of the work to the various spheres of musical tradition and modernity cause that it should be seen from the perspective of a widely understood, “textual” dialogue, but connected with the autonomous and individual language of the composer, being the meeting of “what is new with what is old and what is different with what is own”.⁵² As Mieczysław Tomaszewski writes, the basis for considering the work in the intertextual categories is the presence of any “external influences” in it.⁵³ In the case of the *III Symphony*, these influences were the basis assumption for Mykietyn from the beginning of

50 Compare: D. Krawczyk, *Postmodernizm. Esej o muzyce polskiej*, [in:] *Kompozytorzy polscy 1918–2000*, M. Podhajski (ed.), Vol. 1, *Eseje*, Gdańsk–Warszawa 2005, p. 298.

51 R. Nycz, *Poetyka intertekstualna. Tradycje i perspektywy*, [in:] *Krzysztof Penderecki—muzyka ery intertekstualnej. Studia i interpretacje*, E. Siemdaj, M. Tomaszewski (eds.), Kraków 2005, p. 7.

52 Orig. “tego, co nowe, z tym, co dawne [i] tego, co odmienne – z tym, co własne”. M. Tomaszewski, *O muzyce polskiej...*, op. cit., p. 15.

53 Orig. “wpływów zewnętrznych”. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

the work with the composition. Through stylisation referring to the sounds which are typical for the contemporary popular music, he associated some of "musics" and some of the remaining fragments of the *Symphony* to the modernity as a context. Through sound-textural variety of the remaining "musics", constructed as sonorism or dodecaphony, the composer referred to the widely understood musical tradition, having functioning here as an inspiration.⁵⁴ Stylistic diversity of the *III Symphony* is based on the successive co-existence of many types of musical narration in it—both in the layer of the orchestra and voice. Somehow historical references of "musics" shaping the form of the three first parts of the work are both on the stylistic and structural level. "Musics" A and D—stylised as the popular music, being their real "point of closure" (so the main point of reference)⁵⁵—move their stylistic idiom into the ground of the concert orchestral music, somehow also liquidating its original sound context. Remaining "musics" as well as certain fragments of the *Symphony* are the reminiscence of historical trends and styles, what is confirmed for example by the Romantic-like lyricism of the part IV.⁵⁶ Taking over the heritage of the historical musical tradition in the form of tonality, dodecaphony or the purely timbre elements, in the *III Symphony* the composer balances these elements, subordinating them to the main tone of the work: "stripped of pathos" and "Bacchic".⁵⁷

Deconstruction as one of the main tends of postmodernism, sometimes described as the philosophy of difference, is connected with the multidimensional way of perceiving the ambiguous work of art.⁵⁸ The interpretation of the *III Symphony* in the light of its assumptions results from the presence of the particular conceptive and structural features in the work. Deconstruction—visible in the coexistence of two different elements creating the "binary system", within which its internal hierarchy is changed—in the *III Symphony* has a dual dimension. Namely, it refers to two basic aspects of the work: concept and structure. As a composition

54 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

55 Orig. "punkt dojścia". *Ibid.*, p. 27.

56 Compare: *ibid.*, p. 32.

57 Orig. "odartemu z patosu", "dionizyjskiemu". P. Mykietyn, *Wywiad o „III Symfonii”..., op. cit.*

58 *Idee modernizmu..., op. cit.*, p. 14.

imitating the sounds of the popular youth sounds in the intertextual way, it also deconstructs its basic concept—remaining the symphonic work for a concert performance, because it crosses and broadens its basic genre assumption. This deconstruction of an already existing “object”, in the case of the *III Symphony* meaning the style and the convention of hip-hop music, can be connected, after Beata Fiugajska, with Derrida’s term of “dissemination”.⁵⁹ In the layer of the structure, so the formal plan of the work, the change of hierarchy between the opposite elements is visible in the form of (de)gradation—the way through which the meaning of musical segments as basic components of the work’s structure is deconstructed.

The constructive character of the *III Symphony* results from the presence of rigorous assumptions, strictness and precompositional patterns in it. As it is visible from the analysis of the work, these rigours refer to the form, organisation of time, and organisation of pitches—aspects of the work which have the significant meaning in Mykietyn’s music. The great role of technique, appearing to be important although a deeper layer of the work, decided about its non-chaotic organisation. Structural thinking is visible in the reductive shaping of the cycle of *Symphonies*, namely shortening the following parts in terms of duration and sizes. In the sphere of microform, this technique—connected with the form of *accelerando*—changes the basic assumptions connected with the formal shape of the musical work. The second important trace of Mykietyn’s constructive thinking is the strict use of time through the “permanent *accelerando*”—the technique which is the example of adaptation of the mathematical calculations to the sound sphere. The last one, equally significant example of the constructivism in the *III Symphony*, connected with treating the sound material in a strict, almost structural way, refers to the twelve-tone technique used in several fragments of the work. Introducing eight-part, dodecaphonic over-series in the part I becomes the base for its further returns and permutations, used in new and totally different sound versions.

59 B. Fiugajska, *op. cit.*, pp. 134, 146–147. The author identifies the “strategy of dissemination” with the widely understood strategy of the quotation.

Conclusion

Making an attempt to see the *III Symphony* in the light of its constitutive features, based on the prepared analysis and interpretation, its two aspects can be underlined, signalised in the title of this article. Namely, the work is the clear effect of postmodern attitude, but at the same time it is marked by the strictness of compositional thinking, being an example of musical constructivism. The *III Symphony*, similarly to some of the remaining “mature” works of the composer, mirrors the specific way of realisation of the strict precompositional assumptions. Mykietyn does not shape his whole works according to one and given rigour—he rather uses various, pre-requisite rules in the chosen fragments. This attitude confirms that Mykietyn’s music is multidimensional and multifaceted, being indeed—in accordance with Andrzej Chłopecki’s words—the kind of “postmodern toy”, although—what is confirmed by a quite deeper analysis of the *III Symphony*—“cleverly devised”.⁶⁰

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⁶⁰ Orig. “postmodernistycznej zabawki”, “zmyślnie wykoncypowanej”. A. Chłopecki, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁶¹ The last date of access to all internet sources: 2.12.2018.

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