

biorców. Kreatywność odbiorców jest mocną stroną artykułu o filmie *Copy Shop*. Autorzy prowadzą nas przez skomplikowaną materię filmu, pisząc o swoich odkryciach znaczenia elementu narracyjnego, muzyki i obu tych składowych naraz. Równie interesujący pod tym względem jest artykuł Danae Stefanou o utworach intermedialnych i formach otwartych. W wybranych utworach akcent jest położony nie tyle na interpretację produktu, co na wykonawstwo, które też jest przeciwieństwem interpretacją. Tu rola takiego interpretatora jest nawet zrównana z rolą twórcy. O zupełnie innym rodzaju kreatywności piszą autorzy tekstu poświęconego programowi komputerowemu do harmonizowania melodii. Tym razem chodzi o kreatywność inteligentnej maszyny (*computational creativity*) uruchomionej przez kreatywnych teoretyków. Osiągnięte

tą drogą rezultaty są przez autorów nazywane twórczością, a najmocniejszym argumentem przemawiającym za tym jest fakt, że oceniający te rezultaty eksperci przypisali im wysoki stopień nowości.

Wydanie specjalne *Musicae Scientiae* pt. *Creative Conceptual Blending in Music* nie odpowiada na wszystkie pytania dotyczące podjętego tematu, ale niewątpliwie jest istotnym krokiem w kierunku kognitywistycznego ujmowania muzyki, zwłaszcza jej aspektu pojęciowego. Należy mieć nadzieję, że to wydanie nie tylko zaspokoi ciekawość zainteresowanych mieszaniną pojęciową w muzyce, lecz także stanie się inspiracją do dalszych tego typu badań.

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ewa MAZIERSKA, POPULAR POLISH ELECTRONIC MUSIC, 1970–2020.  
A CULTURAL HISTORY

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In her book *Popular Polish Electronic Music*, scholar Ewa Mazierska traces in depth – and, in several ways, original – history of popular electronic music produced in Poland from c.1970 to the present day.

The book, structured in four broad chapters in chronological order, aims to provide a comprehensive and interdisciplinary overview of the rise of the electronic medium in Poland. The author relates this phenomenon to multiple factors concerning history, politics, customs and society, as well as relations with contemporary music in other countries and with other art forms. The author makes it clear in the introduction that the term ‘electronic’ in the title has an extended meaning: Mazierska examines not only works that composers have de-

finied as electronic, but also works that are considered ‘electronic’ because electronic instruments are used in them. The reason for applying this term to such a vast macro-generic output lies in the fact that in recent decades the criteria for classifying a work as ‘electronic music’ have altered quite radically – in Poland and everywhere else.

The book seeks from the outset to link the history of Polish electronic popular music to the country’s political events. Over the decades examined Poland has gone from being a satellite state of the Soviet Union to being a member of the European Union. The author highlights how, during the last decades of the twentieth century, Polish musicians were disadvantaged and marginalised – both culturally and economically –

compared to their Western colleagues, with censorship of song lyrics and reduced access to the means of production (instruments, recording studios) and to the Western record market. According to Mazierska, this state of general difficulty and isolation did, however, create some paradoxically advantageous conditions for musicians: a less rigid musical system, musical production not bound and pressured by market rules that allowed greater creative freedom and experimentation, and a vast music market within the country and extending to the whole of Eastern Europe.

Before getting to the heart of the historical narrative of Polish electronic popular music, the author pauses briefly – and appropriately – to present what was the starting point of experimentation with the electronic medium in Poland, namely Studio Eksperymentalne Polskiego Radia [the Polish Radio Experimental Studio].

This pioneering electro-acoustic laboratory, founded in Warsaw in 1957, was the fourth electronic music studio to be established in Europe, and gave a strong impetus to musical experimentation by hosting some of the most important European composers of the last century and inspiring many emerging popular musicians. It is precisely within this historical framework that one of the analytical parameters Mazierska employs throughout the book is outlined, to highlight one aspect of the history of electronic music that has only recently begun to be investigated: the proportions of men and women who worked in these environments. Speaking of the first Polish electronic music studio, the author draws attention to how this musical environment – where ‘serious’ electronic music was produced – had established female electronic composers such as Elżbieta Sikora and Lidia Zielińska at its forefront, unlike other European electro-acoustic studios and, above all, unlike the Polish popular music environment, where

men were decidedly preponderant, at least until the 1990s.

In the first chapter of the book, entitled ‘1970. The beginnings’ (pp. 15–53), Mazierska describes the moment when electronic popular music started to be produced in Poland, listing several factors that contributed to the birth and definition of this musical genre in Poland. They include ‘the first pop-rock concerts where electronic instruments were given prominence; the production of the first electronic records; the making of the first Polish electronic musical instrument used in professional settings; the first use of popular electronic music in film; the opening of the first discotheques; the coining of the term “el-muzyka” (or “elmuzyka”), designed to capture the specificity of the Polish version of electronic music’ (p. 5).

Before going into these aspects individually, the author explains the political and economic framework in which Poland found itself in the 1970s, and how this had a profound influence on the country’s cultural life. In particular, the first part of the chapter deals with the rise and fall of Edward Gierek, First Secretary of the Polish United Workers Party, who brought a wave of change and openness towards the West at the beginning of the decade but ended with an economic crisis that led to his resignation towards the end of the 1970s.

Subsequently, the author moves on to the specific question of electronic popular music, starting with the definition of ‘electronic music’ provided by the director Tony Palmer in the television programme *All You Need Is Love: The Story of Popular Music* (1977), and how the characteristics illustrated in that context (‘useful music’, ‘three-dimensionality’, ‘primacy of the studio and [...] producer as the most important creator of music’) were also absorbed by Polish electronic popular music of that period (pp. 17–18).

In connection with the socio-political situation of the early 1970s, Mazierska analyses throughout the chapter how the Gierek government's openness and simplification of travel to Western countries helped facilitate the emergence and spread of electronic music in Poland. One of the most obvious consequences of artists' trips abroad was the introduction into the country of electronic equipment then unavailable in Poland, such as Hammond organs and synthesisers. The ensuing fascination with these new instruments stimulated the production of electronic equipment in Poland and, more generally, led to what the author defines as 'technophilia', a tendency shared by most musicians at that time.

Aiming to examine in depth the connection between rock and electronic music, Mazierska illustrates this relationship through the biographies of musicians active in the 1970s and 1980s, such as Czesław Niemen, Marek Biliński, Andrzej Korzyński and Władysław Komendarek. Their biographies – also reconstructed through interviews conducted by the author herself, which prove invaluable throughout the book – are emblematic of how many rock musicians began to produce electronic music in those years. The path of these artists, the author explains, went – broadly speaking – from playing in folk or cover bands to being members of rock bands, from listening to progressive rock records (released in Europe or the United States) that made extensive use of electronic instruments to buying electronic instruments while touring abroad, with a change in aesthetic direction that led them to make music in the studio, in complete isolation.

Another historical reconstruction concerns a number of 'firsts': the first time electronic instruments were used in Poland during a concert, the first time a synthesiser was used in a song and the first synthesiser purchased by Polish Radio. Related to this is a focus on Polish Radio, which in the 1970s

became a driving force behind the emerging electronic popular music, particularly through its Third Programme.

The last part of the chapter deals, firstly, with popular recordings using electronic instruments released in Poland in the 1970s by musicians such as Mateusz Świącicki, Czesław Niemen, Andrzej Korzyński and Józef Skrzek. In this section, the author reconstructs the biography of these artists and the reasons that led them to make music using electronic equipment, describes the instruments used on the records and on individual recordings, and goes into detail about various tracks. Afterwards, Mazierska addresses one of the themes that, as a scholar, is closest to her interests, namely the 'film music' of the 1970s, which was a very lively field of experimentation for Polish electronic musicians of the period, who achieved their most significant musical results in film soundtracks. This section discusses film music by Krzysztof Penderecki and Andrzej Korzyński, among others.

At the end of the chapter, a section is devoted to venues for popular electronic music, namely the first discos opened in Poland in the 1970s and the emergence of the first professional DJs.

In the second chapter of the book, 'The 1980s. Polish popular music goes electronic' (pp. 55–94), Mazierska presents the 1980s as a decade of transition. In these years, the author explains, the use of electronic instruments by popular musicians was no longer a novelty; these instruments were more and more accessible and widespread in Poland, and their use no longer caused the same astonishment as in the previous decade.

The chapter opens with a historical and economic picture of Poland at the beginning of the decade – a time of profound crisis that was also reflected in music and film.

Mazierska discusses how, during the 1980s, the spread of popular electronic music, as well as the rise of its subcategories that was taking place in Europe at the same

time, was also reflected in the Polish music scene. In this chapter, Mazierska analyses the spread of the electronic genre through several elements: electronic musical instruments, such as synthesisers, which were starting to be industrially produced by an increasing number of firms; the role of the Polish media (especially radio) in the diffusion of electronic popular music; the use of electronic instruments in Polish popular music, reconstructed through the direct testimonies of musicians such as Aleksander Nowacki and Walter Chelstowski, collected by the author; the connotation of the genre 'el-muzyka' during the 1980s; the relationship between electronic music and other genres (such as rock and 'estrada'); the definition of electronic music, particularly in the output of Władysław Komendarek and Marek Biliński, which the author examines in detail; the use of electronic music in film and television by composers representative of the output of this decade, such as Andrzej Korzyński and Marek Biliński. The second chapter closes with insights into artists and groups active in the 1980s, such as Sławomir Łosowski's Kombi, Igor Czerniawski, Papa Dance, Bexa Lala, Kafel and techno bands like Trumpets & Drums, Agressiva 69 and T-34.

In 'Breaking the iron curtain', the third chapter of the book (pp. 95–142), Mazierska discusses the factors that contributed to the spread and success of electronic music in Poland in the 1990s. The chapter opens with an overview of the political, economic and technological situation in Poland, a country undergoing profound transformation after the fall of the Berlin Wall – an event that had profound consequences throughout the country, in particular opening the door to neo-liberalism and the free market and undermining the power of state bodies. This political, economic and cultural openness towards the West influenced the spread of electronic music – particularly techno – which, thanks to its cosmopolitan outlook,

was able to embody the spirit of the times better than rock music.

Mazierska then presents electronic music made in Poland in the 1990s from different angles: starting with relations with neighbouring Germany (and with the lively electronic scene in Berlin, in particular), she analyses the role of Polish radio, television and music magazines in the diffusion of the genre.

A section of the chapter is devoted to the transformation of the role of the electronic musician: created in those years was the figure of the so-called 'portfolio musician', working both for himself and for other artists, as a producer, record producer and entrepreneur. The author reinforces this thesis by analysing the biographies of Wojciech Kucharczyk, Łukasz Pawlak, Maciej Werk and Jacek Sienkiewicz.

After an in-depth examination of the development of dance music in Poland, the last part of the chapter is devoted to analysis of two documentaries by Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz on the Polish techno and disco scene, chosen by the author because they are representative of the attitude towards electronic music adopted by the Polish media.

In the last chapter, 'After 2000. The age of abundance and confusion' (pp. 143–192), Mazierska attempts the complex task of synthesising developments in electronic music in Poland over the last twenty years around some central themes. They include the proliferation of spaces – both real and virtual – for disseminating popular electronic music, such as talent shows, social media and magazines (both print and online).

A section is devoted to the Polish record industry, the history of some of the major labels, and an analysis of record sales from 2001 to 2014, followed by an in-depth focus on live music (festivals, clubs and DJs).

A section on the production of electronic music for computer games is followed by reflection on the female presence in the

electronic scene, summarising the condition of women in previous decades and arguing how much the situation has since improved. Mazierska says that more and more Polish female musicians and producers have embarked on artistic careers in recent years, and she demonstrates this with a rich selection of names and projects launched by Polish female artists in the last two decades.

The chapter concludes with an in-depth look at Polish electronic musicians known as ‘archivists’ – musicians who, instead of making their own works from scratch, tend to use pre-existing material, such as TVCP-The Very Polish Cut-Outs – followed by an overview of the new Polish electropop genre and its main exponents, and a survey of internationally recognised Polish electronic musicians, such as EDM producers Gromee, C-BooL and Blinders.

*Popular Polish Electronic Music* presents itself as a new and original contribution to the history of the subject, on which few publications have hitherto appeared. The volume thus adds to Marek Horodniczy’s *Anthologia Polskiej Muzyki Elektronicznej* [Anthology of Polish electronic music] (Warsaw 2017), as well as texts written by electronic musicians, such *Znam wszystkie wasze numery: Andrzej Korzyński w rozmowie z Marią Szablowską* [I know all your tricks: Andrzej Korzyński in conversation with Maria Szablowska] (Warsaw 2017), and expands the research into Polish electronic music and film carried out by the author in recent years.

Thanks to its transversal and multidisciplinary approach, this volume succeeds

in highlighting the importance of creative work with the electronic medium in electronic music production in Poland and its various artistic, media and social applications.

Mazierska succeeds in filling the gap in the existing literature on the subject thanks to the precious documentation collected in the field, such as interviews with protagonists from the Polish electronic music scene of the last few decades, which prove fundamental for the reconstruction of many of the phenomena described and add to the author’s direct experiences in the Polish music scene. The book is outstandingly rich in details. That is an undeniable strength, although it does occasionally make the reading of the book less fluent, especially for enthusiasts or general readers wishing to discover aspects of the history of electronic music that remain largely unknown. Nevertheless, the cultural historian or musicologist will benefit from the level of care taken over the reconstruction.

Hopefully, new avenues for the exploration of this music scene will emerge from the very rich overview created by Mazierska and will continue to be made known through new publications, specific insights, documents, rediscoveries and record reissues.

This is a book that should be present in all academic libraries, but that will also certainly find a place among a wider public and in the personal collection of every electronic music aficionado.

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