

# Henryk Górecki

A Nonesuch Retrospective

# Henryk Górecki (1933–2010)

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### Lerchenmusik

Recitatives and Ariosos, op. 53

London Sinfonietta Soloists

Originally released 1991

### Symphony No. 3

“Symfonia Pieśni Żałosnych,” op. 36  
 (“Symphony of Sorrowful Songs”)

Dawn Upshaw, *soprano*

London Sinfonietta

David Zinman, *conductor*

Originally released 1992

### Already It Is Dusk

String Quartet No. 1, op. 62

### Quasi una fantasia

String Quartet No. 2, op. 64

Kronos Quartet

Originally released 1993

### Miserere

op. 44

Amen, op. 35

Euntes ibant et flebant, op. 32

Chicago Symphony Chorus

Chicago Lyric Opera Chorus

John Nelson, *conductor*

Wisło moja, Wisło szara, op. 46

(My Vistula, Grey Vistula)

Szeroka Woda, op. 39

(Broad Waters)

Lira Chamber Chorus

Lucy Ding, *conductor*

Originally released 1994

### Kleines Requiem für eine Polka

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David Zinman, *conductor*

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Elzbieta Chojnacka, *harpichord*

Markus Stenz, *conductor*

### Good Night

op. 63

Dawn Upshaw, *soprano*

London Sinfonietta

Originally released 1995

### ...songs are sung

String Quartet No. 3, op. 67

Kronos Quartet

Originally released 2007

### Symphony No. 4

“Tansman Episodes,” op. 85

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Andrey Boreyko, *conductor*

Originally released 2016

## On Reflection

Adrian Thomas, July 2015

When Henryk Mikołaj Górecki died, in 2010 at the age of 76, he left a remarkable musical legacy. Even though he was never one to rush things, taking his time to work on each composition until he was sure that it was ready to be heard outside his own four walls, he completed over 80 works ranging from single songs to works for chamber, choral, and orchestral forces. He knew, as did his publishers and his family, that there were unreleased compositions that were part-finished, some requiring only the dotting of “i”s and crossing of “t”s, some needing closer attention and completion. Few believed that anything would come of this treasure trove, yet he and his son Mikołaj – a composer in his own right – together brought the Fourth Symphony “Tansman Episodes” (2006) to the ears of the public when it was premiered in London on April 12, 2014.

I had been privileged to see the score, write the program note, attend rehearsals with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Andrey Boreyko, and witness the standing ovation at the premiere in London’s Royal Festival Hall. The thoughts in my mind were no doubt shared by many others who were present: How would the new symphony compare not only with its famous predecessor, the “Symphony of Sorrowful Songs,” which had been premiered almost 40 years earlier, but also with the rest of Górecki’s output? For the first time, with the contents of this box set of his music, listeners will be able to make direct comparisons and draw perhaps new conclusions about Górecki’s compositional life and work.

The earliest work in this collection dates from 1972. At the time, Górecki was almost completely unknown outside Poland, and then only in concerts and festivals of new music. It had taken four years for the First Symphony “1959” to be performed complete (Darmstadt, 1963) and eight years before *Monologhi* for soprano and three ensembles was heard (West Berlin, 1968). Matters began to improve when *Refren* (Refrain) for orchestra was premiered in the year of its composition (Geneva, 1965), and likewise *Canticum graduum* for orchestra (Düsseldorf, 1969).

Although most of Górecki’s music from before 1972 still has no widespread acceptance, it would be a grave mistake to ignore its significance. Works such as the orchestral *Scontri* (Collisions, 1960), *Elementi* for string trio (1962), *Refren*, the orchestral *Muzyka staropolska* (Old Polish Music, 1969), and *Muzyczka IV* (Little Music IV) for clarinet, trombone, cello, and piano (1970) provide a vital context for his later, better-known works. They are more avant-garde, even shocking, but their uncompromising character is quintessentially Góreckian.

Górecki was a fighter throughout his life. He battled a succession of illnesses and health problems that would have felled a lesser man. He was an explorer into musical materials, examining them tirelessly until they matched his imagined sounds. He was a groundbreaker. His diaries and sketchbooks reveal his eye for detail, structures, and

patterns that sit cheek-by-jowl on the page with philosophical ideas on music. He maintained his passion for directness of expression and structural order for the rest of his life, regardless of changes in style and content.

A key turning point was the Second Symphony “Copernican” (1972). It contrasts violent dissonance familiar from earlier works with the gentle modal harmony of future pieces and combines Polish history with a fragment of sacred Polish music. Above all, it highlights the importance of transcending the material world. This last element is perhaps the most telling, as it informs so much of the ensuing music that has now reached a worldwide audience. But make no mistake: the music from 1972 onwards was not intended to be an easy listen, no soft option. It maintains the composer’s determined, granitic character, demanding concentrated attention and aesthetic openness.

This is evident in the works that immediately followed the Second Symphony: the unaccompanied choral piece *Euntes ibant et flebant* (1972), its unofficial companion *Amen* (1975), and the Third Symphony (1976). The role of chant in shaping *Euntes ibant et flebant* was later transferred to non-choral works such as *Lerchenmusik* for clarinet, cello, and piano (1984–85) and the string quartets. The meditative character was carried over into *Amen*, which has just the one-word title for its text. Together they formed an isolated tribute to the tradition of the Polish hymn, or “church song,” which went on to become central to Górecki’s composing in the mid-1980s.

Much has been written about the Third Symphony and its extraordinary impact on the musical worlds of the 1990s. It touched the zeitgeist of that decade. Yet it did not chime with the late 1970s, not least because it remained in obscurity outside Poland and would have continued to do so were it not for the advocacy of a few commentators, conductors, performers, and promoters. It was a controversial piece: slow, consonant, reflective. Once again, Górecki was showing his avant-garde credentials, but in a new language and with a compositional craft that made it stand out from the crowd. There is the exquisite yet simple canonic texture of the opening movement, the harmonic motif of the second movement, and his typically iconic quotation of both Chopin and Beethoven in the finale. The symphony has an exceptional purity of intent and execution. Sadly, but inevitably, once the media appropriated it in the 1990s it became associated with tragedies and cruelties beyond the very specific focuses within the symphony. It had nothing to do with Auschwitz or the Holocaust, for example – that was not Górecki’s purpose and is a palimpsest imagined by others. Rather, the Third Symphony emphasized the emotional and philosophical issue of transcendence that was at the core of his being.

One might be forgiven, from these three works from the 1970s, for thinking that Górecki was all about sustained contemplation. Far from it. Much of his music from the 1950s and 1960s was aggressive and boisterous, as in the early instrumental work *Songs of Joy and Rhythm* (1956, rev. 1960). In 1980, he produced one of his shortest and liveliest compositions, the Harpsichord Concerto. Its two movements, lasting just nine minutes, are effervescent miniatures, perfectly contrasted (contrapuntal/chordal, minor/

major), and they reveal an underrated aspect of his musical and individual personality. He was dynamic company, ready to laugh uproariously, argue fiercely, join in celebrations, or stomp off. Within his family and close circle of friends and colleagues he was the life and soul of any gathering, but when he had serious work to do he was ruthless in his focus.

The object of his attention could be the choral arrangements of Polish folk songs close to his heart, as in *Broad Waters* (1979) and *My Vistula, Grey Vistula* (1981), where his deft retouches enhanced the originals. These he did essentially for his own pleasure. A different level of compulsion lay behind the choral work that he composed between these folk settings, *Miserere* (1981). Poland was in a state of insurrection, with the Solidarity trade union confronting the one-party system. There were ugly incidents, including the deaths of Solidarity activists at the hands of the state *militia* in the town of Bydgoszcz. Although Górecki was trenchantly anti-communist, he generally held back from entering the public arena. But such was his anger at the incident in Bydgoszcz that he rapidly completed a work that he had started a few weeks earlier and dedicated it to the town. Because of the imposition of martial law at the end of 1981, *Miserere* was not premiered for another six years. It is one of his most testing works, for the singers as well as the audience, because its sustained counterpoint and restricted modal palette require an inner strength on everyone's part to match the seriousness of the subject of this lament. There is no showiness, no comforting reference to existing music, just a heartfelt, painful prayer.

The first half of the 1980s was also a period of seriously poor health for Górecki. In December 1983, he was restimulated by an unexpected request from Denmark for a piece of chamber music, a genre with which he had not engaged for many years. It took a number of revisions, but when *Lerchenmusik* emerged in its final form it revealed a new Górecki. Many of the components were familiar, but the tensile, developmental aspect of the work was new. It was as if he was engaging afresh with musical traditions that he held dear. Not for nothing is there a clear reference to Beethoven in the finale. A few years later, in the Second String Quartet *Quasi una fantasia* (1991), there is a chordal sequence that he described as Beethovenian. In 1994 he underlined this link by telling me: "It is thanks to Beethoven that I was able to write these quartets."

*Lerchenmusik* initiated a rich vein of chamber pieces, notably the three extant quartets. The First String Quartet *Already It Is Dusk* (1988) combines a number of strands: a dissonant canon (the theme is the tenor line from a Polish Renaissance children's prayer that he had used in two earlier pieces) is intercut with strident open fifths. These eventually erupt into the central allegro, which conjures up the wild folk music-making that Górecki knew from the Tatra mountains in southern Poland. There is balm in the concluding "ARMONIA" section, although it is the rough and strange music before it that stays in the mind.

The Second String Quartet's title, *Quasi una fantasia*, seems to doff its cap at Beethoven, and indeed it is more developed than the First. It also is more extreme in its contrasts and interlockings, not to mention the enigmatic allusion to the carol "Silent

Night" toward the end. Rather than fixing on a single expressive mode (slow in the Third Symphony, fast in the Harpsichord Concerto), Górecki was now creating more complex, quasi-symphonic narratives that in some cases made contact with classical precedents. The subdued was set against the exuberant, the anguished against the lighthearted. And yet, underneath the confident surface, darker currents usually ran. The circus music episodes in *Concerto-Cantata* for flute and orchestra (1992) and *Kleines Requiem für eine Polka* (1993) introduced the ambivalent figure of the clown. And the very title of *Kleines Requiem* – never properly explained by the composer – alongside its apparent reference to the motif of the "Dies Irae," drew attention to this undercurrent.

Death was never far away from Górecki. From that of his mother when he was just two to his many brushes with mortality, he was all too aware of what lay ahead. *Good Night* (1990), composed between the first two string quartets, was a tribute to Michael Vyner, the manager of the London Sinfonietta who had promoted Górecki's music the previous year. The third movement eloquently sets a few Shakespearean words from Horatio's eulogy to Hamlet. Górecki also makes use here of a device that occurs in a few other pieces, including the Fourth Symphony. He devises a musical cipher from the letters of the dedicatee's name. This procedure, not of itself musical, produces a thematic cell that parallels the function of the iconic quotation of preexisting music that Górecki utilised over his career. For him, such elements had a profoundly devotional air.

The citation in the Third String Quartet *...songs are sung* is from Karol Szymanowski, whose *Stabat mater* is referenced in both the Third and Fourth symphonies. Górecki once commented: "Where Szymanowski went, I followed." In the Third Quartet, the quote from Szymanowski's Second String Quartet is so brief that it might pass unnoticed. More particularly, the funereal atmosphere of the brief text that inspired the quartet and of the intimations of mortality in much of the work is not balanced by the attempts at dance-like music in the third movement. The hesitant inability to sustain the momentum, combined with symphonic cross-references to earlier movements, speaks of uncertainty, even of fear. The fourth movement includes the unusual marking "MORBIDO," while the finale seeks to find solace from the disruption. Górecki invites the listener to contemplate the nature of existence, and I remember the utterly rapt attention paid by the audience at the world premiere – in his presence – by the Kronos Quartet in Poland in 2005. If we, as listeners to these CDs, can enter such a world – ten years after that special evening and five years after the composer's death – we will come close to appreciating what a distinctive, challenging, and communicative legacy Górecki has bequeathed us.

## LERCHENMUSIK

Recitatives and Ariosos, op. 53 (1984) 40:28  
for clarinet, cello, and piano

1. I. Lento – Largo – Molto piu mosso, quasi Allegro 15:24
2. II. Molto lento–con moto 10:18
3. III. Andante moderato 14:46

London Sinfonietta Soloists

Michael Collins, *clarinet*

Christopher van Kampen, *cello*

John Constable, *piano*

## LERCHENMUSIK

Lerchenborg is a fine baroque building on extensive grounds, close by the Danish town of Kalundborg. Annually since 1965 a summer music festival has been held there; and each year since 1972 it has featured an International Workshop for composers and musicians. Introducing “new music into an old house” – as the foreword to the 25th anniversary prospectus recalls – had been from the start a special concern of Louise Lerche-Lerchenborg and her husband, Poul Rovsing Olsen.

In 1983 Louise Lerche invited Górecki to write a work for her next festival and to be the principal guest of the International Workshop. He had not travelled abroad since the mid-1970s, and in the meantime had not only experienced considerable personal hardships prior to and during the period of martial law, but had then suffered a prolonged and serious illness. For various reasons, some of purely private concern and others not, Górecki had made no public or official appearances since 1979, when he resigned from his position as Rector of the State College of Music in Katowice. At no time did he avail himself of the privileges (including those of travel) with which authoritarian regimes have always tended to reward and influence distinguished intellectuals, not least in the supposedly “unpolitical” field of music.

At the time when Górecki received Louise Lerche’s invitation he was virtually unknown outside his native country, and within it, wholly isolated – though much respected there, especially by the younger generation. To the surprise and delight of his admirers, he accepted the invitation to Denmark, and duly arrived at the 1984 Festival bearing his new score. For reasons of health, however, he had been unable to finish it in time, and the Fynske Trio therefore performed it (on July 28) as a substantial torso.

Completed soon after, and dedicated to Louise Lerche, the trio was first heard in its entirety at the 1985 Warsaw Autumn Festival. Like so many of Górecki’s premieres, it provoked strong reactions, for and against. Although clearly and directly anticipated by one of the most widely performed of his works, the *Musiquette IV* of 1970 (a miniature concerto for solo trombone with clarinet, cello, and piano), *Lerchenmusik* was so much larger in scope and more various in content that even those listeners with an intimate knowledge of his earlier music were taken by surprise. For others, the most disturbing aspect of *Lerchenmusik* was surely the manner in which it opens out immense architectural and spiritual vistas without the slightest recourse to the Austro-German tradition of developing variation (represented, of course, by Brahms’s major work for the same rare ensemble, not to mention Beethoven’s notable if lesser one). In this respect Górecki has always been closer to Messiaen than to Stravinsky. But *Lerchenmusik* is alone among his works in its relationship to the French master. If, in the tradition of Schumann’s Chopin or Bruckner’s Wagner, there is an element in *Lerchenmusik* that pays conscious tribute to the Messiaen of the *Quartet for the End of Time*, it is firmly on the basis of Górecki’s own language, methods, and objectives. As the composer and musicologist Adrian Thomas has pointed out (in his pioneering essays on the subject), Górecki’s music is from first

to last rooted in the soil of Poland, however far-reaching its branches. Thus the tenuous link between Messiaen and Górecki that seems to be implied by their common regard for Scriabin is in Górecki's case a direct inheritance from the characteristic harmonic and modal structures, the ethnicity, and even the ornithology, of his beloved Szymanowski.

But what about the form of *Lerchenmusik*? That very question was asked by a member of the audience at the Górecki forum which was held on the last day of the London Sinfonietta's Górecki–Schnittke weekend in March 1989. For almost an hour Nigel Osborne had been discussing post-1945 Polish music, culture, and politics with two fellow composers – John Casken and Adrian Thomas – and one empty chair. Meanwhile, Górecki, who had been expected to join them, was sitting in the outer darkness of the auditorium.

Despite and because of the language barrier, he must have sensed that such a discussion was only feasible in his absence, but that it nevertheless had a natural lifespan. Master of the decisive moment in life as in music, he suddenly and without prior warning rose to his feet, and hurried down the gangway toward his three colleagues, whom he greeted with a radiant geniality that instantly belied his somewhat formidable reputation.

From then on he was inevitably the center of attention. The question about the form of *Lerchenmusik* had been prompted by the performance – the first in London – given by the present artists at the Queen Elizabeth Hall two days before. When Osborne had translated the question into Polish, Górecki rose from his seat with a smile and went over to the piano. “What is a form?” he asked quietly; and then, leaning over the keyboard with his head to one side as if waiting to hear a pine-needle fall, he played a characteristically distributed and inverted major triad with such pianissimo inwardness that he plainly wanted everyone to hear through the entire resonance-structure, vertically and horizontally. Only when the last trace of it had died away did he permit himself to answer his own question. “That is a form,” he said softly, and then repeated the chord a fraction louder, adding a *Lerchenmusik* embellishment. “And that,” he went on, “is another form!” Finally, linking two chords, he exclaimed, “and that is yet another!” Through-and-through musician that he is (and by all accounts he was a formidable pianist in his student days), he had captured his audience by what he had played and not played as much as by what he had said and not said. That achieved, he happily returned to his seat, as if for him the subject was closed.

Nothing his interrogator is likely to have been fishing for would ever have been caught and landed. Instead, and without being so churlish as to say so, Górecki had in effect advised his audience to use its ears, and stretch them as far as they will go. The one legacy from his otherwise half-forgotten preoccupation with Webern and the post-Webern school that he seems consciously to have retained is a fanatical concern for every nuance within every dimension, and an inherent tendency toward the exorbitant. Performers ignore such matters at their peril. For Górecki, there is no more misleading performance of his music than one that attempts, with whatever good intentions and by whatever means, to normalize its tempo and dynamic relationships, its phrasing and bowing, its

instrumentation, and so forth.

Notoriously a hard taskmaster in rehearsal, Górecki had listened in silence but with increasing signs of pleasure to the artists in the present recording rehearsing the first movement of *Lerchenmusik*. At the end he approached the players to congratulate them, seated himself at the keyboard, demonstrated what he meant by the difference between *pp* and *ppp* at the very start, and then, almost without taking breath, attacked, like one berserk, the *marcatissimo* motif which eventually breaks in on the long, slow, and quiet opening. Already fearing for the survival of John Constable's Steinway, the astonished trio had yet to hear and witness what Górecki meant by *sfff* in the “delirioso-aggressivo” climax of the second movement....

For Górecki such extremes are not just a matter of detail, or even a norm, but are part of the music's very lifeblood. But what of the teleology of *Lerchenmusik*? The ultimate truth of the final movement is not of course limited to or even defined by the culminating disclosure, through direct quotation in the original key, of a universally revered masterpiece. What lends that event its revelatory power is the nature of its preparation since the very start of the movement, where Górecki introduces his first transformation of a plainchant melody he had overheard when walking past a small country church near Zakopane. But what ultimately justifies the pilgrimage of that plainchant toward the G-major shrine of Beethoven is the nature and destination of the return journey.

First violently and then dolce tranquillo the G-major vision is broken up and dissolved into an A-flat major harmony. Above and beyond this there then arises the rainbow-arc of an “arioso” that literally as well as symbolically transfigures the second of the “recitatives” with which *Lerchenmusik* began. That – surely? – is also “a form.”

—David Drew, 1991

## SYMPHONY NO. 3

“Symfonia Pieśni Żałosnych,” op. 36 (1976) <sup>52:52</sup>  
 (“Symphony of Sorrowful Songs”)

1. I. Lento – Sostenuto Tranquillo ma Cantabile <sup>26:25</sup>
2. II. Lento e Largo – Tranquillissimo <sup>9:22</sup>
3. III. Lento – Cantabile-Semplice <sup>17:05</sup>

Dawn Upshaw, *soprano*  
London Sinfonietta  
David Zinman, *conductor*

The subtitle “Symfonia Pieśni Żałosnych” has suffered much in translation. “Pieśni” is simply “songs”; but the qualifying “Żałosnych” is archaic, and more comprehensive than its modern English, German, or French equivalents. It comprises not only the sense of both the wordless “song” of the opening double basses and the monastic lament which follows, but also the prayer and exhortation (“Do not weep”) of the Zakopane graffito, and the lullaby, both elegiac and redemptive, of the final folksong. Renderings such as “Lamentation Songs” or “Klagelieder” (with their overtones of Jeremiah or Gustav Mahler) are thus even more misleading than the alternative of “Sorrowful Songs.”

## BEFORE GORECKI’S THIRD

At dawn on the first day of September 1939 an elderly battle-cruiser, ostensibly on a training exercise, moved from its anchorage outside the free city of Danzig (Gdansk), and opened fire on the Polish position. Hitler’s attack on a courageous but ill-prepared nation had begun; and by the evening of that same day, Europe was at war for the second time that century.

On the 50th anniversary of those events, at least some of the “millions” imagined by Schiller and Beethoven were momentarily united by a television program relayed from the opera house in Warsaw. While the music of Beethoven, Mahler, Schoenberg, and Penderecki formed a kind of procession that was at once commemorative, affirmative, and protesting, those communal functions were linked, for viewers only, by the recollections and sagacious commentaries of a survivor from Auschwitz.

It seemed right that something so personal should be available only through the most nearly universal of contemporary media. Whatever the private thoughts of the assembled heads of state and their retinues, the concert itself was inevitably and essentially a public occasion. No less important, but for precisely complementary reasons, was the concert given that same evening in the German city of Brunswick.

At the heart of Brunswick’s old quarter – which had been devastated toward the end of the war, much as Warsaw had been devastated at the start of it – stands the rebuilt 13th-century church of St. Magnus. Unobserved by television cameras or security police, and unnoticed even by the local press, the local audience which filled the church on that September evening was in its own way quite as impressive as the international one in Warsaw.

As if in conscious tribute to Lessing – who had written his verse-play *Nathan the Wise* in nearby Wolfenbüttel and dedicated it to his philosopher-friend Moses Mendelssohn – the program began with an early Kyrie by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy; and in witness to the crimes of those who scorned all that Lessing and the Enlightenment had stood for, it continued with Schoenberg’s *A Survivor from Warsaw*. The leap from Mendelssohn’s time to Schoenberg’s thus symbolized the history and the story from which the subsequent performance of Górecki’s Third Symphony set out.

It was a concert without interruption or applause, without introductory messages or mediating prayers. The only written words were those of Brecht’s poem “An die Nachgeborenen” (“To Those Who Come After”), the only spoken ones, those of Schoenberg’s “Survivor.”

At the close of his narrative, the Survivor tells how the sergeant in charge of one of the death-squads orders his nameless captives to number off, and how they start first slowly, then faster and faster “like a stampede of horses,” until finally and in resolute unison they (and Schoenberg’s chorus with them) break into the old Jewish hymn “Shema Yisroel.”

*A Survivor from Warsaw* ends with a darkly bright *sforzando* chord whose quasi-tonal implications are both cautionary and positive. A comparable sense is also implicit in the very architecture of the St. Magnus Church as it stands today. Of the

original structure, only the massive 13th-century bell-tower and some fragments of the nave arcades survived the air-raids of 1944 and were proudly incorporated in the new and otherwise strictly modern post-war church.

Górecki's First Symphony (for strings, percussion, piano, and harpsichord) was also, but in another sense, strictly modern. Subtitled "1959," it expressed (he has said) something of the sense of a new start – both in his own life (it was, among other things, the year of his marriage) and in Poland itself. As far as Poland and its long-sought freedom were concerned, the representative joy of demolishing the statues of Stalin during the "thaw" of the late 1950s proved short-lived. To the disillusion which followed in the 1960s, Górecki's Second Symphony, of 1972 – for soloists, chorus, and large orchestra – provided a full-throated answer: vocally through its setting of Psalm-texts and of a fragment from the writings of the Polish astronomer Copernicus, musically through the gigantic orbital progressions of its forms and harmonies.

Behind the Second Symphony lay an unfulfilled project that has remained a preoccupation of Górecki's to this day, and is indeed embedded in his private landscape as in his family history. Not far either from the village in which he was born or from the city of Katowice where he received his musical education and where he and his family have lived for more than two decades, there lies a town that seems wholly typical of its neighbors in the Polish-Silesian industrial belt, and yet a town that is ineluctably and for all time singled out. Its Polish name has always been Oswiecim but it is known to the world under its German name, Auschwitz.

In the St. Magnus Church, the last echoes of the *sforzando* chord at the close of *A Survivor from Warsaw* had barely faded when the orchestra's double basses began, *de profundis*, the long and slow melody from which Górecki builds one of his great arches of hope – a hope born of sorrow, certainly, but not itself sorrowful.

### GÓRECKI'S THIRD

Composed in Katowice during the last three months of 1976, and dedicated to Górecki's wife, the Third Symphony was first performed in April of the following year by the orchestra of South-West German Radio (Baden-Baden), under its conductor Ernest Bour. Orchestra and conductor alike were (and are) famed for their interpretations of the most "advanced" contemporary music; and the festival of Royan, at which the premiere took place, was likewise famed for supporting it.

In that context at that time, the symphony must have seemed unaccountably naive if not culpably reactionary. Whether it is in fact any less radical than the works that had made Górecki's name in avant-garde circles during the previous twenty years is a debatable question, but not one that has any continuing relevance to a work that has in recent years acquired a passionate following in Europe and America. For the unprejudiced listener of any kind, and also for the specialist whose musicality can still get the better of his or her prejudices, it is not a work that calls for "elucidation"; the light it

sheds at first hearing is exceptionally bright and direct; and subsequent hearings do not diminish it.

The first movement is dominated at the center by a setting of the 15th-century Polish prayer known as the Holy Cross Lament. Flanking it symmetrically but in reversed relationship are the two halves of a canon for strings only, beginning and ending with the double basses. In the first half, the instrumental voices enter by a stairway of fifths that rises through four octaves and eventually encompasses all eight pitches in the Aeolian mode (on E) characteristic of the 24-bar cantus firmus. Whether in its basic two-part version or in its ultimate eight parts, the polyphony is in one sense as static and unitary as the monochord of Stockhausen's *Stimmung* (or Terry Riley's *In C*), while in another it is potentially as prolific and exultant as the Gothic aviaries of Messiaen.

From the bell-tower of the central prayer, the eight-part polyphony is resumed as if it had never ceased (which in a sense it never will). The descent is affected by the same stairway as before, but offers new contrapuntal and textural perspectives at each discrete stage, until at last the two-part floor is reached, and below it, the "ground" of the unaccompanied cantus firmus.

The arcades of the second and third movements together balance the structure of the first in their combined length, and contrast with them in texture, feeling, and tempo. All tempi (as so often with Górecki) are nominally slow, but are subject to such subtle changes and influences that conventional notions of slow and fast are set at naught, and a new sort of dynamism develops. So for example the contrast created by the very opening of the second movement is almost insignificant in metronomic terms, but profoundly affecting in all others. Obscured though it soon is by the contradictory mode in which the soprano begins her imprisoned prayer, that single shaft of vernal sunlight holds in its harmony and mode a promise that is powerfully reaffirmed later in the same movement, but is not to be fulfilled until the end of the third movement – where the folksong's final verse at last discovers the transcendental radiance of A major.

### AFTER GÓRECKI'S THIRD

Just before the orchestra's rapt introduction to the prayer from the wall of the Gestapo prison-cell, the lights in the nave of the St. Magnus Church had been lowered; and so they had remained until the end of the third movement, when they were immediately extinguished, as if to heighten by contrast the luminous resonance of that concluding A-major triad. While the soprano soloist and orchestra remained in darkness, the unaccompanied chorus concluded the concert by singing Kurt Hessenberg's motet of 1947, *O Herr, mache mich zum Werkzeug deines Friedens*. At the end of it, there was an instantaneous and twofold revelation: while the hitherto almost invisible stained-glass window forming the greater part of the nave's south wall was suddenly floodlit from the darkness outside, high above the heads of a still-silent, motionless, and thoughtful congregation, the great bells that had once signaled the end of the Thirty Years War began to peal.

Closer in spirit to Górecki (or Herman Melville) than to Hesse (or Martin Luther), the apparently abstract forms of the St. Magnus window convey a multiple image: fleeing from persecution and trapped on the shore of a hostile sea, the people of Israel are rescued by the miraculous parting of the waves, and accomplished the crossing in a procession whose form simultaneously suggests Jonah's Whale and Noah's Ark.

Whether in Brunswick or in Warsaw, may not the commemorative concert of September 1, 1989, have also served as some reminder that the forces and interests which tend to isolate the world of so-called "serious" music from the serious realities of our own day are not always and everywhere invincible? And that among the most exacting of those realities are our responsibilities toward the past and our obligations toward the future?

—David Drew, London/Barcelona, February 1992

Synku miły i wybrany,  
Rozdziel z matką swoje ranę  
A wszakom cię, synku miły,  
w swem sercu nosiła,  
A także tobie wiernie służyła.  
Przemów k matce, bych się ucieszyła,  
Bo już jidziesz ode mnie,  
moja nadzieja miła.

(Lament świętokrzyski z. "Pieśni tysogórskich";  
druga połowa XV w.)

Mamo, nie płacz, nie.  
Niebios Przczysta Królowo,  
Ty zawsze wspieraj mnie.  
Zdrowaś Mario.

(Zakopane "Palace" cęła nr 3 sciana nr 3 Błażusiakówna  
Helena Wanda lat 18. siedzi od 25 IX 44)

My son, my chosen and beloved  
Share your wounds with your mother  
And because, dear son,  
I have always carried you in my heart,  
And always served you faithfully  
Speak to your mother, to make her happy,  
Although you are already leaving me,  
my cherished hope.

(Lamentation of the Holy Cross Monastery from the  
"Lysagóra Songs" collection. Second half of the 15th century)

No, Mother, do not weep,  
Most chaste Queen of Heaven  
Support me always.  
Ave Maria.

(Prayer inscribed on wall 3 of cell no. 3 in the basement  
of the "Palace," the Gestapo's headquarters in  
Zakopane; beneath it is the signature of Helena Wanda  
Błażusiakówna and the words "18 years old, imprisoned  
since September 26, 1944.")

Kajze mi sie podziół  
mój synocek miły?  
Pewnie go w powstaniu  
złe wrogi zabili.

Wy niedobrzy ludzie,  
dłó Boga świętego  
cemuście zabili  
synocka mego?

Zodnej jo podpory  
juz nie byda miała,  
choćbych moje stare  
ocy wyplakała.

Choćby z mych łez gorzkich  
drugo Odra była,  
jesce by synocka  
mi nie ożywiła.

Lezy on tam w grobie,  
a jo nie wiem kandy,  
choć sie opytują  
między ludźmi wsandy.

Moze nieboroczek  
lezy kaj w dolečku,  
a mógłby se lygac  
na swoim przypiecku.

Ej, ćwierkecie mu tam,  
wy ptosecki boze,  
kiedy mamulicka  
znaleźć go nie moze.

A ty, boze kwiecie,  
kwitnijze w około,  
niech sie synockowi  
choć lezy wesolo.

(Pieśń ludowa z opolskiego)

Where has he gone  
My dearest son?  
Perhaps during the uprising  
The cruel enemy killed him

Ah, you bad people  
In the name of God, the most Holy,  
Tell me, why did you kill  
My son?

Never again  
Will I have his support  
Even if I cry  
My old eyes out

Were my bitter tears  
to create another River Oder  
They would not restore to life  
My son

He lies in his grave  
and I know not where  
Though I keep asking people  
Everywhere

Perhaps the poor child  
Lies in a rough ditch  
and instead he could have been  
lying in his warm bed

Oh, sing for him  
God's little song-birds  
Since his mother  
Cannot find him

And you, God's little flowers  
May you blossom all around  
So that my son  
May sleep happily

(Folk song in the dialect of the Opole region)

## ALREADY IT IS DUSK

### String Quartet No. 1, op. 62 (1988)

1. Deciso; Molto Lento – Tranquillo; Allegro Deciso – Gridando; Martellando – Tempestoso; Molto Lento – Tranquillissimo 13:59

## QUASI UNA FANTASIA

### String Quartet No. 2, op. 64 (1990–91) 31:53

2. I. Largo Sostenuto – Mesto 8:07
3. II. Deciso – Energico; Furioso, Tranquillo – Mesto 6:45
4. III. Arioso: Adagio Cantabile 7:24
5. IV. Allegro – Sempre con Grande Passione e Molto Marcato; Lento – Tranquillissimo 9:31

## KRONOS QUARTET

David Harrington, *violin*

John Sherba, *violin*

Hank Dutt, *viola*

Joan Jeanrenaud, *cello*

*Already It Is Dusk* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet (to which it is dedicated) by Doris and Myron Beigler and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. It was first performed at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, on January 21, 1989. *Quasi una fantasia* was commissioned by the Beigler Trust, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and the Kosciuszko Foundation, and dedicated to the Kronos Quartet. It was first performed at Severance Hall, Cleveland, on November 27, 1991.

## ALREADY IT IS DUSK

The opening words of a four-part church-song by the 16th-century Polish composer Wacław z Szamotuł provide the quartet with its title, and an extended version of the entire tenor melody is both the basis of the opening *Molto lento* and the source of everything that follows. Górecki had already used the same melody to very different purpose in his *Muzyka Staropolska (Old Polish Music)*, op. 24, where it is converted into granite pillars of note-against-note serial counterpoint, and “answered,” brazenly, by transformations of a 14th-century organum. In the *Molto lento* of the quartet, Szamotuł’s original melody is prominently presented by the viola as cantus firmus in a retrograde-inverse canon whose highly dissonant (polymodal) counterpoint has, so to speak, traversed the cathedral-nave of *Muzyka Staropolska*, and entered a small and unoccupied side-chapel.

Three times, the canonic supplications are interrupted by fierce chordal interjections based on the underlying cluster-harmony. The third and longest interruption is separated from the *Allegro deciso* movement it foreshadows by a last mirrored view of the cantus firmus.

The *Allegro deciso* bears such indications as “furioso,” “marcatissimo,” and “tempestoso,” and may be heard as a stylization of the wild dance-music which in the neighborhood of the Tatra mountains is traditionally played by a string ensemble of three fiddles and cello. Górecki himself has on several occasions been invited by one such ensemble to join them as fiddler, and in private has gladly done so. Given that any affectation of folksiness is entirely contrary to his nature and indeed to the path he had already chosen for himself in 1956, it is no surprise that his description of the closing phase of the *Allegro deciso* as “a kind of village dance music from the plains heard at nighttime from far above” refers only to the surface impression. Beneath it, and behind the quartet as a whole, lie not only the text of Szamotuł’s part-song, which is a fervent prayer for deliverance from evildoers and the powers of darkness, but also and for that very reason the thoughts of a Polish artist and devout Catholic in the Advent weeks of 1988.

After the final climax of the dance music (con massima passion–con massima espressione) Górecki had originally written a hymn-like conclusion presenting the cantus firmus in a purely tonal, triadic context. But just before the final pre-Christmas dispatch-date he characteristically rejected this answer as too easy, substituted a continuous (that is, uninterrupted) version of the opening polymodal canon, and only resolved its tensions in a coda as brief as it is inspired.

—David Drew

## QUASI UNA FANTASIA

Górecki began *Quasi una fantasia* in his home city of Katowice on his 57<sup>th</sup> birthday, December 6, 1990 (St. Mikołaj's Day), and finished the score three months later on March 19, 1991. The third in a series of major chamber pieces written in the past ten years, it was preceded by *Lerchenmusik* (1985) and *Already It Is Dusk* (1988). As a group, they represent a renewal of the composer's interest in instrumental music during a decade of writing mainly for the voice.

*Quasi una fantasia* shares some preoccupations with these and other predecessors: the slow pulsing opening is characteristic, as are the monodic fragments that gradually unfold in the first movement. These back-references to Górecki's heritage in the Polish Catholic church and its music are matched by his rock-like belief in the values of Polish folk culture. In this quartet, there are several themes influenced by the folk tradition, but whether they are actually "drawn from life" perhaps only the composer can tell. In the second movement, these themes are initially developed in a bitonal context. When, in a passage marked "Con grande passione, con grande tensione," Górecki focuses on the basic tonality, the theme and accompanying drone seem to have stepped straight out of a folk string band, like those which he has heard on his many working sojourns in the nearby Tatra mountains.

The *Arioso* pits tonalities again, but more bitter than sweet, and the drones and melodies achieve only partial resolution. The last movement owes much to the effervescent finale of the Harpsichord Concerto, op. 40 (1980), its basic theme-and-accompaniment once again rooted in folk practice.

Why, when the quartet has four distinct movements, is it called *Quasi una fantasia*? Is it simply because the thematic ideas are more or less connected movement to movement? Is it because some of these ideas relate to the only overt quotation in the work, which steals in sotto voce just before the final coda? And what is the significance of this particular quotation (Górecki is fond of such things: *Lerchenmusik* quotes Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, *Already It Is Dusk* uses material from a Polish Renaissance lullaby)? Is it seasonal, or related to Poland's experiences of World War II, or connected in some way (most unlikely) to Penderecki's more blatant use of the same tune in his Second Symphony (1980)?

Perhaps the mystery lies in the enigmatic cadential phrases that crop up from time to time. Where have they come from; where are they going? Do they relate to other composers and their practices? However we may surmise his creative intentions, Górecki has composed in *Quasi una fantasia* a stark and passionate confrontation of musical ideas that follow in a long line of potent visions which he initiated more than 35 years ago.

—Adrian Thomas

## MISERERE

1. Miserere, op. 44 (1981) <sup>32:39</sup>
2. Amen, op. 35 (1975) <sup>6:24</sup>
3. Euntes ibant et flebant, op. 32 (1972) <sup>8:36</sup>

### Chicago Symphony Chorus/Chicago Lyric Opera Chorus

John Nelson, *conductor*

4. Wisło moja, Wisło szara, op. 46 (1981) <sup>4:30</sup>  
(*My Vistula, Grey Vistula*)
- Szeroka woda, op. 39 (1979) <sup>15:12</sup>  
(*Broad Waters*)
5. A ta nasza Narew (*Oh, Our River Narew*) Lento Malinconico <sup>4:21</sup>
6. Oj, kiedy no Powiślu (*Oh, When in Powiśle*) Non Troppo <sup>1:12</sup>
7. Oj, Janie, Janie (*Oh, Johnny, Johnny*) Molto Lento – Dolce Cantabile <sup>3:38</sup>
8. Polne róże rwała (*She Picked Wild Roses*) Lento Sostenuto <sup>1:56</sup>
9. Szeroka woda (*Broad Waters*) Maestoso Espressivo <sup>4:05</sup>

### Lira Chamber Chorus

Lucy Ding, *conductor*

#### CHICAGO SYMPHONY CHORUS

Margaret Hillis, Director and Founder  
Elizabeth Hare, Associate Artistic Administrator  
Sarah Hebert, Chorus Manager

#### section leaders:

Mary Ann Beatty, *soprano*  
Gail Friesema, *alto*  
Kathye Kerchner, *alto*  
Edward K. Osaki, *tenor*  
James P. Yarbrough, *tenor*  
Charles M. Olson, *bass*  
Kip Snyder, *bass*

#### CHICAGO LYRIC OPERA CHORUS

Donald Palumbo, Director

#### LIRA CHAMBER CHORUS

Lucyna Migala, Artistic Director

Almost half of Górecki's music involves the voice. From the affecting *Three Songs* (1956) to *Good Night* (1990), he has written works for solo voice and piano or instrumental ensemble as well as the three magnificent compositions of the 1970s: Symphony No. 2 "Copernican" (1972), Symphony No. 3 "Symphony of Sorrowful Songs" (1976), and *Beatus Vir* (1979). Several of these works also involved the choir, which in its unaccompanied form is probably Górecki's favorite medium. Since the composition of *Euntes ibant et flebant* (1972) and *Amen* (1975), he has written another dozen works for a cappella choir, some of a sacred nature, some based on Polish folk songs. A few of these pieces have found their way onto concert programs and CDs, but this collection is the first to give a glimpse of the breadth of Górecki's interest in choral music. It is dominated by his major large-scale composition of the 1980s.

The circumstances which precipitated the composition of *Miserere* are unusual in Górecki's output in that they were of an overtly political nature. On March 19, 1981, following a sit-in at the headquarters of the United Peasant Party in Bydgoszcz by members of Rural Solidarity, some 200 members of the militia burst in on the demonstrators. In the ensuing violence, when the protestors were forced to run the "path of health" of militia batons, over 20 union members were injured, several of them very seriously. Pictures of the provocative incident were soon seen all over Poland, unrest spread to the nearby towns of Toruń and Włocławek, and suddenly there was a dangerous national crisis. The world looked on with grave concern, surpassed only by the imposition of the "state of war" by General Jaruzelski nine months later.

Górecki's response was immediate. With a text of only five words – "Domine Deus noster, Miserere nobis" ("Lord our God, have mercy on us") – and a simple dedication to Bydgoszcz, Górecki wrote his most important work for unaccompanied chorus as his personal protest at this act of violence. With heavy governmental restrictions in force after December 13, 1981, no performance of *Miserere* was possible or planned. In the spring of 1987, Górecki worked again on the piece in preparation for the premiere, which was given later that year on September 10 in Włocławek and a day later in Bydgoszcz itself.

Górecki's ground plan for the piece is daringly and characteristically blunt. The words "Miserere nobis" are saved until the final three minutes, a masterstroke of touching simplicity. *Miserere* comes to rest on a chord of A minor, the root of the entire piece and a unifying device that is a familiar feature of Górecki's music. In this instance, the subtleties of the opening are contained in a new and contrapuntal approach to animating this underlying harmonic idea. The eight parts enter in turn, from the bass upward, over an extraordinarily sustained span of some 25 minutes. Górecki gives a different melody to each of the eight voices as it enters. But they are unified by a background chord built up in thirds from the second basses' first A natural: each subsequent voice is centered on the next note in this arpeggio of thirds (A-C-E-G-B-D-F) until the note A is reached again with the entry of the first sopranos.

This architectural procedure is very close to the canon at the beginning of Górecki's Third Symphony, except that the time-scale is three times magnified. The significant difference here, however, is that each voice starts off with its own melodic identity. This gave Górecki some considerable compositional headaches along the way, but he was insistent that this was a crucial part of the musical and symbolic design. He does not stick rigidly to one reiterated melodic line for each voice, but molds the lower voices to each new upper voice as the musical need arises. The second basses (first entry) start off with a line very closely related in contour and intervals to the choral works of the 1970s and, like many of the subsequent entries, their line is marked "Błagalnie" ("imploringly"). The second tenors (third entry) open up the intervals and the melodic range, while the two alto entries (marked respectively "imploringly – tenderly" and "imploringly – somewhat plaintively") are more melodically restrained. The main entry of the second sopranos is the occasion for a glorious change in sonority.

With the entry of the first sopranos, Górecki picks up the pace and dynamics. He then briefly meditates in a simple four-part texture "dolcissimo cantabilissimo i bardzo czule (and very tenderly)" before striding forward to the dynamic climax of the piece, where the choir sings in ten parts. Another composer might have been tempted to change harmony at this point, to emphasize what seems to be the culmination. But the resolution of the cumulative tension built up over the previous half hour is saved for the final supplication, "Miserere nobis." It is a moving moment. *Miserere* demands concentration and thoughtful consideration, and is a heartfelt plea for peace and understanding from a composer who believes in the values of personal individuality and compassionate responsibility.

Górecki's first unaccompanied choral work was *Euntes ibant et flebant*. Much of it is typical of Górecki: its slow tempo, sustained textures, and modality. But it also has several features that relate more specifically to the two symphonies which surround it: texts from Górecki's beloved Book of Psalms – he had used psalm verses in his previous work, the Second Symphony – and an anticipation of the first movement of the Third Symphony in the pervasive reiteration of a melodic fragment (on the notes D-E-F). The melodic line has what may be described as its own harmonic halo, giving it a magically disembodied presence, as if recreating a chant in a church acoustic.

The single-minded concentration on D-E-F leads to a section where chanting proper (most unusual in Górecki's music) is sung by the basses against a resonant choral backdrop. Curiously, Górecki interrupts the flow of Psalm 126 at this point to interpolate a verse from Psalm 95, putting this passage of near-monastic chant as if in parentheses. And yet it remains an integral part of the musical flow as Górecki returns to the opening motif and texture in a newly strengthened version. There follows an harmonic shift onto the chord of B flat, against which the motif's E natural acquires a folk-like coloring as a sharpened 4th. Górecki now returns to the remaining text of the sixth verse of Psalm 126 ("mittentes semina sua..."). The conclusion of *Euntes ibant et flebant* has a few surprises

too, including small but significant inflections such as a solitary E flat in the melodic line. The juxtaposition of weeping and adoration which Górecki has fashioned out of these two psalm fragments is encapsulated by the very closing bars: a shaft of sunlight on three chords of D major, a brief recall of B flat, and a final resting point in the modality with which the work began.

Górecki has commented that he likes short texts. And *Amen*, with its total absorption in just the *one* word of its title, is the shortest text Górecki has ever used. The slowly unfurling melodic line again looks forward to the first movement of the Third Symphony, but its initial harmonic underpinning is distinguished by contrary motion, like slow breathing. Parallel motion takes over as the music moves inexorably toward its climactic A-major chord. There is, as so often in Górecki's music, a moment of quiet reflection at the end.

In 1979, Górecki turned directly for the first time to songs known by generations of Poles. *Szeroka woda* (Broad Waters) ushered in a decade of works for unaccompanied chorus which number over 40 individual church and folk songs, most of them still unpublished and unperformed. *Broad Waters* is a collection of five folk songs whose traditional words and melodies are drawn from two illustrated story books for children. Górecki's selection emphasizes the fascination of streams and rivers – the flooding Narew and Vistula rivers in the first two songs, a garland of field roses cast on the waters in the fourth, and a brief ode to the Vistula in the final song (the only watery element in the central folk song is dew!). The Vistula also appears in the familiar folk song *Wisło moja, Wisło szara* (My Vistula, Grey Vistula). Górecki's approach in his settings is always of the utmost subtlety. He gives an almost imperceptible new aura to the tunes – nothing elaborate, nothing that could take away from the charm and delicacy of the originals.

— Adrian Thomas, 1994

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**MISERERE, op. 44**

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Domine Deus noster,  
Miserere nobis.

Lord our God,  
have mercy on us.

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**EUNTES IBANT ET FLEBANT, op 32**

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Euntes ibant et flebant...  
(Psalm 126, v.6)

He that goeth forth and weepeth...  
(Psalm 126, v.6)

Venite adoremus, et procidamus  
et ploremus ante Dominum, qui fecit nos.  
(Psalm 95, v.6)

O Come, let us worship and bow down  
let us kneel before the Lord our maker.  
(Psalm 95, v.6)

...mittentes semina sua,  
Venientes autem venient cum exultatione,  
portantes manipulos suos.  
(Psalm 126, v.6)

...bearing precious seed,  
shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,  
bringing his sheaves with him.  
(Psalm 126, v.6)

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**WISŁO MOJA, WISŁO SZARA, op. 46**

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Wisło moja, Wisło szara,  
gdzie tak cicho płyniesz?  
Skąd swe wody nazbierałaś,  
mów, nim w morzu zginiiesz.

My Vistula, grey Vistula,  
Where do you flow so quietly?  
Where do you collect your waters,  
Tell me, before you are lost in the sea.

Nazbierałam swoje wody  
z tej polskiej krainy,  
z tej krainy ukochanej,  
nie ma nad nią innej.

I collect my waters  
From this Polish land,  
This beloved land,  
Above which there is no other.

Texts and melody: trad., taken from Jadwiga Gorzechowska's *Szeroka Woda* (Warsaw, 1967)

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**SZEROKA WODA, op. 39**

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**A ta nasza Narew**  
gdy rozleje wody,  
oj, na łąkach, oj, na polach  
narobi nam szkody.

**Oh, Our River Narew**  
When it spills its waters,  
Over meadows and fields, oh,  
It'll do us mischief.

Popłynę, popłynę  
czołkiem przez wodę,  
oj, i Narew już nie gniewna,  
naprawi nam szkodę.

I'll go, I'll go  
In my little canoe, across the waters,  
And, oh, the Narew, no longer angry,  
Will repair the damage for us.

Latają jaskółki  
nad tą wodą nisko,  
oj, gdzie komu gdzie daleko,

The swallows fly  
Low over this water,  
Oh, what's far for some,

nam do domu blisko.

**Oj, kiedy na Powi lu**  
da, woda nam zatopi,  
oj, nie ma w chałupinie  
da, i snopka konopi.

Oj, żeby na Powiślu  
da, woda nie topiła,  
oj, toby Powiślanka  
da, we złocie chodziła.

**Oj, Janie, Janie,** Janie zielony!  
Cóżżeś nam przyniosł nowego?  
Cóżżeś nam przyniosł dobrego,  
Janie zielony? Janie zielony?

Przyniosłem rosy chłopcom na kosy.  
Oj, i dałem macierzanki,  
oj, i dałem macierzanki  
pannom na wianki.  
Pannom na wianki.

Oj, Janie, Janie, Janie zielony!  
Oj, padają drobne liście,  
oj, padają drobne liście  
na wszystkie strony.  
Na wszystkie strony!

**Polne ró e rwała**  
na wodę rzucała.  
Popłyn, popłyn polna rózo,  
skielam cię narwała.

Róża popłynęła  
do miejsca swojego.  
Oj, nie widać, oj, nie widać  
wianuszka mojego.

**Szeroka woda** na Wiśle,  
a powiem wam teraz swe myśle.

Jak było wczoraj, tak i dziś,  
muszę ja na wieki z tobą być.

Texts and melody: trad., taken from Jadwiga Gorzechowska's *Szeroka Woda* (Warsaw, 1967)  
and from Jadwiga Gorzechowska and Maria Kaczurbina's *Jak to dawniej na kurpiach bywało*  
(As it was long ago in Kurpie) (Warsaw, 1969)

Is close to home for us.

**Oh, When in Powi le**  
The water floods us,  
There's nothing in the huts  
No, not even a bundle of hemp.

Oh, if only the waters of  
Powiśle did not flood,  
Then the lasses of Powiśle  
Oh, would go about in gold.

**Oh, Johnny, Johnny,** Green Johnny!  
What have you brought us that's new?  
What have you brought us that's good,  
Green Johnny? Green Johnny?

I've brought the boys dew for their scythes.  
Oh, and wild thyme,  
Oh, and wild thyme  
For the lasses for their garlands.  
For the lasses for their garlands.

Oh, Johnny, Johnny, Green Johnny!  
Oh, little leaves are falling,  
Oh, little leaves are falling  
All around.  
All around!

**She Picked Wild Roses**  
And threw them on the water.  
Float, float, wild rose  
To the place where I picked you.

The rose floated  
To its home.  
Oh, I can't see, oh, I can't see  
My garland.

**Broad Waters** on the Vistula,  
So now I'll tell you my thoughts.

As it was yesterday, so it is today,  
I must be with you forever.

## KLEINES REQUIEM FÜR EINE POLKA

op. 66 (1993) 23:32

1. I. Tranquillo 9:42
2. II. Allegro impetuoso – marcatissimo 5:07
3. III. Allegro – deciso assai 2:36
4. IV. Adagio cantabile 6:07

Sebastian Bell, *flute*  
Melinda Maxwell, *oboe*  
Timothy Lines, *clarinet*  
John Orford, *bassoon*  
Anthony Halstead, *horn*  
Andrew Crowley, *trumpet*  
David Purser, *trombone*  
John Constable, *piano*  
James Holland, *tubular bells*  
Nona Liddell, *violin*  
Joan Atherton, *violin*  
Levine Andrade, *viola*  
Christopher van Kampen, *cello*  
Robin McGee, *double bass*  
DAVID ZINMAN, *conductor*

## CONCERTO FOR HARPSICHORD AND STRING ORCHESTRA

op. 40 (1980) 8:50

5. I. Allegro molto 4:36
6. II. Vivace 4:14

Elzbieta Chojnacka, *harpsichord*  
Nona Liddell, *leader*  
MARKUS STENZA, *conductor*

## GOOD NIGHT

For soprano, alto flute, 3 tam-tams, and piano, op. 63 (1990) 26:36

*In Memoriam Michael Vyner*

7. I. Lento (adagio) – tranquillo 6:51
8. II. Lento tranquillissimo 10:16
9. III. Lento – largo: dolcissimo – cantabilissimo 9:29

Dawn Upshaw, *soprano*

Sebastian Bell, *alto flute*  
John Constable, *piano*  
David Hockings, *tam-tams*

LONDON SINFONIETTA

## KLEINES REQUIEM FÜR EINE POLKA

As with the title, so with the music: it is what it has to be, and could not be otherwise. The composer himself has little to say about the title, and in any event is given to saying less than he means wherever his own innermost world is touched upon. Unless the cryptologists manage to break in, the rest of his meaning will generally be reserved for his family circle. If that.

Of too deeply humorous a disposition to condone mere facetiousness, Górecki is not one to use a word like requiem lightly, let alone to ignore the effect of associating it with the merry dance from early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Bohemia which by the 1840s had achieved the kind of popularity in Europe and America that only the tango, the foxtrot, and the Charleston were to equal in later eras. Perhaps it was the uncertain etymology of “polka” that appealed to this most Polish of composers. Whatever the case, the musical character and rhythmic configurations of the second and third movements of the *Kleines Requiem* are far removed from the polka conventions, despite the real or illusory 2/4 time and the popular connotations of the “off-beat” harmonies. As for the polkas colonized by the “Polish” mazurka, not to mention the refined varieties cultivated by Smetana and others, these are nowhere echoed or commemorated in the *Kleines Requiem*.

So far from being a jeu d’esprit, the *Kleines Requiem* is as grave, and as intense, as the *Ad Matrem* (Do Matki) of 1971, which was written in memory of the composer’s mother. Apart from its common roots in folksong and church-song, the work’s connections with *Ad Matrem* are fewer than those with another work, or work-series, whose importance is also played down by a diminutive title – the *Musiquettes* of 1967–70. Some of the most important clues to the hidden meanings of *Kleines Requiem* are perhaps to be found among the inscriptions on the precipitous rock-face of *Musiquette 2*; others may be heard in the frenzied bird-cries and solemn chants of *Musiquette 4*.

Commissioned by the Holland Festival for the Schönberg Ensemble, the *Kleines Requiem für eine Polka* was first performed at a Holland Festival concert on June 12, 1995. The Ensemble was conducted by its director, Reinbert de Leeuw.

## CONCERTO FOR HARPSICHORD AND STRING ORCHESTRA

With Elzbieta Chojnacka as soloist, the Concerto was first performed on March 2, 1980, in the composer’s home town of Katowice. Fifteen years later, it has probably become the most widely played modern harpsichord concerto since Manuel de Falla’s. Written for and dedicated to Chojnacka, the Concerto is addressed to her specific personality and musicality, much as Falla addressed his concerto to her great Polish predecessor, Wanda Landowska. Indeed, Landowska herself is called to mind by the work’s strictly Góreckian stylizations of the Bach–Scarlatti traditions to which Falla had returned in quite another sense.

In his path-finding and crucially important Górecki articles of 1983–84, Adrian Thomas singled out the Concerto on the grounds of its extrovert character – a character

that must at the time have seemed almost alarmingly at odds with the inwardness of adjacent works like the Symphony No. 3 and *Beatus Vir*. So great was the apparent discrepancy that Thomas even implied that Górecki had discovered an unsuspected affinity with Les Six.

If, however, the background-figure of Landowska continues to be focused upon, the relevance of the Górecki concerto is clearly not to Les Six in general but to Poulenc and his *Concert champêtre* in particular; for the Poulenc of that mock-Watteau concerto is father to the religious Poulenc of the Concerto for Organ, Strings, and Timpani, where Bach and the church are adjacent to the music-hall, the fairground, and the calliope.

Not that Górecki affects any sort of Gallic roguishness. In the first of his two movements, the key-color, despite the modal influences, is immediately suggestive of the darker Bach, as are the keyboard’s metrically distracted baroque figurations. Melodically, however, the movement is entirely dominated by the remorseless chantings of the strings, which take a narrow path between some nameless penitential psalm and the secular world of one of the most ominous of Shostakovich’s quartet movements.

Whatever Górecki’s subject matter in this first movement, it appears to be thrust aside by the sword-and-sabre dances of the finale. Here, Górecki returns to the manner of his *Three Dances* for School Orchestra (1973) – but only to show how different is the calibre of the Concerto, and how fraught the rural scene has become since Szymanowski’s day. The clinching event comes at the very end: like some massive boulder dislodged from a mountainside by the frenetic dancing and stamping in the village below, a fragment of the first movement literally as well as figuratively “flattens” the final cadence. With that tonal-harmonic masterstroke, the soloist is compensated a hundredfold for the cadenza that has so spectacularly been denied her.

## GOOD NIGHT

### *In Memoriam Michael Vyner*

The London Sinfonietta’s Schnittke–Górecki “Response Weekend” of March 1989 was the occasion for Górecki’s first-ever visit to London and his first public appearance in a Western capital for nearly 20 years. All this was due to Michael Vyner: not only to his initiative, but also to the tenacity with which he pursued the cause of introducing Górecki and his music to London, and later, as he hoped, to his home town of Leeds.

Like so many, Vyner had first encountered Górecki’s music through the Third Symphony. But like few others, he had immediately gone on to enquire what lay behind that work, and what had stemmed from it. In the course of his investigations, and decisively in his hearing of *Beatus Vir* (1979), he had found that the music was reawakening childhood memories of Jewish worship in Leeds, and somehow eliding them with half-buried and preconscious recollections of his family’s Eastern European origins.

Michael had tried to speak of that during Górecki’s few days in London. But because music was the only language they had in common, he was never quite convinced

that something so personal was in any sense translatable via a third party. That Górecki had indeed grasped what Michael meant, as well as what he stood for and what was owed to him, was clear enough at the time, and was confirmed six months later. The news of Michael's death reached him just before a London Sinfonietta concert in Donaueschingen on October 20, 1989. Scarcely a word was said at that moment; but the next day he quietly announced that he had already planned a three-movement memorial piece featuring soprano and solo flute, with unspecified ensemble.

The present instrumentation was decided upon shortly after Górecki's return to Katowice. The composition-sketch was completed on February 19, 1990, and the definitive score on March 9. On May 6 the final movement only was performed by Margaret Field and members of the London Sinfonietta during the course of the memorial concert for Michael Vyner given at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The premiere of the complete work, with the same players and the soprano Nicole Tibbels, followed on November 4 at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London.

In each of the three movements, the stringency of method and economy of material are in principle typical of Górecki's music for the past 30 years, but seem unusually pronounced because of the absence of those overly Polish elements – both sacred and profane – which are characteristic of the work's immediate forebear, the *Lerchenmusik* trio *Recitatives and Ariosos*. The tone of *Good Night* is in certain respects unique, and peculiar to the occasion. Implicit in it is not only a necessary self-denial, but also a telling avoidance of anything suggestive of the “mourning songs” of the Third Symphony. Contemplative rather than sorrowful, and in the final “arioso” entering a state of timelessness, *Good Night* had already transcended the strife of *Lerchenmusik* even before the opening A-flat is sounded.

The tonal and pitch structures of all three movements are rigorously circumscribed, as is the role of the piano. The first half of the first movement is entirely confined to the six-note chromatic field bounded by the A-flat below middle-C and the D-flat above. Throughout the movement, the piano's sole function is to provide a harmonic aureole for the “recitatives” of the flute, by means of unison-doublings and constant sustaining pedal.

At the start of the second half of the first movement the six-note field is enlarged by a semitone; and in the coda the E-flat is reached, which allows for the movement's first and only common chord – an A-flat major triad. Its effect is immediately colored by an intrusive F-natural, which gives a fleeting illusion of an added-sixth chord but in fact proves to be the starting point, and modal final, of the very different kind of slow movement that follows.

Here the piano acquires a traditional if primitive accompanying function, while both instruments abandon the ambit of the first movement in favor of the octave above. To the nine different pitches explored in the first movement, no new ones are added in the first of this binary movement's two strongly contrasted “ariosos.” But the three remaining

pitches are decisively introduced at the start of the climactic second “arioso”: marked “as in a dream,” this instrumental song is the structural apex not only of the second movement, but of the work as a whole. Yet the corporeal and terrestrial experience implied by its modal relationship to the second movement's F center is cut short by the compressed reprise with which the movement ends, and is then transcended by the last movement's vocal song – a monody embellished by the flute and accompanied by a single four-note chord whose dominant implications are only a remote recollection of the world of time and space.

The text of the song is the line from *Hamlet* “Good night... flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.” The sense of it strikingly recalls the Schoolmen's theory that angels, as pure spirit, manifest themselves as “bodies” of air condensed to clouds. The chord is just such a cloud; and since there is no surviving cadential impulse, even the pitches it comprises and the melody it accompanies must eventually, and with all simplicity, dissolve.

Hence the first and final entry of the three large tam-tams. In a work whose lowest sound until now has been the G below middle C, their sonority seems unfathomable but in no sense funereal. Or so their metaphysical slow-waltz suggests.

When the waltz of the tam-tams is over, the piano echoes the song's head-motif and then enciphers the name of M-I-C-H-A-E-L V-Y-N-E-R in a mode foreign to the entire work, but recalling the (semitone) tension from which it set out.

—David Drew, 1995

## PIEŚNI ŚPIEWAJĄ (...SONGS ARE SUNG)

String Quartet No. 3, op. 67 (1994–95) 50:15

1. I. Adagio – Molto andante – Cantabile 10:33
2. II. Largo, Cantabile 10:59
3. III. Allegro, Sempre ben marcato 4:22
4. IV. Deciso – Espressivo ma ben tenuto 11:26
5. V. Largo – Tranquillo 12:34

### KRONOS QUARTET

David Harrington, *violin*

John Sherba, *violin*

Hank Dutt, *viola*

Jeffrey Zeigler, *cello*

*Pieśni śpiewają (...songs are sung)* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by the Carnegie Hall Corporation, the Angel Stoyanof Commission Fund, and the Kosciuszko Foundation.

The Kronos Quartet has played an enormous part in the promotion and dissemination of the music of Henryk Górecki. It commissioned and premiered his first two quartets – *Already It Is Dusk*, op. 62 (1989) and *Quasi una fantasia*, op. 64 (1991) – and asked Górecki for a third. He composed the new quartet methodically and rapidly, finishing it in January 1995, but no one could have foreseen that it would be over ten years before he delivered the new score. The dedication reads: “To the Kronos Quartet, which for so many years has waited patiently for this quartet (Ząb, May 2005).”

In a commentary attached to the end of the manuscript, Górecki confesses, “I wrote the Third Quartet between the end of 1994 and the beginning of 1995. To be exact: from November 16, 1994, to January 26, 1995. Only now, in 2005, have I amended it here and there and written it out neatly. In the intervening years there were several dates set for the work’s premiere by the Kronos Quartet, who also commissioned this quartet – but I continued to hold back from releasing it to the world. I don’t know why.” The world premiere was given by Kronos in Bielsko-Biała, in southern Poland, on October 15, 2005.

Speculating on reasons for this delay is an idle task. It cannot pass unnoticed, however, that Górecki’s output has been fairly lean since the phenomenal worldwide success of Nonesuch’s 1992 recording of the Third Symphony. Indeed, apart from some relatively small-scale choral music, there has been nothing of instrumental substance since *Kleines Requiem für eine Polka* (1993). The Third Quartet therefore occupies a key position in understanding the composer’s perception of his creative path.

Like its predecessors, the Third Quartet has a subtitle. On this occasion, and reinforcing Górecki’s longstanding fascination with “song” in instrumental works as varied as *Songs of Joy and Rhythm* (1956/1960), *Genesis II: Canti strumentali* (1962), and *Lerchenmusik: Recitatives and Ariosos* (1986), his eye was caught by the last words of a Polish translation of a four-line poem by the Russian writer Velimir Khlebnikov (1885–1922). The customary English translation reads:

When horses die, they breathe,  
When grasses die, they wither,  
When suns die, they go out,  
When people die, they sing songs.

According to his publishers, Boosey & Hawkes, Górecki preferred the sense of a more oblique translation of the final phrase, “When people die, songs are sung.” In any case, Górecki is insistent that *...songs are sung* is in no way a musical interpretation of any of Khlebnikov’s poem and that the verse’s last line was just an inspirational starting point.

The lyricism underlying much of Górecki’s output is brought to the foreground in the Third Quartet. The slowly rocking melodic ideas and accompanying harmonies at the opening are a familiar trait – from his earliest works, Górecki has been fond of what

might be termed his “lullaby” idiom and it forms an integral strand again in this quartet. The combination of keening dissonance and gentle but pervasive melancholy gives the work its essential character, whether or not this is derived from Khlebnikov’s poem. The opening movement also displays Górecki’s fondness for repeating phrases or sections to create his musical architecture. After ratcheting up the tension, partly through shifting accents, Górecki briefly recalls the opening idea – a low-voiced minor third, E-flat–G-flat – before coming to an uneasy rest.

One of the fascinating aspects of Górecki’s language is his ability to embrace expressive dissonance and, as at the start of the second movement, more familiar, consonant harmonies as well (the Second Quartet has notable instances of this). The movement begins with a slowly flowering melody played by the violins in thirds, elements of which reappear later in the quartet. In the central portion of the movement the folk origins of the material emerge in a shift to a major tonality, with open fifths in the low voices. The tartness that follows is reminiscent of the folk traditions to be heard in the traditional music of Podhale, in the foothills of the Tatra mountains, which are as beloved to Górecki as they were to his compatriot Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937). As the end of the movement approaches, Górecki reverts to harmonies that recall the opening of the movement, but eventually ends the movement on E-flat major.

Górecki began the composition of the third movement on his 61st birthday, St. Nicholas’s Day (December 6, 1994), a feast-day in Poland when children are treated to presents and special activities. Whether that explains its faster tempo and more joyous mood is hard to say. The third movement is certainly striking in being the only fast movement out of the five, although it counts for less than a tenth of the work’s duration. Its first two themes are related to early ideas in the two previous movements, and this almost symphonic integration proves to be a crucial element as the following movements unfold. The solemn idea in thirds from the second movement, for example, is translated here into a lilting, dance-like theme. At its climax, the music pauses momentarily, then unexpectedly plunges into one of those resonant chord sequences that characterize Górecki’s music of the 1980s and ’90s.

What follows is a further surprise, at the same time evincing another Góreckian trait, that of iconic citation. In this instance, it is the direct quotation, albeit in a different tempo and expressive shading, of a moment from the first movement of Szymanowski’s First Quartet (1917). Here, instead of being limpid and *dolcissimo*, it is forthright and *molto espressivo e ben tenuto*. It vanishes immediately, like a brief and sudden recollection that has intruded and been dismissed. Its effect may be judged, however, by the way the returns to earlier themes of the movement become increasingly halting and the attempts of the lilting thirds to reestablish their dance-like idea become progressively hesitant. The movement falters and peters out, and its closing cadence barely registers.

The final two movements, both of them slow, gradually bring the expressive world of the quartet to a closure. The fourth movement initially seems intent on an

unexpected reprise of the *molto espressivo* idea from the middle of the third movement, followed by a version of the violin duet from the second movement. It abandons this in favor of a new idea introduced by a slowly repeated major chord. The apparent disjunction between the harmony of the violin duet and the chords played by the viola and cello is a return to one of Górecki’s favorite expressive devices, but in this extensive section, he has included the unusual marking “MORBIDO.” Eventually, the music resolves with a quiet plagal cadence (also known as an “amen” cadence), coming to rest on an F-major chord.

The finale, too, recalls earlier movements, and like the fourth seems intent on finding comfort from inner turmoil in the consonance of triads. It begins, however, with a brief soliloquy for solo cello. The whole quartet responds with a subdued quasi-chorale, as if trying to gather together the essence of what has gone before. Górecki repeats the chorale more extensively before edging his way back to a reprise of the Quartet’s opening idea. At this moment, if not before, it becomes apparent that the ultimate destination of the Quartet’s initial minor third, E-flat–G-flat, is the resolution onto the concluding E-flat major triad, and that the intervening attempts at closure have been staging posts along the way.

*Pieśni Śpiewają (...songs are sung)* as a whole seems preoccupied with the elusiveness of memory, with the mind’s ability to repeat ideas but to lose itself in them through that very repetition, through its periodic development and both exact and inexact recall. There are moments of genuine repose and resolution, of light illuminating the meditative introspection, but for the most part the work is characterized by an underlying restlessness.

At the premiere, the audience was rapt, the music seeming to provoke an uncommon sense of identity with its expressive world, taking the listeners beyond accounting for musical content. It seemed to transport them onto a more metaphysical plane, recalling the transcendental qualities of the “Symphony of Sorrowful Songs” and *Lerchenmusik*, the works to which, along with the first two string quartets, the Third Quartet is most closely drawn.

— Adrian Thomas, 2007

For the Kronos Quartet:  
Janet Cowperthwaite, Managing Director  
Laird Rodet, Associate Director  
Sidney Chen, Artistic Administrator  
with Caiti Crum, Scott Fraser, Christina Johnson,  
Larry Neff, and Lucinda Toy.

## SYMPHONY NO. 4

“Tansman Episodes,” op. 85 (2010) 31:36

1. I. Deciso – Marcatissimo ma ben tenuto 4:46
2. II. Largo–ben tenuto – Marcatissimo 4:48
3. III. Deciso–Marcatissimo – Tranquillo e Cantabile 11:43
4. IV. Allegro Marcato – Giocoso – Deciso –  
Marcatissimo ma ben tenuto 10:19

London Philharmonic Orchestra  
Andrey Boreyko, *conductor*

Symphony No. 4 was commissioned by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Southbank Centre, London, with generous support from the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Polish Cultural Institute in London; the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association: Gustavo Dudamel, Music Director; and the ZaterdagMatinee, Dutch radio's classical music concert series in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw.

The success in the 1990s of Górecki's Third Symphony, composed in 1976, was unprecedented in its reach and volume. The music had a profound effect on audiences across the world that few had foreseen. During the late 1970s and through the 1980s, when the Third Symphony remained largely out of sight, Górecki moved on, developing his music in different directions both stylistically and in the genres that he chose. There were large-scale choral works (*Beatus Vir*; *Miserere*), a piano trio and two string quartets, Marian hymns and folksongs. And in the 1990s, while the Third Symphony was making waves, he composed two works that included references to circus music (*Concerto-Cantata* and *Kleines Requiem*). There is, therefore, some distance between the Third and Fourth symphonies.

Undoubtedly the media circus and international invitations in the mid-1990s – enjoyable although the latter often were – disrupted Górecki's routines and, in a way, caused him some anguish about his future path. Hence the ten-year delay before releasing his Third String Quartet in 2005, and the fact that he held on to his Fourth Symphony, completed in 2006 in short score for piano, with indications of eventual orchestration. Dates for its premieres came and went, and the composer died in 2010 before he was ready to share it.

The task of realizing the manuscript for publication and performance fell to Górecki's son, Mikołaj, a composer in his own right. Although much of the instrumentation was already written into the short score, elsewhere Mikołaj Górecki drew on his intimate knowledge of his father's music and thought processes. The use of three bass drums in the first movement, for example, comes from Górecki's comments to his son when he played the Symphony to him on the piano in 2006. There are also instrumental references to comparable moments in works from *Beatus Vir* and the Harpsichord Concerto to *Kleines Requiem* and *Concerto-Cantata*.

The Symphony's subtitle, “Tansman Episodes,” reveals something of its source of inspiration, although it is not quite what it appears. The work was the result of several years of cajoling by Andrzej Wendland, who initiated a festival in honor of the naturalized French composer Alexandre Tansman (1897–1986) in the central Polish city of Łódź, where Tansman was born. Wendland sowed the idea for a new work in Górecki's mind and left it to him to come up with a piece as and when it suited the composer's schedule and health. Although Górecki had asked Wendland for a range of materials by and about Tansman, in the end he decided to write a work apparently uninfluenced by his compatriot, with one important exception.

In a number of previous works, Górecki had included the names of dedicatees in the fabric of the music (for example, Michael Vyner's name in *Good Night*). This he did by translating suitable letters into their musical equivalents. In the Fourth Symphony, he derived the following musical cipher from Aleksander Tansman (Górecki used the Polish original of the forename): A-La (A)-E-S (E flat)-A-D-E-Re (D) ... T (C)-A-S (E flat)-Mi (E)-A.

There are four movements, played without a break and with internal subdivisions (usually indicated by changes in tempo or instrumentation) that sometimes run counter to

the score's indicated division. This approach is developed in part from Górecki's chamber music of the 1980s and '90s. The scoring is for large orchestra (quadruple woodwind, three percussionists, organ) with obbligato piano. The role of the piano is an overt echo of *Kleines Requiem*.

The first movement opens with the first five notes of the "Tansman" theme, the remainder following in a series of *fff* repetitions. There is an unmistakably Mussorgskian flavor to this opening (as I recall, Górecki possessed a score of *Boris Godounov*), evoked partly by the pentatonic answer to the opening motif and partly by the repetitive nature of the material. Its incantatory nature is reinforced by superimposed chords (based on A and E flat), this characteristic dissonance released rather than resolved by a skeletal exchange between piano and glockenspiel. The movement ends with six emphatic A-minor chords, gritted by G sharps and B flats.

As an example of the through-composed nature of the Symphony, the second movement continues the basic A-minor tonality, with a chorale-like idea in the cellos and basses, *ben sonore*, that is interrupted several times by the gritty chords. A second melodic theme, backed by a G-major triad, is played by a pair of clarinets. This turns out to be the theme from the final movement of Szymanowski's *Stabat mater*, one of Górecki's favorite pieces. Its punctuation is gentler (a whole tone on piano, glockenspiel, and tubular bells). A third theme follows (second violins and violas). The movement ends with a return of the opening *ben sonore* material, this time intercut by the whole-tone piano and bells, and a final recall of the clarinets, doubled by French horns.

The expressive atmosphere at this point has become introverted. As in his chamber music, Górecki punctures the mood with something more upbeat, although not in this case really up-tempo (it is marked *Deciso-Marcatissimo*). The third movement shows Górecki in earthy mode and contains a passing allusion to Stravinsky. The core of the movement is unexpected and was part of Górecki's original concept. He abandons the orchestra and focuses on a small chamber ensemble with the piano at its heart. It accompanies firstly a solo cello, to which subsequently is added a solo violin, with a piccolo joining in for the major part of the section. This "trio" is followed by the return, elaborated and extended, of what is in effect the orchestral "scherzo." By this stage in the Symphony, it will have become evident that much of the melodic material, the "Tansman" theme aside, has a strong folkloric identity or is borrowed material.

The finale begins as a true allegro, taking its cue from the opening notes of the "Tansman" theme (oboes and clarinets). There is a typically acerbic answer (violin dissonances) as well as repeated triadic punctuation. The repeated chords begin as a self-referential nod to *Kleines Requiem*, but then Górecki morphs it into a reference to the music of John Adams. Although Górecki did not like the term minimalist when applied to his music, he was interested in composers for whom at some stage it was appropriate. He shared a publisher – Boosey & Hawkes – with Steve Reich and John Adams, and I think that at this particular moment he realized that there was a coincidental connection with

Adams and as a tongue-in-cheek tribute he proceeded to make it explicit.

When the music moves decisively into triple meter it is marked *giocoso* even though it is more elusive than the opening of the movement. After a recapitulation of the first section, a slower solo for the piano brings back the "Tansman" theme in new chording, onto which the brass burst with a new phrase that in its stentorian presentation seems particularly significant. This singular moment, shortly before the end of the Finale, is both unexpected and unexplained. It shares a pitch-class (E flat) with the "Tansman" theme as well as sharing a three-note "turn" with the theme borrowed in the second movement from Szymanowski's *Stabat mater*. But Górecki keeps this four-bar idea separate and isolated from its surroundings. It is a mystery why, at this culminating point in the Symphony, Górecki should make a direct reference to the "Siegfried" theme from Wagner's *The Ring*. His son, Mikołaj, has said that in his last years his father became interested in Wagner, but the listener may well feel nonplussed by this particular citation.

After this interpolation, the piano and orchestra pick up the "Tansman" thread for the last time. The final moments are dominated by the reiterated, gritty A-minor chords, although they do not have the final word.

— Adrian Thomas, July 2015



LERCHENMUSIK

Produced and engineered by Max Wilcox

Recorded December 10–11, 1989, at CBS Studios, London

Assistant Engineer: Mike Ross-Trevor

Cover photograph by Malcolm Crowthers

Original design by James Victore



SYMPHONY NO. 3

Produced by Colin Matthews

Recorded May 1991 at CTS Studios, London

Engineer: Tony Faulkner

Assistant Engineer: Declan McGovern

Editing and Post-production: Marian Freeman for Modus Music

Mastered by Robert C. Ludwig

Cover photograph: *Silhouette of a Woman / A Maiden at Prayer* (ca. 1899),  
by Gertrude Käsebier

Collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, CA

Original design by John Heiden

English translation by Krystyna Carter,

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### ALREADY IT IS DUSK/QUASI UNA FANTASIA

Produced by Judith Sherman

Engineered by Bob Edwards and Judith Sherman

Recorded at Skywalker Sound, Nicasio, CA

*Already It Is Dusk* recorded July 1990

*Quasi una fantasia* recorded August 1992

Assistant Engineer: Craig Silvey

Cover photograph by Edward Falkowski,

from *Warszawa stolica Polski*, 1949,

courtesy of Wanda Tomszykowska and

the Polish Arts and Culture Foundation, Oakland

Original design by John Heiden

Special thanks to Janet Cowperthwaite, David Drew, and David Huntley



### MISERERE

Produced by Philip Waldway

Recorded April 25–27, 1994, at St. Mary of the Angels Church, Chicago, IL

Engineered by Henk Kooistra, Soundmirror, Boston, MA

Edited and Mixed by Kees de Visser, Galaxy Studios, Mol, Belgium

Production Coordinator: Karina Beznicki

Translation of Polish texts by Monika Olszer Jasinska

Cover photograph by Jim Bengston

Original design by John Heiden

Special thanks to

Soli Deo Gloria Foundation, Richard Nordlof, Jay Hoffman, Susan Bamert,

Monika Olszer Jasinska. Rev. John G. Twist and Barbara Kozuchowska.

Soli Deo Gloria is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the great sacred choral and orchestral works of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Soli Deo Gloria sponsors concerts, recordings, and video productions, and commissions new works of sacred choral music by leading composers of our time. Its first production was in Chicago on April 24, 1994, when it produced Górecki's *Miserere*.



KLEINES REQUIEM FÜR EINE POLKA/CONCERTO FOR  
HARPSICHORD AND STRING ORCHESTRA/GOOD NIGHT

Produced by Philip Waldway

*Kleines Requiem für eine Polka*

Recorded February 12, 1994, at Henry Wood Hall, London

Engineered by Kees de Visser, Galaxy Studios, Mol, Belgium

*Concerto for Harpsichord and String Orchestra*

Recorded December 17, 1994, at All Saints Church, Surrey, England

Engineered by Tryggvi Tryggvason, Modus Music, Middlesex, England

*Good Night*

Recorded June 5, 1993, at Henry Wood Hall, London

Engineered by Tony Faulkner, Green Room Productions, Middlesex, England

Editing and Mastering Engineer: Kees de Visser

Cover photograph by William Clift

Original design by John Heiden

Special thanks to Susan Bamert, Paul Meecham, and Mary Jones.



PIĘŚNI ŚPIEWAJĄ (...SONGS ARE SUNG)

Produced by Judith Sherman

Recorded August 1–3, 2006, at Skywalker Sound, Nicasio, CA

Engineered by Leslie Ann Jones

Assistant Engineer: Dann Thompson

Editing Assistant: Jeanne Velonis

Mastered by Robert Ludwig, Gateway Mastering Studios, Portland, ME

Cover photograph: “Chrysanthemum #2” from

*Talbot’s Shadow Series 2002* by Keith Carter

Original art direction and design by Frank Olinsky

Project Coordinator for Kronos Quartet: Sidney Chen



SYMPHONY NO. 4

Recorded April 12, 2014, live at Southbank Centre's  
Royal Festival Hall, London

Producer: Tim Oldham

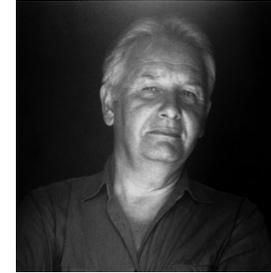
Engineer: Mike Hatch

Mixed and Mastered by Mike Hatch at Floating Earth Ltd, London

Cover photograph by Gerry Hurkmans

Original design by John Heiden

Supported by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute as part of the Polska Music Programme



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Cover photograph by William Clift

Design by John Heiden

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All compositions published by  
Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. (ASCAP)



Nonesuch Records Inc., a Warner Music Group Company, 1633 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

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