

Summary

The Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church by Jan Fotek and *Missa solemnis – hommage à Josquin Desprez* by Stanisław Moryto are two highly interesting examples of compositions one can find in the collection of numerous works of Polish composers of Masses from the second half of the 20th century and early 21st century.

In his autobiography Stanisław Moryto referred to the origins of his *Missa solemnis* and wrote the following moving passage: “I love recreating the world that no longer exists. (...) It seems to me that sometimes the world invented by myself exists for real. For me, transiting from world to world is one of the attractions of being a composer. I can see those people, their everyday life, those landscapes, customs, surroundings. Going back into the past gives one a completely different perspective. That is why it is so interesting.”¹

Going back into the past, “the world that no longer exists”, has enabled showing the two works in discussion from a new perspective, which has been the leading motive to originate the following thesis. Its main objective was a thorough analysis, a demonstration of the context of origin and a description of chosen performance aspects of two very different Mass cycles: *The Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church* (1974) by Jan Fotek and *Missa solemnis – hommage à Josquin Desprez* (2004) by Stanisław Moryto. Their contrastive analysis made it possible to “transit from world to world”, from the atmosphere of a music festival of religious songs, the “Sacrosong” of the 70s of the previous century, to the Renaissance style of Josquin Desprez, creatively reinterpreted. That turned out to be a highly interesting and vivid experience, one that deserves the most thorough description possible and one that reveals the treasury of contemporary Polish church music.

Approaching the abovementioned cycles that come from “different worlds” has above all been an opportunity to reveal their beauty in the perspective of contrasting differences which result from different lyrics used in them, as well as different elements of music language, performance apparatus, sound aesthetics, and stylistics. The variety of means of the composing technique in both cycles is closely connected with performance issues and thus with difficulties

¹ S. MORYTO, *Muzyka z mojego życia (Music from my life)*, Warsaw 2017, p. 203.

accompanying and ways of solving them. An attempt to describe them, undertaken in this thesis for the first time, makes for the novelty in the academic field.

When analysed, both pieces exhibited undeniably high artistic qualities, such as an excellent composers' proficiency, compliance with liturgy content and an ability to operate in the *sacrum* aesthetic space, enrooting in the music tradition of the Church, especially in Gregorian chant. Quite surprisingly, but with enough verification in this work, one can state that the two works converge genetically, which can be seen in a creative application of "Gregorian-tending" elements that both composers developed in completely different aesthetic currents.

The composing currents that Jan Fotek and Stanisław Moryto followed in the pieces discussed have been outlined quite broadly in this thesis, also by showing the context of ten years of creation and how they join in the *continuum* of the genre of the Mass cycle, present in Polish composers' creative activity. In the case of Jan Fotek's *Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church*, they are the years following Vatican Council II that permitted including native languages in the liturgy and propagated the so-called *participatio actuosa*, i.e. an active participation of all the faithful who gather at the Holy Mass liturgy. That bid was also included in a rising music phenomenon of that time – the "Sacrosong", a youth festival of religious songs which was gaining popularity and was promoted by cardinal Karol Wojtyła. As for Stanisław Moryto's *Missa solemnis*, its timeframe is the first decade of the third millennium, when composers – quite interestingly - gladly make use of the creative possibilities offered by a Mass cycle, while frequently returning to the use of Latin as a fancy. A completion to the image of contexts is obviously the conscious and creative reference to the great master of the Renaissance, Josquin Desprez, to whom *The Solemn Mass* is dedicated as a homage and whose unremembered world it thus revives.

Missa solemnis by Stanisław Moryto is rightly called a masterpiece. A proof to that, the author believes, is not only the thorough analysis of composing proficiency presented in this thesis, but also a repeatedly lively reaction of the audience who could listen to it over the period of (already) fifteen years since its creation. The opportunity to investigate its artistry through a deep study, the attempt to describe the sources of its beauty and to present it during the Ph.D. programme concert has been an honour, a great joy and satisfaction. The author hopes it contributes to a still greater popularity of that wonderful sacral composition which apart from stage performance can also well serve the liturgy of the Church as a work intended for use.

No less valuable dimension of the work undertaken has been the opportunity to unearth and – daring to say – to save from oblivion a very interesting composition of Jan Fotek, i.e. *The Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Preparing and performing it in its entirety after 44 years since

its first night may rightly be called a “new first performance”. A detailed analysis of *The Mass* has enabled bringing closer the characteristics of the original music language Jan Fotek used in that composition. It was written especially for the Warsaw *Sacrosong '74* festival. The main elements of this work’s music language turned out to be, among others, a skilful combination of “discordances” through reference to Gregorian chant style while simultaneously reaching for the idiom of *pop music*, as well as a frequent use of the technique of shifted chords, enhancement of the verbal layer, especially in poetry that constitutes the canvass of the Proper of the Mass, a simple and direct emotionality, often built by sparing compositional means. In that context it makes for a curiosity that also Fotek – not only Moryto – used the technique of voice pairs, the so-called “Josquin pairs”, which can be found in the Mass cycles of both composers.

Brought to light, *The Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church* by Jan Fotek was performed twice: on 28 May 2018 as part of the author’s Ph.D. programme concert and on 22 September 2018 during the final of 32nd Legnickie Conversatorium Organowe (Organs Conservatory of Legnica). Every time that piece met with a lively, enthusiastic reaction from the audience. The author is glad he could approach Jan Fotek’s works while presenting unknown facts from his biography as part of his academic work. He hopes to contribute to spreading information about the composer and a greater interest in his artistic activity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Piotr Marcin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Piotr" is written with a large, decorative initial 'P' that loops back. The last name "Marcin" is written in a similar cursive style. The signature is centered on the page.