

Streszczenie w języku angielskim

“The polyphonic techniques of Paul Hindemith in selected works for piano solo and chamber piano ensembles”.

My personal interests in Paul Hindemith's work started with my first time listening to the performance of his symphony “Mathis der Maler”. The serene beauty, clarity and perfection of the composition made me deeply admire the mastery of writing combining such complexity and simplicity simultaneously. Later, having performed many of his sonatas for wind and string instruments, my interest grew stronger. What drew in my attention in particular, was his use of polyphonic structures and an innovative and highly idiosyncratic musical language, that's still clearly rooted in tradition and the works of his musical predecessors. This dissertation is an attempt at exposing the structure of Hindemith's polyphonic language via three musical excerpts: “Piano Sonata no. 3” (1936), “Flute Sonata” (1936) and “9 English Songs”.

Chapter one offers a thorough presentation of the political, social and cultural events occurring during the composer's lifetime, as well as his biography and his life work. In the history of western classical music, Paul Hindemith's legacy is one of the most truly exceptional. However, his artistic choices were, to a great extent, influenced by the political and historical events of his time. He gained recognition and popularity during his twenties, eventually rising to become one of the most impactful and important German composers of the modern era. Born in 1895, in Germany, he witnessed World War I; the rise and the fall of the Weimar Republic. Under the Nazi regime, he fled Germany and emigrated to the United States, where he became a professor of music theory at Yale University in New Haven, CT. In 1952, he finally returned to Europe, Switzerland, where he died in 1963.

His prolific body of work spans from smaller chamber and solo pieces to large-scale symphonies, operas and ballets. Hindemith's career spanned many areas as well, being an educator, philosopher, writer, conductor, an accomplished violist and chamber musician, as well as a

librettist for his own operas, not to mention a world-renowned composer, in all of which he received substantial recognition.

Throughout his work and philosophy, Hindemith believed in a so-called “spiral evolution” of music, embracing the dynamic interconnectedness of various musical epochs from the past to the present, positioning himself opposite to the likes of Adorno and Schoenberg, who were both vocal in their criticism of Neo-classicist ideals. He also considered music of great ethical importance in society and devoted his life to the popularization and accessibility of classical music for the common listener and amateur musician, known as *Gebrauchsmusik*.

The Neoclassical style of Paul Hindemith is an integration of many polyphonic techniques developed in various musical periods. The second chapter presents a detailed history of polyphony and also deeply examines and breaks down the composer’s polyphonic language. My methodology is based on Metrical Dissonance Theory (MDT), first introduced by Maury Yeston in *The Stratification of Musical Rhythm*¹⁶² and later developed by Harald Krebs in *Fantasy Pieces: Metrical Dissonance in the Music of Robert Schumann*¹⁶³. I’ve found this to be the most adequate in analyzing and understanding the complexity and ambiguity within Hindemith’s polyphonic writing. Chapter Three includes a formal and structural analysis of the three aforementioned musical excerpts as seen from the performers perspective, and offers a thorough presentation of the various polyphonic techniques used in these three compositions.

In his writings, Paul Hindemith details a great deal the intended performance of his works, which is discussed and summarized in Chapter Four. I have also included notes and comments from my personal experience of interpreting and performing the works discussed in this dissertation.

¹⁶² Maury Yeston, *The Stratification of Musical Rhythm* Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1976.

¹⁶³ Harold Krebs, *Fantasy Pieces: Metrical Dissonance in the Music of Robert Schumann* Oxford University Press, New York 1999.

Popularity of Paul Hindemith's music faded after World War Two, he was no longer an influential composer inspiring a new generation. However, after many decades of silence, I believe, that we are ready to rediscover his music and I humbly hope that my dissertation might revive some of the interest in his exceptional body of work and also let us be inspired by his remarkable persona.