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Abstract of the dissertation: *Krzysztof Meyer's string quartets. Idea – form – language*

The recognition of Meyer's work in Poland and abroad is an important impulse to undertake research aimed at bringing the quartet's achievements closer to the scientific literature. Another research goal is to make a comparative characterization of Meyer's quartet works, as a result of which it would be possible to capture the possible stylistic evolution that could be revealed during the writing of the genre – the years 1963-2017.

The thesis of the undertaken scientific reflection is the possibility of demonstrating stylistic evolution within the string quartet genre practiced by Krzysztof Meyer. The above-mentioned corpus of sixteen compositions (15 String Quartets and one work entitled *Au-delà d'une absence*) for executive group was written quite regularly from 1963 and provides sufficient research material to identify possible phases of Meyer's Quartets.

This dissertation is divided into an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, a list of musical examples and a list of tables.

Chapter one – "Krzysztof Meyer – on his way to composing String Quartets" – concerns Meyer's figure, which is distinguished by multiple interests and activities. The artist was therefore characterized as an instrumentalist, theoretician, and above all as a composer. It is therefore an attempt to capture the most important facts from the biography of a living artist that could have an impact on the development of the composer's way of composing and the creative emotionality inherent in him. An important element of Meyer's musical language is the use of allusions, which will be discussed in the first chapter of the dissertation. It is a creative process that is not always perceptible to the listeners and is not always possible to be identified by the researcher.

The second chapter – "String Quartet - history of the genre and the state of research" – presents the historical outline of the genre under study. It is a genre that developed in several European centers, and then was individually cultivated by composers of subsequent eras. The tradition of the quartet, which begins in the 18th century, is a reference point for the composer's creative imagination, who, on the basis of similarity and contrast, takes a stance on the artistic achievements of artists from previous centuries. Meyer, inspired by the works of his predecessors, continues the most important creative tendencies and even incorporates creative solutions from other compositions of his choice into his works.

The first two chapters introduce contextual considerations. The biography of the author of the quartet works discussed here creates a profile of an artist who, aware (as a scientist –

theoretician) of the evolution and groundbreaking achievements in this genre from classicism to the 20th and 21st century, when creating his works (already as a composer), refers to the creative trends of his choice while keeping distance from others.

The most extensive third chapter – "Krzysztof Meyer's String Quartets in the light of the results of detailed analyses. Between tradition, avant-garde and individuality" – contains the results of the multi-context analyzes of sixteen Meyer quartet works conducted in this study. The main purpose of these analyzes was to identify and describe the form-creating unit used in Meyer's quartet music - the rhythmic-melodic-harmonic motif. Changes in the formation and use of this unit are the result of Meyer's use of various compositional techniques. Therefore, an important part of this chapter is the presentation of the results of structural and stylo-critical analyzes in the context of the identified compositional techniques and the interpretation of their use both as factors shaping the musical narrative of the studied works and determining their style.

The third chapter also addresses issues related to the texture of Meyer's quartet works and possible inter-genre relations. In the context of stylistic changes, a certain predilection can be observed in the use of selected textures, as well as the fact that some of them are identified in almost every work, and others will appear only in some compositions. This knowledge is the starting point for an attempt to characterize the entire corpus of Meyer's quartet works.

An important theme of this chapter of the dissertation is drawing attention to the means of execution technique used by Meyer. His first works were written in the 1960s, and his most recent work was composed in the second decade of the 21st century. The time distance and the observed changes in the performance techniques used by the artist may also indicate the evolution of the compositional language.

The last subchapter of the third chapter is a reflection related to the musical form. While at the beginning of the existence of the studied genre, certain determinants of its macro-organization - such as, for example, the cycle's four-movement structure or the use of appropriate formal patterns in each of its links - were expected by the audience, in the 20th and 21st centuries composers gain greater autonomy, enabling them to form a work in any and original way. This situation means that Meyer's quartet compositions are built in an individual way. However, this does not mean that the artist abstracts from a priori forms. However, it is an original and creative reference to them, which may or may not be perceived by the recipients.

Fifty-four years have elapsed between the first and the latest Meyer String Quartet. However, in all works of this genre, it is noteworthy that the author derives his creative process from the choice of the smallest form-forming unit, which is a specifically shaped rhythmic-melodic-

harmonic motif. This is a feature common to all his quartet works, in which various compositional techniques were used, and the compositions themselves were written in various stylistic trends.

The motif, which is the smallest unit of a work, is used by Meyer in two ways - as a static and motor motif. The contrast between them initiates the choice of the method of shaping the musical narrative for individual works, and finally for the entire quartet's work. Depending on the relationship between the instrumental parts, each of the motifs can be presented in the Quartets in two functions - melodic or accompaniment - which even more allows the composer to make transformations adequate to the compositional techniques used. Meyer minimizes the number and variety of form-forming units while maximizing their creative exploitation. This method of operating the form-creating unit results in a number of techniques appearing in the works that enable the transformation of the original motif. Therefore, a special place is occupied by the variant technique and evolutionism as well as sonoristic, aleatoric, concertante and polyphonic techniques.

The results of the research proved that Meyer's quartet work evolved over several decades of composing. Despite this fact, it is worth noting that from the very beginning these works have a highly individualized stylistic profile. A manifestation of this originality is the use by the author of the Quartets of various textures understood as inter-genre filiations - quartet, symphonic, concert, vocal and neutral - as well as textures resulting from the organization of sound spaces filled by individual parts of a chamber ensemble - monophonic, polyphonic, micropolyphonic, homophonic, heterophonic, sonoristic and punctual.

The conclusion brings a summary of the research conducted in the dissertation, their interpretation and confirmation of the thesis put forward at the beginning of the work regarding the stylistic evolution observed within the genre of the string quartet.