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Grażyna Bacewicz and Social Realism

Ned Charles Kirk

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of Washington
2001

School of Music

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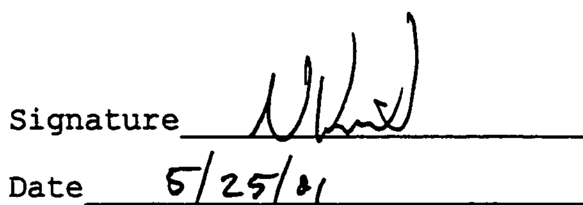

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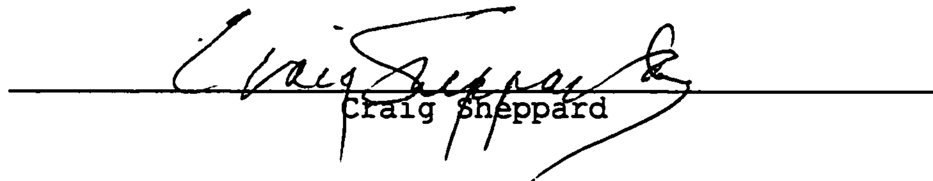

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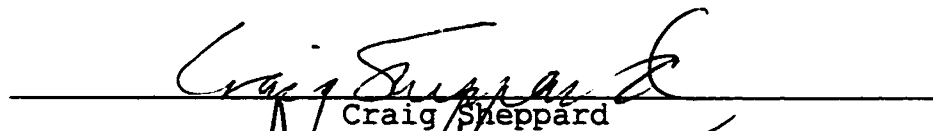

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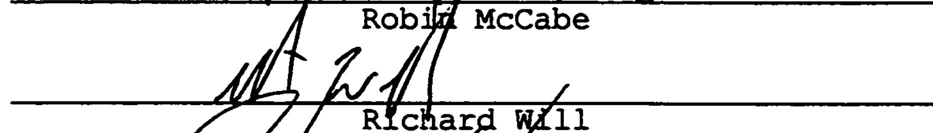

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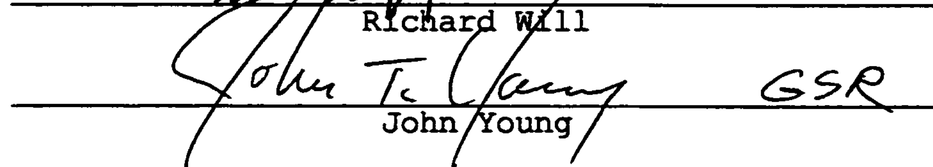

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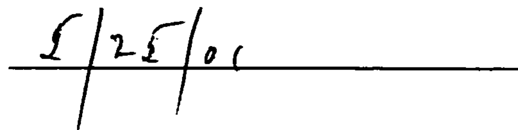

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Abstract

Grażyna Bacewicz and Social Realism

Ned Charles Kirk

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The history of Social Realism and its relation to music has never been clear. Many scholarly sources provide varying degrees of discussion on the topic, but all are either superficial or diffused and vague in scope. It is the intention of the present study to bring a degree of clarity to the doctrine of Social Realism in relation to Polish music, and to the compositions of Grażyna Bacewicz in particular. Great attention has been given to the study of Social Realism in relation to literature and visual art, but not in relation to music. The abstract nature of music makes allusions to Social Realism, which are by their nature extra-musical associations, difficult to support. Indeed, in music without programmatic content, any associations are subjective and open to debate. The history of Social Realism is traced beginning with the political climate which fostered the movement, through its origins, authors, definitions, guidelines, manifestation, monitoring organizations (musical),

composers' reactions and ultimate demise.

Bacewicz was a highly respected and immensely prolific artist, and was one of the few Polish composers to successfully embrace Social Realist doctrine in her absolute music, doing so in ways that could be defended. Her use of traditional forms and genres, as well as folk idioms, helped her to avoid censure. Many of her best known and most enduring works date from this period of isolation. Thus, she is an important composer through which to view the manifestation of Social Realism.

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Social Realism and its relation to music has never been clear. Many scholarly sources provide varying degrees of discussion on the topic, but all are either superficial or diffused and vague in scope. The large bibliography of the present work attests to the ambiguous nature of the subject and the effort undertaken to gather scattered information. It is the intention of the present study to bring a degree of clarity to the doctrine of Social Realism in relation to Polish music, and to the compositions of Grażyna Bacewicz in particular.

Great attention has been given to the study of Social Realism in relation to literature and visual art, but not in relation to music. One reason, perhaps, is simply that the movement began with literature, was then applied to art and finally to music. A more compelling reason, however, and the rationale for the present study, is that the abstract nature of music makes allusions to Social Realism, which are by their nature extra-musical

associations, difficult to support. Indeed, in music without programmatic content, any associations are subjective and open to debate.

Bacewicz was a highly respected and immensely prolific artist. An indication of her stature can be seen in the words of one of the most important Polish composers, Witold Lutosławski:

> She was born with an incredible wealth of musical talent, which she succeeded to bring to full flourish through an almost fanatic zeal and unwavering faith in her mission. The intensity of her activities was so great that she managed, in such a cruelly-shortened life, to give birth to such treasures that any composer of her stature with a considerably longer life span could only envy.[1]

Bacewicz was one of the few Polish composers to successfully embrace Social Realist doctrine in her absolute music, doing so in ways that could be defended. Her use of traditional forms and genres, as well as folk idioms, helped her to avoid censure, and many of her best known and most enduring works date from this period of isolation. Thus, she is an important composer through which to view the manifestation of Social Realism.

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[1]Judith Rosen, *Grażyna Bacewicz: Her Life and Works* (Los Angeles: Friends of Polish Music, University of Southern California, 1984), 11-12.

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

Musicologists have tended to divide the compositional output of Grażyna Bacewicz into varying numbers of stylistic periods. Her compositions have generally been described as neo-classical, neo-baroque and folk-influenced. Rarely, however, is her work linked to the socio-political environment in which she was forced to live and work. The artistic restrictions imposed during the years of Stalinism (1945-1954) had a profound influence on the compositional style of Bacewicz during that period. She was one of the few Polish composers able to embrace the doctrine of Social Realism, survive professionally, and go on to build a major career as a composer.

Grażyna Bacewicz was born February 5th, 1909 into a talented family. She and three siblings were born in Łódź and encouraged from an early age to study music. Grażyna's brothers, Kiejstut and Witold, were both

pianists and her sister, Wanda, was a poet and writer. Grażyna was a child prodigy whose earliest musical training came from her father and the musical environment he fostered at home; the three musical children often played chamber music together. When she was in her teens, she attended a private conservatory in Łódź. She went on to receive diplomas from the Warsaw Conservatory in 1932, studying composition with Kazimierz Sikorski, violin with Józef Jarzębski and piano with Józef Turczyński. Bacewicz had wide-ranging interests, even studying philosophy at the University of Warsaw concurrent with her enrollment at the conservatory. In the tradition of many of Szymanowski's students during this time, Bacewicz went on to Paris to study composition with Nadia Boulanger and violin with Henri Touret and Carl Flesch.

Bacewicz's professional life encompassed four distinct areas: performing, composing, teaching and writing. After receiving an Honorable Mention at the first Wieniawski International Violin Competition in 1935, Bacewicz's performing career intensified. She toured Europe extensively, often premiering her own works as both a violinist and pianist. In 1936, at their invitation, she joined the Polish Radio Orchestra as concertmaster, touring with the group for two years. This experience

proved invaluable to her as a composer by providing performance opportunities for her works. In addition, such close exposure to this type of ensemble helped to hone her orchestration skills. In the early 1950s, Bacewicz began to cut back the number of engagements she would accept and, by 1955, withdrew entirely from the concert stage in order to devote all of her energies to composition.

Bacewicz's pedagogical contributions ranged from giving lectures in harmony, counterpoint and solfege at various institutions, to serving as an adjudicator at international competitions. Throughout her life Bacewicz did little formal teaching, preferring to focus on performance and composition. She taught a violin class on two brief, separate occasions at the Łódź Conservatory; the first during the school year of 1934-35, and the second in 1945-46. Her most significant instruction was teaching a composition class at the Warsaw Conservatory from 1966 until her premature death on January 17, 1969. Bacewicz was also a talented writer with several novels, short stories and a play to her credit.

While Bacewicz became famous throughout Europe as a violinist, it was composition which ultimately became her focus. One of the most important influences during her

early years was meeting Szymanowski at the Warsaw Conservatory where he served as director. Szymanowski had explored with great interest many north African and European cultures. Thus, he influenced many Polish music students, in addition to Bacewicz, to continue their studies abroad.

Bacewicz's compositional output can roughly be organized into several periods. It is important not to envision these groupings as distinct style periods, but rather as landmarks in her internal development combined with external influences and circumstances. The earliest period includes her youthful efforts through works written while still a university student. Some of these garnered attention for her talent, but it was not until later, when she was a student of Nadia Boulanger, that her works began to win awards.

The next period includes her mature works that predate and include the war years, 1933-45. Pieces from these years show Bacewicz's development of neo-classical elements. The war greatly disrupted Polish musical life and displaced the entire Bacewicz family. Because of the Nazis' ban of the arts, Polish musical life was forced into a clandestine existence. Even under these conditions Bacewicz managed to compose several works, one of which,

the *Overture* for orchestra (1943) was especially well received at its 1946 premiere. It was also during these years that Bacewicz married and had a child.

Another period, 1945-54, encompasses the years of Stalinism and the imposed doctrine of Social Realism (the subject of chapters two and three). This was a difficult time for Polish composers as Russia took control of Poland and all artistic organizations. Still another period, 1955-60, reflects Bacewicz's years of experimentation with techniques previously unknown in Poland. Dodecaphonic music, serialism and aleatoric music were of particular interest. Composers such as Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, Messiaen, Stockhausen, Boulez and Nono were all major influences on Polish composers at this time. The first changes to Bacewicz's style included a departure from tonality and greater attention to timbre and rhythm. Works such as the *String Quartet No.5*, *Violin Concerto No.6* and *Music for Strings, Trumpets and Percussion*, the latter an especially popular work, all date from this period.

Following these years of experimentation, Bacewicz slowed her work pace and began a period of self evaluation during 1961-64. She had always been labeled a neo-classicist, even during the late 1950s, and her works from

the early 1960s show her struggle to incorporate avant-garde elements into this style. After 1965, Bacewicz finally turned away from neo-classicism to focus on serialism. Final works include the *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra*, *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra*, *Four Caprices* for violin solo, and her last composition (not quite finished), the ballet, *Desire*, based on a Picasso play.

Bacewicz liked to work long hours on a composition, feeling that many of her best ideas came when she was very tired. Thus she did not like to take significant breaks until a composition was complete.[2] This method of working allowed her to produce works quickly and made her one of the most prolific Polish composers, with over two hundred compositions to her credit.

Bacewicz's name figures prominently in the literature of contemporary east European music. Throughout her career she was continuously faced with questions about her success as a woman composer. Bacewicz was totally lacking in interest for the subject and usually evaded such discussions. It was her firm belief and desire that she should be treated first and always as an artist and

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[2] Judith Rosen, *Grażyna Bacewicz: Her Life and Works* (Los Angeles: Friends of Polish Music, University of Southern California, 1984), 20.

composer. Although she herself maintained that gender was irrelevant, the recent trend toward the historical study of women composers and musicians has brought Bacewicz and her works to the forefront of current Polish musicology as the most important woman composer of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL REALISM

After a long period of occupation, the people of Poland enjoyed twenty years of freedom between World Wars I and II. However, progress made towards bringing Poland in line with western European musical trends abruptly ended with the Nazi occupation in 1939. Polish culture endured extraordinary losses due to World War II. In addition to the extreme hostilities that raged during the war, the Nazis attempted to systematically obliterate Poland as a nation. The erasure of Polish national identity included not only the politicians and intelligentsia, but also the elimination of education, the closing of all artistic performance venues and the banning of arts in general. The Poles challenged the Nazis in every respect. They fought back physically; they resisted mentally and emotionally. Polish culture endured clandestinely, and it was this underground foundation which formed the basis for the reconstruction of Polish

music in the new socio-political system.[3]

With the near total physical destruction of the country and the subsequent occupation by the Soviet Union, Poland was faced with the enormous task of rebuilding. With the amazing exception of Krakow, nearly every city had been reduced to rubble. The western part of the country, formerly under German rule, now required Polish administration. Poles forced to leave eastern Poland, now annexed to the Soviet Union, were settled in western Poland while the several million ethnic Germans living there were expelled. Following the escape, to the west, of Stanisław Mikołajczk (former prime minister of the Polish government-in-exile during the war and current postwar leader), and rigged elections in 1948, Stalin's grip on Poland became secure. His policies, which began with Marxist-Leninist ideology (he was later to drop completely this ideology, in lieu of much more extreme measures), inundated the country. Statues of Lenin and Stalin proliferated; the Polish army was forced by conscription to grow to 400,000 men; enormous construction projects were launched; the Roman Catholic Church was openly attacked with the expropriation of property, the

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[3]Ludwik Erhardt, *Music in Poland* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1985), 74.

arrests of Priests, and the deportation (to the east) of the Cardinal-Primate.[4] As if it were not enough of a challenge to rebuild the country from scratch, a civil war also raged for two years, eliminating what was left of the wartime resistance. Thus it took nearly three years for the Soviet-backed communist government to take full political control of Poland. With the adoption of a new constitution in July 1952, Poland's official name became the People's Republic of Poland (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa). Obviously, Poland was not a willing participant through all of this. The Polish spirit and resistance could not entirely be suppressed; thus, while this period (1948-1955) was profoundly difficult for the Poles, Stalinism never quite permeated society to the extent of other eastern bloc countries. Within two years of Stalin's death in 1953, tensions and restrictions thawed enough that, in the arts at least, western trends began to filter through the borders.

The political background from which Social Realism emerged was one of total isolation from western influences. In addition to the problem of physical reconstruction, there was the issue of what place the

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[4]Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 8.

Polish arts would occupy in the new socio-political context. The whole undertaking of socializing music had actually begun in Russia in the mid 1930s but was interrupted by World War II. Following the war, efforts were renewed and intensified, and Stravinsky became the target for the strongest criticism against western music. With Russia now exerting significant control over the new socialist states of Eastern Europe, the furor over Formalism versus Social Realism quickly spread. With musical life showing signs of recovery and state patronage increasing the number of grants to the arts, the role of composers and their music in the new socialist society was being questioned.[3] A major factor in the communist party's policy regarding music and other art forms had to do with what was considered 'understandable.' The party went to great lengths to say that music not understood by the masses was vulgar and without value. It is more likely that they believed this music to be dangerous to the well-being of the state but simply hid behind a convenient veil of criticism. Any art form that promoted individualism and new creative thought was inherently dangerous to the stability of a communist society. More importantly, music not understood by the Committee members

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[3]Erhardt, 79.

themselves, or even Stalin, was dangerous because of its unknown potential effects on the people. It represented a lack of control in one aspect of society, and the communist party was quick to suspect anything it could not totally regulate. By turning the situation around and requiring music to conform to the concepts of Social Realism, the party not only resolved the issue of music for the elite, but also created a powerful propaganda machine.

The foundations of Social Realism were laid down with the Russian Party Resolution of April 23, 1932, entitled "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations".[4] Specifically, the resolution sought to dissolve all literary organizations and replace them with newly formed unions closely aligned with the communist party. The mission of these new unions was to foster an atmosphere of developing socialism, with membership being restricted to those wishing to contribute. In reality, it would have been personally and professionally devastating for a writer not to join. The resolution also had the immediate effect of replacing the old leadership with new, party-controlled bureaucracies. The term itself,

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[4]Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1970* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), 109.

attributed to Maxim Gorky and first appearing in 1932, was originally applied only to literature.[5] Literature was singled out, because Lenin believed it to be of primary importance among art forms with regard to its usefulness in bringing people and party together.[6] The first reference to music came in 1936 when Joseph Stalin himself addressed a gathering of musicologists and composers. Stalin felt that a country's heritage and cultural traditions should form the basis of musical construction.[7] He was speaking to Soviet musicians, but the developing policies of Social Realism were expected to be realized by all of the occupied satellite countries. It is curious that Russia wanted Poland and the other eastern bloc nations to develop nationalism in their music, art and literature, albeit in a social realist manner. Fostering the development of national idioms in Russia made more sense than in the occupied territories, but Stalin must have considered this an acceptable compromise to the alternative of embracing western trends. By forcing countries to shun western influences, Stalin gave them

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[5]Steven Stucky, *Lutosławski and His Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 34.

[6]Schwarz, 110.

[7]Rena Moisenko, *Realist Music: 25 Soviet Composers* (London: Meridian Books, 1949), 24-5.

nowhere to turn but to nationalism; thus, even under the harsh conditions of Stalinism, this musical policy fostered inevitable artistic rebellions in all the Soviet-occupied countries.

The term Social Realism, first appeared in a Polish musical context in the September 15, 1948 issue of *Ruch Muzyczny* in an article by Tikhon Khrennikov, the general-secretary of the Soviet Composers Union.[8] Khrennikov stated that the topic was of great interest throughout Soviet society and that the purpose of this article was to report what the common people of Russia had decided about the future of music.[9]

While many individuals worked hard to promote Social Realism in music, there were two principle proponents. Andrei Zhdanov (1896-1948) was a Soviet politician and major supporter of Social Realism who, during his career, held several high-ranking communist party and government positions. As secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, he delivered many speeches at conferences organized by the Committee, most notably (with regard to Social Realism) to the first

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[8]Tikhon Khrennikov, "O Nowe Drogi Tworczosei Muzycznej," *Ruch Muzyczny* (Sept 15, 1948): 2-6.

[9]Ibid.

Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 and at a meeting of Soviet musicians in 1948.[10] Zhdanov presented the parameters of the new socialist system to the Congress and addressed the role expected of Soviet writers. He made it clear that the future triumph of Soviet literature could only be achieved by focusing on the success of socialism.[11] By requiring writers to embrace socialist topics in order to have successful careers, the true aim of using literature as a socialist weapon against capitalism was fostered. His choice of words made the point absolutely clear:

> You have many different types of weapons. Soviet literature has every opportunity of employing these types of weapons (genres, styles, forms and methods of literary creation) in their diversity and fullness, selecting all the best that has been created in this sphere by all previous epochs.[12]

This speech was intensely political and frequently confrontational.

At the meeting of Soviet musicians, Zhdanov gave two speeches. One was a scathing attack on a new opera by the Russian-Georgian composer Vano Muradeli, and the other was

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[10]Andrei A. Zhdanov, *Essays on Literature, Philosophy, and Music* (New York: International Publishers, 1950), 6.

[11]Maxim Gorky and others, *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism in the Soviet Union* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), 17.

[12]Ibid, 22.

an appraisal of the state of Soviet music. Muradeli was generally considered a third-rate composer and was one of the few to write a work in honor of the thirtieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution in 1947 (which is perhaps why he received any attention at all). His opera, *The Great Friendship*, was the first in ten years by a Soviet composer, and was premiered in Moscow for a select audience. Zhdanov, along with several hundred other Central Committee members, made up the audience, and it was rumored that even Stalin was in attendance.[13] Zhdanov relentlessly tore apart the work in every detail to illustrate the position of the Committee and the state of Soviet music. Though no one knows how they began, rumors had surfaced that he was musically accomplished. While this was later proven to be totally false (by his own admission), it had a lasting impact on the public's perception of his musical authority, and he was thus profoundly influential in defining the path of Soviet and East European music.[14]

Zofia Lissa (1908-1980), the other major proponent of Social Realism, was a major figure in Polish musicology

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[13]Alexander Werth, *Musical Uproar in Moscow* (London: Turnstile Press, 1949), 26.

[14]Ibid, 27.

whose career spanned many periods of change within Poland. From the time of freedom between the wars through the Nazi occupation and ten years of Stalinist terror, to the slightly 'relaxed' atmosphere of Soviet occupation, Lissa was an active and outspoken individual. In the thirties she aligned herself with the communist party and during World War II moved to Moscow, becoming the cultural attaché to the Polish Embassy.[15] Upon her return to Poland in 1947 she became involved with the movement to promote Social Realism, serving as an Executive Board member of the Composers' Union from 1947 to 1954. In contrast to those who embraced Social Realism as a matter of survival, Lissa seems to have firmly believed in combining communist ideology with music as a way to move towards an inclusive society. She was a prolific writer with some six hundred works to her credit.[16]

The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* defines Social Realism as: "The method of literature and art that expresses in aesthetic terms a consciously socialist concept of man and the world."[17] Lenin emphasized the relationship, inherent

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[15]Zofia Helman, "Zofia Lissa (1908-1980)," in *Polish Musicological Studies*. Vol. 2, ed. Zofia Chechlińska and Jan Stęszewski (Krakow: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1986), 7-8.

[16]Ibid, 10.

[17]D.F. Markov and L.I. Timofeev, "Socialist Realism," in *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, Vol. 24 (New York: Macmillan, 1980), 244-45.

in the concept, between the artist and history by stating that in order for an artist to experience real creative freedom one must consciously align one's self with currently developing historical events.[18] To this concept, Andrei Zhdanov added "works to be attuned to the epoch," and Stalin himself added "cultures, national in form and socialist in substance."[19] Along with the creation of the term Social Realism, the term Formalism was generated to help clarify the first. The purpose of developing these two opposing concepts was to facilitate the classification of all music as examples of either one or the other; or more specifically, as being acceptable or unacceptable. Witold Rudziński, a prominent Polish composer, suggested that music classified as formalistic was not necessarily of poor quality, but should be banned because of the negative impressions inherent in the music.[20] The definitions that evolved were broad, yet vague enough to allow those in positions of influence or authority to make sweeping judgments that were largely subjective. As far as can be determined, explicit

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Schwarz, 110.

[20] Jan Patrick Lee, "Musical Life and Sociopolitical Change in Warsaw, Poland: 1944-1960" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1979), 221.

guidelines for composing in a social realist manner were never concisely specified. 'Rules' for Social Realism were usually presented in broad poetic or bureaucratic terms with little regard for clarity. The Soviet Composers' Union guidelines state:

> The main attention of the Soviet composer must be directed towards the victorious progressive principles of reality, towards all that is heroic, bright and beautiful. This distinguishes the spiritual world of Soviet man and must be embodied in musical images full of beauty and strength. Socialist Realism demands an implacable struggle against folk-negating modernistic directions that are typical of the decay of contemporary bourgeois art, against subservience and servility towards modern bourgeois culture.[21]

In his speech to the 1948 conference of Soviet musicians, Zhdanov attempted to clarify what he referred to as 'trends.' Regarding Social Realism he states:

> One trend represents the healthy, progressive principle in Soviet music, based upon recognition of the tremendous role of the classical heritage, and, in particular, the traditions of the Russian musical school, upon the combination of lofty idea content in music, its truthfulness and realism, with profound, organic ties with the people and their music and songs - all this combined with a high degree of professional mastery.[22]

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[21]From "Statutes of Composers' Union", quoted in *Entsiklopedicheskii Muzykalnyi Slovar*, ed. B. Steinpress and I. Yampolski, 2nd ed., M, 1966, article "Sotsialisticheskii Relism"; quoted in Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1970* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1972), 114.

[22]Zhdanov, 81.

This vague description is followed by his equally vague definition of Formalism:

> The other trend is that of a formalism alien to Soviet art; it is marked by rejection of the classical heritage under the cover of apparent novelty, by rejection of popular music, by rejection of service to the people, all for the sake of catering to the highly individualistic emotions of a small group of select esthetes. This trend substitutes music that is false, vulgar, and often simply pathological, for natural, human music. At the same time it is typical of this trend that it avoids frontal attacks, preferring to conceal its revisionist activity behind a mask of seeming agreement with the fundamental tenets of Socialist Realism.[23]

Attempting to extract a list of guidelines for composing in a social realist manner from the endless displays of bureaucratic language, was a dubious prospect at best. Indeed, the lack of clarity inherent in the definitions was a significant part of the communist party's strategy in wielding as much control as possible over composers. By avoiding specifics, sweeping subjective judgments were easier to hand down. There remain however, two overriding purposes behind the government's efforts that may be interpreted as rules or guidelines: (1) express reality: current historical events and anything familiar to common people in terms of their daily lives, and (2) be a vehicle for political

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[23]Ibid.

propaganda: composers and their music were to be of service to the people and state by disseminating communist ideology. To address these two purposes, two aspects of music may be defined, each with its own set of guidelines: (1) musical material and (2) musical concepts.

The goal of musical material was to connect with common people by providing elements that were familiar and to which they could relate - specifically, using styles and forms that had been long established and recognized for their greatness, such as from the baroque and classical periods, as well as incorporating anything that could connect people to nationalism. Folk music was ideal for many reasons. It was musically simple in construction, it inherently allowed for group participation rather than indulging individualism, and it was usually sung, which provided programmatic content. Simplicity was another important requirement. Music had to have easily understood forms and singable melodies. For many, modeling cherished composers was the solution. Chopin had always been considered the greatest Polish composer and as such was viewed as an ideal example to emulate. Though his music was not programmatic, it was deeply rooted in the nationalistic spirit of Poland, and his ability to create great works of art from common folk

melodies and rhythms was seen as verification of what was possible in music for the masses.[24] There is also the simple fact that the Poles took great pride in Chopin, which automatically protected him from criticism.

The goal of musical concepts was to connect people with socialist daily life and communist ideology. Programmatic music was well suited for this purpose. It could connect people with current events, provide images and scenes of daily life and thus be a vehicle for propaganda. In the hands of a master composer, the party could theoretically have a powerful voice. Composers were viewed as influential, and their creative individualism was seen as a threat to socialist society. Thus the party had two purposes here: keeping composers personally in line, while taking advantage of their musical skills in realizing a political mandate in musical terms and bringing it to the people.

The definitions and descriptions of Formalism usually displayed a different vocabulary. While the understanding of the term could be summed up as the separation of form from content, words like 'false,' 'vulgar,' 'novelty,' 'subversive' and 'pathological' were often used. Formalism quite simply referred to any music not employing

[24]Lee, 209.

the principles of Social Realism.

In August 1949, the Ministry of Culture and Art organized a composers' conference in Łagów Lubuski. Włodzimierz Sokorski, the vice-minister of Polish culture, and Zofia Lissa led twenty-five composers in a discussion of Socialist Realism, attempting to define it. The distinction between Formalism and Social Realism needed to be clarified in a way that didn't seem arbitrary. Lissa put forth the argument that only by studying and discussing contemporary works would a clear definition emerge.[25] Using actual pieces also served to validate the process by giving the discussions a tangible focus. The definition of Formalism was so broad that it was able to embrace any new western influence, thus allowing government censors to apply it to any work that failed to please them. Social Realism, however, required music to appeal to the masses; to contain strong nationalistic elements and, as opposed to the western decadence of Formalism, to have aesthetically appropriate social content. Previous to this conference, other conventions of the Composers' Union had taken place in which the idea of music for the masses had been introduced. The Łagów Lubowski meeting was significantly

[25]Ibid, 216.

different, however, because it was not organized by the Composers' Union, but rather by a government agency with the purpose of implementing what was essentially a political mandate. In addition, it was the first composers' conference to receive widespread press coverage and have post-conference publications by participants.[26]

Zofia Lissa signed, on behalf of the Polish Composers Union, the Prague declaration of May 29, 1948, at the Second International Congress of Composers and Musicologists, committing to the new social realist movement. Specifically, the following policy implementations were required: cultivation of nationalism, avoidance of discretionism (i.e., individualism), and a return to the use of traditional forms.[27] The forms listed in the declaration as acceptable were all vocal types because of the programmatic nature of text. It is interesting to note the international makeup of the Congress. While it was held in Eastern Europe and was dominated by Soviet occupied countries, several other nations were represented: Brazil, France, Holland,

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[26]Ibid, 221.

[27]Nicolas Slonimsky, ed. "Declaration of the Second International Congress of Composers and Musicologists," in *Music Since 1900* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 1378-79.

Austria, Switzerland and Great Britain.[28]

By 1949 a strong effort was being made to clarify how Social Realism could be expressed in music. In art and literature Social Realism had a concrete form. One could paint a picture of a steel factory or write a book about a peasant farmer, but in music, if no text was involved, these extra-musical associations presented significant challenges for composers. How was one to present a coherent, recognizable, programmatic content in purely musical terms? Music that employed a text could have programmatic content (depending on how poetic the text was) and was viewed as the most effective in appealing to the masses while delivering social realist meaning. Forms best recognized for this included song, chorus, cantata, opera and oratorio. Of all these possibilities, the chorus (usually referred to as the mass song) and the cantata, with its traditional (historical) form and use of text, were preferred by the Committee because they could easily be understood. Zofia Lissa was responsible for bringing the Soviet mass song to Poland.[29] These songs contained current cultural topics, were based on folk music and were intended to be relatively simple. While

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[28]Ibid.

[29]Lee, 113.

the use of a text in music made it easier for a composer to guard against being criticized as a formalist, it also made it easier for those in positions of authority to pass judgment. For music that did not employ a text and thus did not have programmatic content, composers turned to the forms and genres of the Baroque and Classical periods. Concerto, symphony, sonata, small chamber ensemble combinations such as quartets and quintets, sonata-allegro form, simple binary and ternary forms were all used. There was some natural interest in nationalism, in part due to its complete suppression during the wartime Nazi occupation, when all artistic endeavors had been forbidden. Works that embraced elements of both programmatic and absolute methods were considered the most powerful combinations. Employing folk idioms and a text within the framework of a traditional form or genre was considered quite effective in bringing socialism to the masses. In an early attempt to recognize composers' efforts in expressing Social Realism in their music, the state awarded, in 1950, citations to those who came closest to the aesthetic ideal. In every case, composers whose works contained strong folk influences were selected.[30] Of the five composers to receive awards that

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[30]Erhardt, 82.

year, Grażyna Bacewicz emerged as one of the most important and enduring.[31]

During the years of Stalinism several administrative musical organizations were formed, and endowed with the authority to monitor, promote and ultimately enforce the doctrine of Social Realism. Immediately after the war, the government created the Ministry of Culture and Art, which took on the role of state-sponsored patronage. The Ministry was organized into three divisions: performing associations, education, and creative issues. Within this newly formed organization, Zofia Lissa served as Deputy Director of the Department of Music from 1947-1948. While the ministry was quick to rebuild musical institutions such as orchestras, opera companies and theaters, it was also to become the principle agency through which Social Realism would be enforced.

The Polish Composers Union existed before the war as the Association of Polish Composers. Members were essentially the same (those who survived the war), but the political climate the Union now faced was something completely different. With the creation of the Ministry, the Union was now forced to realize the new socialist doctrine. Issues such as whether one should use folk

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[31]Ibid.

elements or not were insignificant next to the idea that a government ministry would or could mandate a national style. The Union served many functions: concerts were arranged, conferences organized, composition competitions held, letters written and papers published. Even the utilitarian needs of its members were addressed. But more specifically and significantly, the Union disseminated political ideologies for music through publications and conferences all aimed at attacking western trends while 'educating' Polish composers.[32]

As a joint venture, the Composers' Union and the Ministry created the Commission for Commissions and Purchases. Beginning in 1948, it not only commissioned works, but also bought unsolicited compositions. In an effort to gain more control over what was produced (i.e., reduce individualism), it ultimately restricted its purchases to commissions by 1950. Through the Commission, the Ministry and Union were able to exert enormous influence over the types of compositions that were given performances.

The Union also created a sub-organization of itself, called the Youth Group, in 1949. This organization served as a professional transition from early music study to

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[32]Lee, 227.

membership in the Union. This was a way for promising young talents to have some professional opportunities while continuing to develop their skills. It was also a way for the Union to indoctrinate potential members who did not yet have a voice as a benefit of full membership. Tadeusz Baird and Kazimierz Serocki were among those to first participate in the Youth Group and go on to have prominent careers.

Few members of the Composers' Union ever joined the communist party, a fact that contributed to the Union's increasing ineffectiveness with regard to the socialist mandate. By 1952, the Ministry had taken over the Commission for Commissions and Purchases. Along with the creation of the Artistic Council that same year, it sought to take general control away from the Union. The Union had stopped holding annual conferences and instead addressed its needs through meetings run by its administrators without the dialogue and input of its members.[33] By now, stripped of any real influence, it barely had any function.

An important vehicle for Social Realism was ARTOS, a state run organization made up of seventy-five traveling ensembles. These groups performed music of all types

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[33]Ibid, 316.

throughout Poland with the aim of reaching the broadest possible audience. By 1954 ARTOS had become so successful that its groups were performing several thousand concerts annually, proving extraordinarily effective in bringing music to the masses.

Two important journals, *Ruch Muzyczny* (Musical Life) and *Kwartalnik Muzyczny* (Musical Quarterly), were created to monitor and report on the reconstruction of musical life after the war. Zygmunt Mycielski, a well-known composer and music critic who served as chief editor of *Ruch Muzyczny*, believed that in order to be truly effective in promoting Social Realism, only part of the responsibility lay with composers. The rest depended on publications and music education in the public schools.[34] Despite Mycielski's seemingly appropriate intentions, both publications became increasingly viewed as having questionable political influences and were replaced in 1950 by a new journal entitled simply *Muzyka* (Music). The purpose of *Muzyka* was to help solidify the socio-political path of Social Realism by giving the government greater control over the dissemination of its ideologies.[35]

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[34]Ibid, 231-32.

[35]Ibid, 226.

In general, during the years of Stalinism, composers were faced with a tremendously difficult situation and reacted to the restrictions of Social Realism in different ways. Those who had established themselves in a free Poland before the war were forced to adjust to the new conditions. With only one music publisher in the country, it was difficult for composers to get their works published and thus known. Several independent publishers did try to establish themselves after the war but were quickly deemed illegal by the government and shut down. Most composers received regular Ministry commissions for large works, with one to two years to complete them. Their salaries however, were equal to only two months' cost of living, which meant they were forced to find other means of supporting themselves. Monetary issues, combined with the requirement of writing socially acceptable music, forced some composers to turn away entirely from composition, only to discover they were unable to get work of any kind, as they were viewed as being politically suspect. Many gave up composing to the extent that this was possible, turning to performing or conducting. Some refused to give up their integrity and composed works that were not heard for years while finding compromises in their other compositions that allowed them to appear

compliant. One of the best examples of this was Witold Lutosławski, who rejected Social Realism and chose to earn his living composing utilitarian works for radio and schools. He felt that he was not compromising his integrity, because the nature of these works was dictated entirely by the various specific commissions and not by any government agency.[36] Many of his earlier works were dismissed as formalist and were removed from concert programs until after Stalin's death. Even one of his best known works, the *Variations on a Theme of Paganini*, was banned.

Andzej Panufink was one of the most respected musicians in Poland and was at the height of his professional career during the Stalinist years. In addition to composing, he was principle conductor of the Krakòw Philharmonic and Music Director of the Warsaw Philharmonic. He had achieved such fame that even under the intense political restrictions, he was allowed to travel extensively as guest conductor and cultural ambassador, visiting all of the major artistic centers in Europe, Scandinavia, Russia and China. In truth, Panufnik wanted nothing to do with Social Realism and after a number of intensely frustrating years, he fled the country

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[36] Stucky, 37.

in 1954, with the KGB in pursuit, and settled in England. While he did not leave until liberalization had begun, the effect of the oppressive years combined with what he felt to be a bleak future left him with little choice. Other composers did conform, however, to the doctrine of Social Realism, with varying degrees of success.

More than any other factor, it was the death of Stalin on March 5, 1953 that signaled the decline of Social Realism. Little happened during the first year after his death. While the party continued to persist with its social realist mandate, it did so with a different tone. Soon after Stalin's death, the following was published in *Pravda:*

> Social Realism offers boundless vistas for the creative artist and the greatest freedom for the expression of his personality, for the development of diverse art genres, trends and styles. Hence the importance of encouraging new departures in art, of studying the artist's individual style, and ... of recognizing the artist's right to be independent, to strike out boldly on new paths.[37]

This reflected a loosening of restrictions which generated much discussion. Several new music critics had emerged during this period, and nothing escaped them. They were young, and quick to criticize the stagnant effects inherent in the system. Up until now, most proponents had

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[37]Schwarz, 273.

tended to be uneducated (though influential), while those qualified to make judgments went unheard. Mediocrity had a voice in Social Realism and was in no hurry to lose that dominance.

A landmark in twentieth-century Polish music came in October, 1956 with the first Warsaw Autumn Festival of Contemporary Music. This festival was started by Tadeusz Baird and Kazimierz Serocki, young composers a generation apart from Lutosławski, Panufnik and Bacewicz. The Warsaw Autumn Festival garnered international attention and officially opened the musical doors to the west. In later years it was to become an important venue for the newest Polish music, but for the first festival, the mission was to provide a representative sampling of recent western styles and techniques still unknown in Poland. Interest was renewed in dodecaphonic music, which composers had been exposed to before the war, and the use of extended serial techniques was now being hastily explored by many of Poland's leading composers. Pent-up frustration from the long period of isolation fueled several years of intense experimentation.

A new acceptance of jazz by the government was also part of the process of change. Jazz had been performed publicly prior to 1949, when it was forced underground.

It resurfaced legally with the first public jazz concert in five years, in March, 1954, and quickly became popular. Concerts and festivals, along with a new journal devoted exclusively to jazz, helped to firmly establish its place in Polish musical life by 1956.[38]

The focus of this discussion has been to trace the history of Social Realism and its relation to Polish music beginning with the political climate which fostered the movement and ending with the death of Stalin and Social Realism's subsequent demise. It was the formation of the Ministry of Culture and Art immediately after the war, a government run organization empowered to dictate Russian musical policy, which set the course Polish composers would have to follow for the next decade.

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[38]Lee, 373.

CHAPTER III

BACEWICZ AND SOCIAL REALISM

Composers struggled with how to express Social Realism in music that did not employ a text. For example, the manifestation of Social Realism in music with programmatic content was relatively easy to recognize. When a composer wrote a work for chorus and orchestra, and the choir sang about the glorious, vibrant life of a tractor driver or factory worker, the purpose was clear. There is no question that by using voices and text, it immediately became possible to express in literal terms any subject matter desired. This is why the Russian-controlled government preferred composers to use vocal genres such as the mass song and cantata as a vehicle for expressing communist ideology and daily socialist life. It was much easier to dictate, monitor and thus control the development of Polish music when the use of a text allowed musically uneducated bureaucrats to understand the content, at least superficially, of a serious work.

Music without programmatic content was another matter. How was one to express the doctrine of Social Realism in abstract terms? Without a text, extra-musical associations are essentially subjective. There were several ways, however, composers could attempt to overcome this (whether they were ever successful remains a matter of contention). It was generally accepted that creating links to long established styles and genres was a safe method of representing social realist ideals. Anything that could be classified as neo-baroque or neo-classical immediately connected people with the past, which by virtue of time and tradition, was familiar. In addition, anything that could connect the listener to nationalism was viewed favorably. Thus the choice of classic forms and the use of folk idioms became the primary means of expressing Social Realism in absolute music.

Knowing how difficult it was for composers to navigate the vague guidelines of Social Realism, it is interesting to view the entire output of Gra_yna Bacewicz. Here was a composer who wrote very little vocal music, yet consistently won recognition for her compositions during the years of isolation as well as throughout her life. Bacewicz's total works number two hundred and three. Of these, one hundred seventy-nine are

instrumental and just twenty-four are vocal. One could argue that the small number of vocal works simply represents her background as a performing violinist and pianist. The fact remains, however, that regardless of her predominantly instrumental compositional output, she was still required to embrace Social Realist doctrine - she simply chose to do so through non-textual means.

Of the twenty-four vocal works, only four date from the Stalinist years; two solo songs and two works for chorus and orchestra. The solo songs do not emphasize their texts, but rather explore the color of the voice. The texts are quite simple and generate a dreamy atmosphere. The first verse of "*Here is the Night*" begins: "This is the night of dancing dreams. The rising new moon appears again, like a secret... ."[39] Neither song uses a text that conforms to Social Realist principles, but neither are they significant works (and Bacewicz wrote only two). The larger pieces consist of a Cantata (*Kantata olimpijska*) and *Tryptyk*, based on a folk text, for choir and orchestra. Both works embraced Social Realism, and, curiously, were never published.

Of the larger number of instrumental works, forty-

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[39]Sharon Shafer, *The Contribution of Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-1969) to Polish Music* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 18.

seven are from the years 1948-1954. While the Stalinist period actually began in 1945, it was not until 1948 that Russia's control of Poland was secure. Thus, change in the artistic life of the country occurred gradually. At the other end of this time period, Stalin's influence after his death in 1953 lingered with little change well into 1954. The forty-seven works consist of sixteen sonatas, dances and character pieces for solo violin or violin piano duo, six solo piano works, eight chamber works, five concertos and twelve works for chamber or full orchestra.

Many of Bacewicz's fifty-two piano works were composed early in her career and were either destroyed or never published. Only a few stand out as popular and enduring, including the *Sonata No. 2* (1953) and *Ten Concert Etudes* (1956). Unlike the piano works, however, many of the forty-nine pieces for violin *are* significant and most *were* published. The large number of character pieces, violin sonatas, concertos and string quartets all indicate the importance of the violin to Bacewicz as a means of compositional expression. It was her primary instrument, after all - even though she was a talented pianist as well. Bacewicz played and wrote for an instrument that inherently helped her link her

compositions to the familiarity of the past with regard to the material used and the manner in which it was realized in performance. Both the violin and piano are historically the primary instruments for which classical sonatas were written. Thus the simple effect of hearing these instruments in neo-classical genres created for the listener a stronger connection to the past than listening to a sonata played by, for example, a trombone or oboe. The violin is also a traditional folk instrument and, as such, has the unique ability to express folk influenced twentieth-century works in a stronger manner then if played by a non-traditional instrument.

Bacewicz used classical and baroque genres and forms throughout her compositional career, not just during the Stalinist years. It was fortunate that she devoted a large portion of her life to exploring forms from these periods, because they were excellent vehicles for Social Realism. The use of traditional forms and genres such as fugue, sonata form, sonata, string quartet and symphony all provided a connection to the past. Many western European and American twentieth-century composers used these genres as well, though Bacewicz used little else, with the addition of Polish folk dances.

FORM

Bacewicz's *Sonata No.2* (1953) for piano is an excellent example of both neo-baroque and neo-classical writing. The first movement is written in modified sonata form and contains three theme areas (Figure 1). Two

Section		
Introduction (mm. 1-2)		(2 bars of dominant preparation on B)
Exposition (mm. 3-63)	(m. 3)	Theme Area I: E minor
	(m. 29)	Theme Area II: B♭ minor
	(m. 42)	Theme Area III: G minor
	(m. 63)	Closes on new dominant of G♭
Development (mm. 64-119)		(begins in B minor) (ends in B major)
Introduction (mm.120-129)		(10 bars of dominant preparation on B)
Recapitulation (mm. 130-184)	(m. 130)	Theme Area I: E minor
	(m. 156)	Theme Area III: (E minor)
	(m. 168)	Theme Area II: B♭ minor
		Closes in E minor

Figure 1: *Piano Sonata No.2* (First Movement: Outline of Sonata Form)

measures of dominant preparation open the movement. The exposition begins with the first of three theme areas in E minor and the second and third theme areas in B♭ minor and G minor, respectively.

Notable deviations from traditional sonata form include unusual key relationships between the theme areas and an unexpected order of restatement for principal themes in the recapitulation. When all three keys of the themes are considered together, they outline mediant relationships. However, the relation of a tritone is prominent between the first two keys of E minor and B♭ minor before Theme Area III enters in G minor, providing tertian balance. In the recapitulation, the presentation of the second and third themes is reversed with Theme III implying the tonality of E minor. The work moves to B♭ minor once again before closing in E minor. The chromatic saturation of the movement often obscures the major/minor modality and, to a lesser degree, the tonality. The formal structure of the movement, however, is clear.

One of the most important elements of sonata form, the transition from the development to the recapitulation, is given special emphasis here. Bacewicz brings this transition to a climax in B major and then repeats and

expands the original introduction. Its purpose at the beginning of the movement (Example 1) is amplified here

Example 1: *Piano Sonata No.2* (First Movement: mm.1-8)

as Bacewicz expands it to ten measures of dominant preparation for the return to E minor in Theme Area I (Example 2).

Example 2: *Piano Sonata No.2* (First Movement: mm.118-133)

The second movement (Figure 2) is a six-part form with both neo-baroque and neo-classical elements. The A

A homophonic/ostinato
(mm.1-19)

B contrapuntal
(mm.20-28)

C mixed texture: octaves/syncopations/melodic
(mm.29-49)

D fugato
(mm.50-70)

B' contrapuntal
(mm.71-78)

A' homophonic/ostinato
(mm.79-90)

Figure 2: *Piano Sonata No.2* (Second Movement: Outline of Form)

sections are homophonic and consist of a *tranquillo* melody line over a chordal ostinato (Example 3). The B sections are melodic as well, but with a thick, contrapuntal texture. A varied texture in the C section, of octaves with left hand octave syncopations, leads to the first emotional climax of the movement. This is followed by a fugato in the D section. Here, Bacewicz writes six

Example 3: *Piano Sonata No.2* (Second Movement: mm.1-12)

consecutive and complete presentations of a fugue subject (Example 4). She begins a seventh presentation, but this

Example 4: *Piano Sonata No.2* (Second Movement: mm.50-62)

time uses the opening motive to take the movement to its second climax. The movement is rounded off with modified versions of both the A and B sections, though in reverse order with the piece ending as it began.

The *Sonata No. 4* for violin and piano is one of Bacewicz's most popular and enduring works. As she built her career largely as a violinist, it should be included in this discussion. Written in 1949, the work encompasses four movements with rich neo-classical and neo-romantic writing. While folk influence is evident, it is not used on a large scale.

The first movement is in modified sonata form (Figure 3) and contains two theme areas. The movement begins with twenty-three measures of introduction which serve to establish the key of D minor and prepare the listener for Theme Area I in measure 22 (Example 5). The abrupt, violent nature of this theme and its need for an introduction is reminiscent of the first movement of Beethoven's *Piano Sonata Op.13*. Bacewicz's powerful first theme is contrasted by a lyrical Theme Area II beginning

<u>Introduction</u> (mm. 1-23)	(gently establishes key of D minor)
<u>Exposition</u> (mm. 24-103)	(m. 23) Theme Area I: D minor (m. 73) Theme Area II: E minor
<u>Development</u> (mm. 104-155)	(begins in B minor) (ends with 18 mm. of dominant preparation on A)
<u>Recapitulation</u> (mm. 156-224)	(m. 156) Theme Area I: E minor (m. 197) Theme Area II: A minor Closes in E minor
<u>Coda</u> (mm. 224-243)	(begins with reference to E major) (ends in E major)

Figure 3: *Sonata No.4 for violin and piano* (First Movement: Outline of Sonata Form)

Example 5: *Sonata No.4 for violin and piano* (First Movement: Theme Area I, mm.20-31)

in measure 73 (Example 6). This theme is preceded by five measures of gentle tonic preparation and is in the key of E minor.

Example 6: *Sonata No.4 for violin and piano* (First Movement: Theme Area II, mm. 73-86)

The development section, beginning in measure 104, opens with a reference to the opening key of D minor in the violin before the key of B minor is quickly superimposed in measure 106. Both principle themes are developed, as well as the short melodic line from the introduction of the movement. Eighteen measures of dominant preparation (Example 7) serve as transition from the development to the recapitulation. In contrast to

Example 7: *Sonata No.4 for violin and piano* (First Movement: mm. 138-159)

the second piano sonata, both theme areas return in their original order. The movement closes with a short coda that has a function contrary to what might be normally expected. While codas usually serve to solidify the tonic key, Bacewicz reiterates the opening melody of the introduction in its original key of D minor within the context of a larger key area, E major. The unusual closing key of E major is hinted at as early as measure 216 and, even with the extensive use of chromaticism, emerges as the most significant key of the coda before the brief restatement of D minor in measures 236-239.

Sectional divisions in this movement are quite clear. It is the unusual key relations used in Theme Area I and II which add interest to the traditional structure. The E minor of Theme Area II is merely the dominant of the dominant used in Theme Area I, but the fact that the originating key is D minor and not D major adds to the distant effect of the modulation.

The second movement is a seven-part form (Figure 4) similar in organization to that of a rondo, though here it serves as the sonata's slow movement. Measures 22-40 are essentially a written-out repeat of measures 1-21, and when considered from this viewpoint, a five-part form (ABCBA) is evident; thus the relation to rondo is

A (A minor, mm.1-12)

B (C# minor, mm.13-21)

A (A minor, mm.22-32)

B' (C# minor, mm.33-40)

C (C major/C minor, mm.41-61)

B'' (C# minor, mm.62-69)

A (A minor/D major, mm.70-81)

Figure 4: *Sonata No.4 for violin and piano* (Second Movement: Outline of Form)

stronger. However, the slow tempo and the added violin part in measures 33-40 do indeed suggest a seven-part construction. While the form is neo-classical in nature, the musical texture is lushly romantic, reminiscent of Brahms and Franck (Example 8). The overall key structure of the movement is consistent throughout the repeated sections, with the interesting addition of an unusual closing key. All of the A sections are in A minor, the last unexpectedly closing in D major.

Example 8: *Sonata No.4 for violin and piano* (Second Movement: mm. 1-21)

The third movement is a lively Scherzo without a formal trio (Figure 5). Repeated fast sections

Intro	(A minor, mm. 1-4)
A	(A minor/C major, mm. 5-68)
B	(emphasis on A, mm. 69-87)
A'	(A minor/C major, mm. 88-188)
B	(emphasis on A, mm. 189-206)
A''	(A minor, mm. 207-216)
Codetta	(A minor, mm. 217-221)

Figure 5: *Sonata No.4 for violin and piano* (Third Movement: Outline of Form)

alternate (Example 9) with two shorter semi-lyrical sections (Example 10), providing the effect of a trio by

SCHERZO
Molto vivo (♩=136)
pizz.
arco

Example 9: *Sonata No.4 for violin and piano* (Third Movement: mm. 1-12)

slowing the fast-paced character, if not the actual tempo, of the A sections.

Example 10: ***Sonata No.4 for violin and piano*** **(Third Movement: mm. 69-78)**

The fourth and final movement of the *Sonata No. 4* again looks back to the rich romanticism of the late nineteenth century. The form (Figure 6) is an alternating structure with a large interruption in the second A section (mm. 72-141). The movement is extremely chromatic with frequent shifts of tonal center all expressed through a lush romantic texture (Example 11).

Intro	(mm.1-6)	
A	(mm.7-41)	
B	(mm.42-71)	
A	[mm.72-141]	
'A'	(beginning of A)	(mm.72-95)
C	(new: lyrical)	(mm.96-117)
Intro		(mm.118-123)
D	(new: energetic)	(mm.124-133)
'A'	(end of A)	(mm.134-141)
B	(mm.142-173)	
Coda	(mm.174-186)	

Figure 6: *Sonata No.4 for violin and piano* (Fourth Movement: Outline of Form)

Example 11: *Sonata No.4 for violin and piano* (Fourth Movement: mm. 16-26)

FOLK

For Bacewicz, the use of folk idioms had a much greater significance than that of mere compliance with a socialist mandate. Three elements were working together: the link to a nationalist tradition, the historic connection of the violin itself to folk music, and the fact that Bacewicz was a violin virtuoso. Though the earliest music to accompany Polish folk dances consisted of singing, clapping, foot stamping and whistling, the first instruments to be used included primitive violins, pipes, bagpipes and hunters' horns.[40] In early dances, the violin was often used alone. Because dances were done with bare feet on grass or clay floors, the volume of a solo violin was adequate. It was the addition of wooden floors with wooden shoes that necessitated the introduction of percussion and other instruments so that the musicians could be heard.

There are five national Polish folk dances from which composers drew inspiration: the Polonez, Mazur, Kujawiak, Oberek and Krakowiak.[41] The Mazurka is often referred to

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[40]Ada Dziewanowska, *Polish Folk Dances and Songs: A Step-by-Step Guide* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1997), 26.

[41]Ibid, 29.

as a traditional folk dance, but is actually a general term which includes the Mazur, Kujawiak and Oberek. Chopin was the first composer to create a stylized version of these three dances and all may be found in his Mazurkas, either alone or in combination with each other.[42] Meters, tempos and accents were the most important distinguishing characteristics. The Polonez, for example, was a stately dance in triple meter and had a slight accent on the first beat of each measure.[43] Many composers championed the Polonez in their compositions, including Chopin, Moniuszko, Wieniawski and Szymanowski. The Krakowiak was the only national dance in duple meter, and was fast and bouncy in character. In classical music, Chopin and Paderewski made use of this style.

The three remaining dances - Mazur, Kujawiak and Oberek - were all in triple meter and had characteristics often used by Bacewicz. The Mazur was an elegant, yet fiery dance characterized by strong variable accents. Accents often fell on the third beat of the bar, though they could occur anywhere, and were also frequently found

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[42]Ibid, 516.

[43]The Polonez was originally a dance in *duple* meter with four beats per bar. It consisted of three beats of music with a pause on the fourth beat to allow the dancers to bow. In classical music, an example of a Polonez with four beats per bar exists in the first movement of Tchaikowsky's violin concerto .

at the end of a phrase. The Oberek was the fastest and most exuberant of the dances and was the only dance with acrobatic elements. An important feature was related to its performance tradition; the folk band providing the music would play faster and faster so that toward the end the effect was one of complete dizziness. Of these last three dances, the Kujawiak was only moderately fast and thus had a character that was more romantic and sentimental, which balanced well when combined with a faster dance in a Mazurka. Accents were again important in this dance, usually occurring on the second beat of the bar.

The violin, a historic folk instrument, inspired Bacewicz to compose a number of stylized folk dances. Two popular showpieces were the two *Obereks* for violin and piano. These short, dynamic works were based on the traditional Oberek and even titled as such. Bacewicz displayed in these contemporary pieces a variety of folk-influenced effects. In the opening violin line of the *Oberek No.1* (Example 12), the double note passage consists of a melodic line over a repeated pitch on the open D string. This repeated note creates a drone effect that traditionally would have been played by a bagpipe or another accompanying instrument. This drone effect

Example 12: *Oberek No.1* (mm.1-10)

permeates the entire dance. The *Oberek No.2* also has a drone effect created by two repeated pitches in the piano part that persist throughout the work (Example 13). Other

Example 13: *Oberek No.2* (mm.1-8)

folk effects include *pesante* plucking of large dissonant chords, melodic phrases played in parallel fifths and a strong allusion to a Polish folk mode called the Podhalean mode. This mode, commonly used by Bacewicz (as well as

Szymanowski), emphasizes the raised fourth and lowered seventh, scale degrees (in this case, G-sharp and C-natural, respectively: see Example 13). These pieces are significant because they form a link from historic folk music to Bacewicz's use of folk idioms in her serious works.

The third movement from Bacewicz's *Piano Sonata No.2* is entitled *Toccata*, but is really an Oberek (it might have been noticed that this movement was omitted earlier in the discussion). This finale, spirited in character and often rich in texture, is written with a symmetrical structure (Figure 7). It is in modified ternary form with the first and second theme areas serving as the principle musical material. Rather than using a repeat sign, the repetition of the first theme area is written out, outlining an AA'BA framework. The sections labeled 'mixed material' provide the effect of interruption and their fragmentary nature argues against their having a more important structural label. Both sections use fragmented folk motives and driving rhythms to create a wild and somewhat spontaneous atmosphere. The introduction and coda are the only sections that contain no folk idioms and are thus linked to the title of *Toccata* by means of their

Introduction
(mm.1-23)

A First Theme Area
(mm.24-60)

A' First Theme Area
(mm.61-99)

Mixed Material: fragmented folk based motives
(mm.100-142)

B Second Theme Area
(mm.143-176)

Mixed Material: different fragmented folk based motives
(mm.177-221)

A First Theme Area
(mm.222-266)

Coda
(mm.267-285)

Figure 7: *Piano Sonata No.2* (Third Movement: Outline of Formal Structure)

fiery showmanship style, functioning as effective 'bookends' to the movement.

The folk melody used consists of a theme which emphasizes the downbeat of each measure with either duplet or triplet sixteenth-notes (Example 14). While the melody progresses in the upper voice, a syncopated rhythm in the lower voices emphasizes the second and third beats, with double-notes drawing attention to the second beat. This

Example 14: *Piano Sonata No.2* (Third Movement, mm.25-40)

example encompasses a sixteen-measure double period, the first eight bars of which (mm. 25-32) show influences from both the Mazur and Oberek. The second half adds a persistent left-hand rhythm which is more characteristic of the Oberek.

The melodic line beginning in measure 147 also has folk characteristics (Example 15). In addition to emphasizing the first and third beats with groups of duple

Example 15: *Piano Sonata No.2* (Third Movement, mm.143-154)

sixteenth-notes, the line is modal. Beginning in measure 143, the leading tone G is in conflict with the supertonic B♭, obscuring the tonal emphasis of A♭ until measure 148. The importance of A♭ is affirmed in measures 151-154. Characteristics of the Oberek can be heard again in measures 191-196 (Example 16) in the powerful downbeats of the lowest voice, which then leaps with great energy into a high register.

Example 16: ***Piano Sonata No.2*** **(Third Movement, mm.191-196)**

The works discussed above are excellent examples of the manifestation of Social Realism in absolute music. Specifically, they fall into the category of 'musical material' discussed in chapter two. The use of folk idioms allowed the composer to connect with common people by linking contemporary classical music directly to Polish folk tradition, which in turn fostered an atmosphere of nationalism. Folk music was not simply heard and understood, it was deeply felt as well. The nature of the rhythms and accents involved, in addition to familiar melodies, allowed the average listener to connect immediately with the music. Styles, genres and forms also linked people to a tradition already commonly accepted. In addition, simplicity was a requirement of Social

Realism. Music easily understood instantly produced a sense of familiarity, which helped to connect it with common people.

The other important aspect of the manifestation of Social Realism discussed in chapter two was that of 'musical concepts.' Many composers wrote music which employed a text, but Bacewicz usually chose a more difficult vehicle for embracing Social Realism. Lesser composers were forced to be more pragmatic in their choices of expression because they lacked the ability to create great works under such conditions. It is interesting to recognize, with respect to musical concepts in the absolute music of Bacewicz, that her works *did not* immediately connect people with socialist daily life and communist ideology. Without a concrete text and clearly defined extra-musical associations (i.e., a program, which she never employed), there was no clear way to make the connection. It is arguable that this was a way in which Bacewicz rebelled against the establishment. She appeared to be compliant to the dictates of Social Realism in her use of neo-classicism and folk idioms, but by limiting herself to absolute music during these years, she was able to create art that was in line with what she had already been exploring and simply continue with it without seeming

to make adjustments in her own principles, or directly challenging regulatory forces. Though there is no direct evidence to support this, her lack of music with programmatic content might even be construed as a major statement against the communist government.

Bacewicz's success during Stalinism was particularly noteworthy because it was achieved through the composition of absolute music during a time when not conforming to the current political mandate could mean having to pay the ultimate penalty - death or imprisonment was a genuine threat to the intelligentsia. Yet, because of her skill and the undeniable quality of her compositions, Grażyna Bacewicz was able to avoid persecution by Stalinist bureaucrats while maintaining her artistic energy and integrity.

CONCLUSION

The concept of Social Realism purported to create a more inclusive society by connecting literature, art and music with common people. The concept itself had merit: the problem was its cynical implementation. Russia's only purpose was that of control, to use the communicative powers of the arts to disseminate communist ideology and secure and maintain control over society. Stalin was naive to think that the human spirit could be suppressed even through the fear generated by his extreme measures of enforcement.

The purpose of this discussion has been to trace the history of Social Realism and clarify its relation to the music of Grażyna Bacewicz. It has been the intent of the analyses in chapter three to show how the use of traditional forms and folk idioms allowed Social Realism to manifest itself in her absolute music. No single source has been found that adequately outlines the history of Social Realism, including the standard reference works. The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* provides a detailed and

thoroughly utopian explanation of Social Realism, clearly written as a form of propaganda. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* gives attention only to literature and art with no mention of music. And, finally, the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Second Edition) manages only a complex definition of the term with no discussion of the political background, major proponents or general historical track.

Grażyna Bacewicz was an enormous talent who left behind an extraordinary catalogue of works. She had the astute ability to perceive the compositional boundaries of Social Realism and avoid criticism. It is reasonable to suggest that had she not been trapped in an artistic vacuum, she would have explored atonality and other techniques and styles much earlier in her career. The great popularity of her compositions from the Stalinist years is a tribute to her ability to embrace Social Realism, continue to grow as an artist, flourish in the profession and leave a legacy of artistic integrity.

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APPENDIX

List of Compositions from 1948-1954

**PWM: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne*

1948

Concerto for string orchestra (PWM)

Concerto No. 3 for violin and orchestra (PWM)

Easy Pieces for clarinet and piano (PWM)

Folk Sketches for orchestra (unpublished)

Olympic Cantata for choir and orchestra (unpublished)

Polish Dance for violin and piano (PWM)

Sonata No. 3 for violin and piano (PWM)

Trio for oboe, clarinet and bassoon (unpublished)

Waltz for orchestra (PWM)

1949

Concert Krakowiak for piano (unpublished)

Concerto for piano and orchestra (PWM)

Easy Pieces for violin and piano (PWM)

Etude for piano (unpublished)

Krakowiak for orchestra (unpublished)

Melody for violin and piano (PWM)

Oberek No. 1 for violin and piano (PWM)

Polish Caprice for solo violin (PWM)

Polish Rhapsody for violin and orchestra (unpublished)

Quartet for four violins (PWM)

Sonata No. 4 for violin and piano (PWM)

Sonata No. 1 for piano (unpublished)

"*The Parting*" for soprano and piano (PWM)

"*Trail of Shadow*" for soprano and piano (PWM)

1950

Ancient Dance for violin and piano (unpublished)

"*Cheers*" - *Polish Dance No. 1* for clarinet and string quartet (unpublished)

Polish Dance Suite for orchestra (unpublished)

Serenade for orchestra (unpublished)

1951

Concerto No. 1 for cello and orchestra (PWM)

Concerto No. 4 for violin and orchestra (PWM)

Mazowsze Dance for cello and piano (PWM)

Mazowsze Dance for violin and piano(PWM)

Mazur for orchestra (unpublished)

Oberek No. 2 for violin and piano (PWM)

Sonata No. 5 for violin and piano (PWM)

String Quartet No. 4 (PWM)

Symphony No. 2 (unpublished)

1952

Caprice No. 2 for solo violin (PWM)

Etude in Thirds for piano (PWM)

Lullaby for violin and piano (PWM)

Piano Quintet No. 1 (PWM)

Slavic Dance for violin and piano (PWM)

Symphony No. 3 (PWM)

1953

Humoresk for violin and piano (PWM)

Rondo for piano (PWM)

Sonata No. 2 for piano (PWM)

Symphony No. 4 (PWM)

The Peasant King - Ballet (unpublished)

1954

Concerto No. 5 for violin and orchestra (PWM)

Polish Caprice for clarinet and piano (PWM)

Polish Overture for orchestra (unpublished)

Tryptyk for choir and orchestra (unpublished)

Ned Charles Kirk, pianist, is a native of Redding, California where he received his early musical training. Mr. Kirk received degrees in piano performance from the Peabody Conservatory of Music and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He is currently finishing work on a DMA at the University of Washington. His teachers have included Lillian Freundlich, Walter Hautzig, Nigel Coxe and Craig Sheppard. He has performed extensively throughout the United States, as well as in Poland, Finland and England, in solo recital, and in violin-piano duo with his wife Marta Kirk. He is also very active as a chamber musician. Mr. Kirk has been a faculty member at the Marrowstone Music Festival, Sitka Fine Arts Institute in Alaska and served for seven years on the piano faculty of Pacific Lutheran University. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Music at Saint Mary's University in Winona, Minnesota.