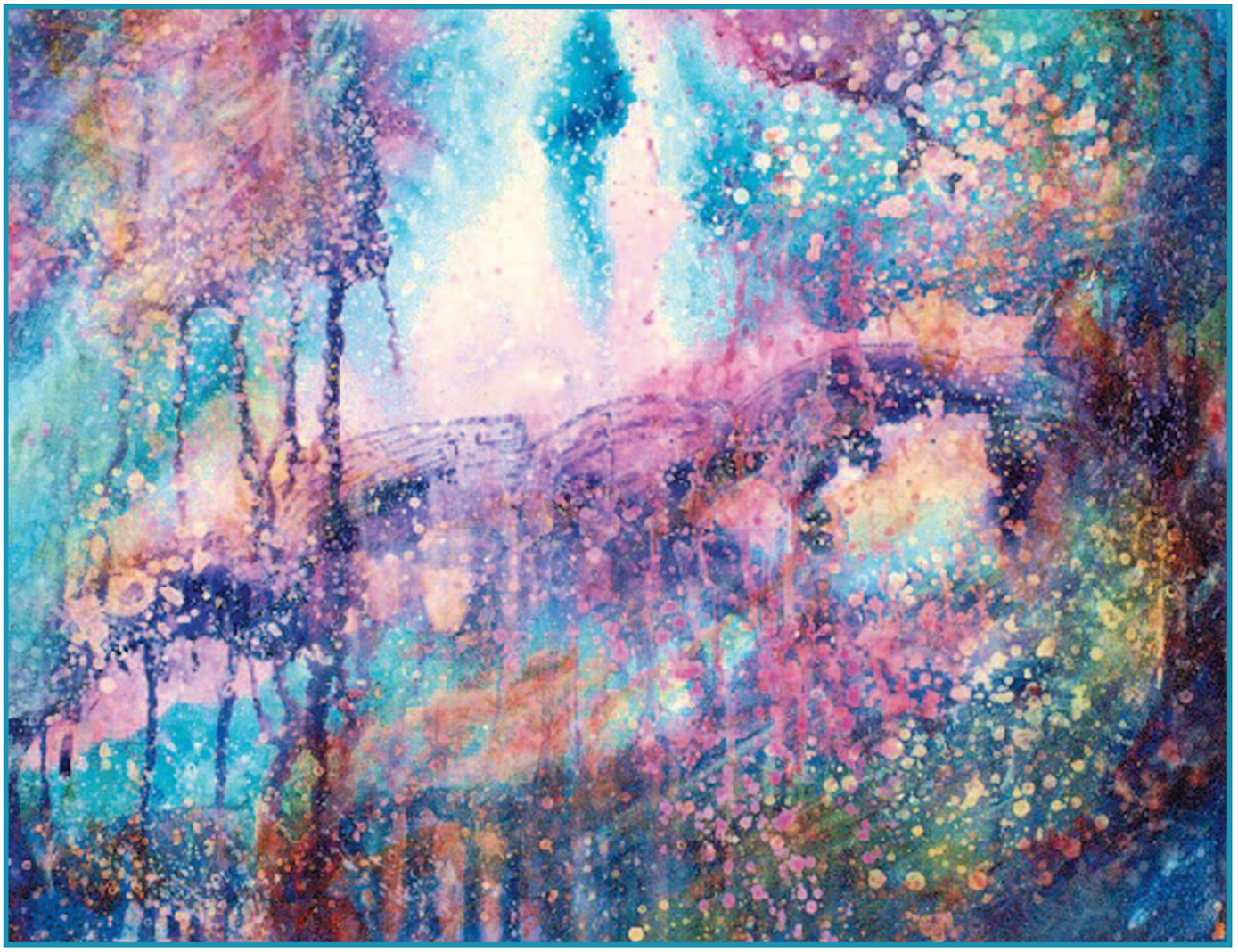
NAXOS

KILAR

Piano Concerto

Bogurodzica • Grey Mist • Kościelec

Waldemar Malicki, Piano • Wiesław Ochman, Baritone
Warsaw National Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra
Antoni Wit



Wojciech Kilar (b.1932)
Vocal and Orchestral Music

Wojciech Kilar was born in the then Polish city of Lwów (now L'viv in Ukraine) on 17th July, 1932. He studied piano and composition at the Katowice Academy from 1950 to 1955, then the State Higher Music School in Kraków until 1958. In 1957 he had attended the Darmstadt Summer School in (West) Germany, then a centre for the emerging European musical avant-garde, and during 1959-60 was a pupil of Nadia Boulanger in Paris. In 1960 his *Oda Béla Bartók in memoriam* received the Lili Boulanger Foundation Award, with numerous national and international prizes to follow in its wake.

After a period of experimentation in the 1960s, Kilar arrived at an idiom notable for its directness of expression and immediacy of impact: an approach typified by the 1974 orchestral piece *Krzesany* [Naxos 8.554788]. Polish traditional sources, both sacred and secular, are often prominent, through an idiom that, in the words of the writer Adrian Thomas, has "... been variously regarded as spuriously kitsch, naively devotional or intuitively post-modern". It may be just these qualities - or the perception of them - that led to Kilar's success as a film composer, with over a hundred scores for Polish films before that for Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* won him the ASCAP Award in 1992, to be followed by a similarly acclaimed score for Roman Polanski's *Death and the Maiden* in 1994 [a selection from both features on Marco Polo 8.225153] and also Jane Campion's *Portrait of a Lady* in 1996. Moreover, the vividly expressive themes and quasi-minimalist harmony characterizing these film scores are qualities equally evident in Kilar's concert output: not least the four pieces contained on the present disc.

Bogurodzica (1975) is a fantasy for chorus and orchestra on the ancient Polish hymn sung in time of war and of peace (and best known in the West through its use in *Sinfonia Sacra* by Andrzej Panufnik). Distant taps on side-drum gradually move closer then recede, the second crescendo underpinned by a timpani roll. Halting peremptorily, the chorus fervently intones the opening lines of the text, solemnly underpinned by strings and percussion. Forceful reiteration and dissonant outbursts only add to the intensity of the setting, which unfolds as a series of repeated phrases in rhythmic unison, *col legno* strings and percussion to the fore. At length a suspended passage for strings and harp introduces a calm, even remote atmosphere, with the chorus intoning the final lines of the text in suitably hieratic fashion. This resolves first onto a fifth, then onto a perfect cadence, and the piece appears to be heading for a blissful conclusion, but a defiant final gesture, and the sound of side-drum once more receding into silence, leaves one in no doubt as to the music's underlying emotional fervour and ominous import.

The *Piano Concerto* (1997) is among the most recent of Kilar's concert works and draws on sources as distinct as the Catholic liturgy and the piano concertos of Beethoven. Although cast in the traditional three movements, the opening *Andante con moto* is unusually subdued in its pacing and expression. It begins with the soloist repeating a gentle pattern over a static string background, with violins adding occasional melodic phrases to a texture that evolves largely through periodic modulation to other keys. As the string textures gradually fill out, so the piano writing is extended across the keyboard and dynamics increase to an apex (two-thirds through), before the music tails away in a mood of delicate regret. A downward phrase in lower strings denotes the beginning of the central *Corale*, with the soloist promptly introducing a solemn chorale theme that is taken up fervently by strings in rhythmic unison. Soloist and strings proceed to elaborate this theme through alternation, with the mood intensifying towards a sustained central span, in which solo strings are effectively deployed in tandem with the piano. The

latter now has a cadenza, which musingly reworks aspects of the chorale up to a brief climax, before the strings re-enter with a solemn polyphony that builds in an arching crescendo of emotion. At the point of maximum intensity, the soloist heads off with a driving chordal passage that denotes the opening of the *Toccata* finale. Brass and strings add forcefully repeated gestures, then percussion enters for the first time in the work as the music gains inexorably in velocity. Strings now expound a chordal idea (related to the chorale of the previous movement), before the piano has a hectic solo passage, over which brass balefully intone the strings' theme and the work races to its precipitous conclusion.

Siwa Mgła (1979) might be described as a vocal tone-poem, in which the texts are derived from folk sources. Softly dissonant strings gradually fan out in harmonic and textural complexity, creating an atmosphere of claustrophobic intensity. At length the baritone enters with an impassioned monologue, violin and viola echoing his phrases in ecstatic accord. Brass and timpani break in forcefully, before the baritone continues, then a striding motion across the strings changes the prevailing mood to one of trenchant resolve. Horns then trumpets bring the music to a climax of defiant repeated chords, before the solo strings heard earlier continue their ecstatic polyphony as though nothing had happened. The baritone resumes in a mood of renewed calm, with a number of discreet but effective modulations adding expressive depth to the vocal line. A brief unaccompanied vocal passage follows, and the work ends with a cadential string chord that resolves tensions from the beginning.

Kościelec 1909 (1976) is another of Kilar's vividly evocative tone poems. The title itself refers to a peak in the Tatra mountains in Southern Poland, where the composer Mieczyslaw Karlowicz met his death in an avalanche while ski-ing, at the age of 32. Kilar does not portray this tragedy in narrative terms: rather he embodies it in music that serves as a commemoration of the life, and also an apotheosis of the art of Karlowicz, who at the time of his death was already the most significant Polish composer of his generation.

At the outset divided lower strings create an atmosphere of sepulchral gloom, out of which an undulating idea at length emerges and is given greater definition by bassoons. This spreads across cellos and basses, with clarinets then oboes adding a rejoinder, a process repeated as the idea gradually rises through strings and woodwind respectively, with the latter becoming more dissonant on each appearance. Mid-way through the piece, brass and percussion suddenly sound out in grimly triumphal splendour, before vanishing to leave the timpani and basses in an unexpected vacuum. Vicious tattoo-like outbursts on trumpets and side-drum intervene, then the music gathers itself in a powerful motion, and utilising a much augmented version of the undulating idea heard near the beginning, towards a climax (one that recalls the extemporised procedures of Penderecki) which distils the prevailing mood into one of bitter majesty. This breaks off, leaving strings to descend back into the depths from which they began. Out of this, however, a brief crescendo rises to end the work on a note of curt defiance.

Richard Whitehouse

Sung texts for this release are available as PDF files online at www.naxos.com/libretti/kilar.htm
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Naxos' position as leader in the budget-priced market.

Waldemar Malicki

Born in 1958, the eminent Polish pianist Waldemar Malicki graduated in 1981 with distinction from the Academy of Music in Gdansk, where he studied with the legendary Jerzy Sulikowski. He has performed in master-classes with Paul Badura-Skoda, Jorg Demus and Victor Merzhanov, was a prizewinner of the national Polish piano competitions in 1980 and 1982 in Warsaw and Slupsk, and was awarded First Prize at the Vienna Musikseminar in 1982. In great demand as a soloist for his remarkable virtuosity and musical intensity, he has performed throughout Europe, North and South America, Russia and Japan, and collaborated with distinguished Polish violinists and singers, including Teresa Zylis-Gara and Stefania Toczyska, in memorable performances of chamber music. Waldemar Malicki has recorded 35 CDs of solo and chamber works for Polskie Nagrania, Polton and Dux (Poland), Pavane (Belgium), Adda and Accord (France), Koch Records, Schwann and Wergo (Germany) as well as Pony Canyon (Japan). He has also recorded numerous piano concertos with the Polish Radio and Television Orchestras in Kraków and Katowice, and toured as soloist with a number of Polish orchestras. He has three times been awarded a *Fryderyk*, the Polish version of a Grammy. He is widely acclaimed for his outstanding master-classes in Scandinavia, North and South America and Japan, and is the author and solo performer of a popular Polish television series, programmes in which different musical phenomena are analyzed, often using improvisation as a means of illustration. He also performs recitals of piano improvisation in the virtuoso style of the nineteenth century, complete with light-hearted narration. The first President of the Paderewski Society, Waldemar Malicki is currently the Artistic Director of the Festival of Musical Humour in Southern Poland.

Wiesław Ochman

Since the times of Jan Kiepura, Wiesław Ochman has been the first truly world-famous Polish tenor. Born in Warsaw in 1937, he first had the ambition to become a painter, before turning instead to vocal studies. In 1960 he joined the Silesian State Opera and for three seasons undertook a number of major parts there, while continuing his vocal training with Maria Szłapak. In the autumn of 1963 he moved to the opera house in Kraków, but a year later returned to his home city of Warsaw, where the Teatr Wielki was about to be reopened after rebuilding. His performance as Jontek in Moniuszko's *Halka*, together with three other productions for the 1965 grand opening of the theatre, became the turning-point in his career. In the same season he also won success singing the title rôle in *Faust*. This resulted in an invitation to the Berlin State Opera, where he sang the part of Turiddu in *Cavalleria rusticana* in January 1967, followed by appearances in Munich and Hamburg. At Glyndebourne he sang Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, then Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, appeared in Salzburg and, something hitherto unheard of for a Polish tenor, gained international fame as an excellent interpreter of Mozart parts. In particular he became a much sought-after performer for the rôle of Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, and the title-role in *Idomeneo*. In 1972 he appeared at the Paris Opéra, and in the United States, making his début at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1975 as Arrigo in Verdi's *I vespri siciliani*, and going on later to appear there in *Eugene Onegin*, *Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshchina*. Meanwhile in 1982 he had made his début at La Scala, Milan, under Claudio Abbado. The recipient of various official awards in Poland, Wiesław Ochman has an extensive repertoire both in opera and in oratorio. He has the largest number of recordings to his credit among all the Polish singers, both from the present and from earlier generations.

Warsaw National Philharmonic Choir

The Warsaw National Philharmonic Choir was founded in 1952 by Zbigniew Soja and gave its first concert in May 1953, under the then artistic director of the Warsaw Philharmonic Witold Rowicki. The present choirmaster Henryk Wojnarowski has held this position since 1978. In its wide repertoire the choir has more than 150 oratorios and choral works ranging from the medieval to the contemporary. Each year the choir collaborates in some ten symphony and oratorio concerts with the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the most important part of its artistic activity. The choir also performs regularly at the Warsaw Autumn Festival and in Wrocław at the Wratislavia Cantans Festival. Many of these concerts have been recorded. Polish music, in particular works of Krzysztof Penderecki, Henryk Mikolaj Górecki and Wojciech Kilar, is a very important part of the choir's repertoire. The choir has performed all Penderecki's oratorios and a cappella works, as well as his opera *Paradise Lost*. The Warsaw Philharmonic Choir is also very active internationally, appearing throughout Europe and beyond. There have been collaborations with the most renowned orchestras, and participation in operas at La Scala, Milan, La Fenice, and in other major houses. In 1988 and 1990 the choir was invited to the Vatican to take part in celebrations of the successive anniversaries of Pope John Paul II's pontificate, concerts that were televised and broadcast throughout Europe. In December 2001 the choir, together with the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, performed for John Paul II once again in a special concert commemorating the centenary of the Warsaw Philharmonic, this time presenting the *Missa pro pace* by Wojciech Kilar. Among the conductors who have performed with the Warsaw Philharmonic Choir have been Witold Rowicki, Jerzy Semkow, Kazimierz Kord, Jerzy Maksymiuk, Krzysztof Penderecki, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Leopold Stokowski, Gary Bertini, Sergiu Comissiona, Lorin Maazel, Seiji Ozawa, Giuseppe Sinopoli and Igor Stravinsky and, of course, Antoni Wit who is the Artistic Director of the Warsaw Philharmonic, the National Orchestra and Choir of Poland.

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra: The National Philharmonic of Poland

The first performance of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra took place on 5th November 1901 in the newly opened Philharmonic Hall under the artistic director and principal conductor, Emil Mlynarski. The soloist was the world-renowned pianist, composer and future statesman Ignacy Jan Paderewski, and the programme included Paderewski's *Piano Concerto in A minor* and works of other Polish composers, Chopin, Moniuszko, Noskowski, Stojowski and Zelefski. In the succeeding years the orchestra won a high reputation, collaborating with leading conductors and soloists, until the outbreak of war in 1939, the destruction of the Philharmonic Hall and the loss of 39 of its 71 players. Resuming activity after the war, the orchestra was conducted by Straszýski and Panufnik, and in January 1950 Witold Rowicki was appointed director and principal conductor, organizing a new ensemble under difficult conditions. In 1955 the rebuilt Philharmonic Hall was re-opened, with a large hall of over a thousand seats and a 433-seat hall for chamber music, recognised as the National Philharmonic of Poland. Subsequent conductors included Bohdan Wodiczko, Arnold Rezler and Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, and in 1958 Witold Rowicki was again appointed artistic director and principal conductor, a post he held until 1977, when he was succeeded by Kazimierz Kord, who served until the end of the centenary celebrations in 2001. In 2002 Antoni Wit became general and artistic director of the Warsaw Philharmonic – The National Orchestra and Choir of Poland. The orchestra has toured widely abroad, in addition to its busy schedule at home in symphony concerts, chamber concerts, educational work and other activities. It now has a complement of 112 players.

Antoni Wit

Antoni Wit, one of the most highly regarded Polish conductors, studied conducting with Henryk Czyz and composition with Krzysztof Penderecki at the Academy of Music in Kraków, subsequently continuing his studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. He also graduated in law at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Immediately after completing his studies he was engaged as an assistant at the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra by Witold Rowicki and was later appointed conductor of the Poznań Philharmonic, collaborated with the Warsaw Grand Theatre, and from 1964 to 1977 was artistic director of the Pomeranian Philharmonic, before his appointment as director of the Polish Radio and Television Orchestra and Chorus in Kraków. From 1983 to 2000 he was the director of the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, and from 1987 to 1994 he was the chief conductor and then first guest conductor of Orquesta Filarmónica de Gran Canaria. In 2002 he became General and Artistic Director of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra. His international career has brought engagements with major orchestras throughout Europe, the Americas and the Near and Far East. He has made nearly a hundred records, including an acclaimed release for Naxos of the piano concertos of Prokofiev, awarded the *Diapason d'Or* and *Grand Prix du Disque de la Nouvelle Académie du Disque*. In January 2002 his recording of the *Turangalıla Symphony* by Olivier Messiaen (Naxos 8.554478-79) was awarded the Cannes Classical Award in *Midem Classic 2002*. Antoni Wit is a professor at the F. Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw.

Wojciech Kilar (geb.1932)
Vokal- und Orchestermusik

Wojciech Kilar wurde am 17. Juli 1932 in der damals polnischen Stadt Lwów (Lemberg, heute L'viv in der Ukraine) geboren. Er studierte von 1950 bis 1955 Klavier und Komposition an der Akademie in Katowice (Kattowitz), dann bis 1958 an der Staatlichen Musikhochschule in Kraków (Krakau). Im Jahr 1957 besuchte er die Darmstädter Sommerkurse, seinerzeit ein Zentrum der musikalischen Avantgarde Europas; 1959/60 war Kilar Schüler von Nadia Boulanger in Paris. 1960 erhielt er für seine *Oda Béla Bartók in memoriam* den Preis der Lili Boulanger-Stiftung, dem zahlreiche weitere nationale und internationale Preise folgten.

Nach einer Phase des Experimentierens in den 60er Jahren gelangte Kilar zu einem Idiom, das durch Direktheit des Ausdrucks und Unmittelbarkeit der Wirkung gekennzeichnet ist. Diesen Ansatz verkörpert das Orchesterstück *Krzesany* (Bergsteiger) von 1974 [Naxos 8.554788]. Traditionelle polnische Quellen – geistliche wir weltliche – sind häufig prominent in einem Idiom, das nach den Worten des Schriftstellers Adrian Thomas „mal als kitschig, mal als naiv-erbaulich oder intuitiv-postmodern bezeichnet wurde". Es mögen gerade diese Qualitäten sein – oder ihre Wahrnehmung –, die Kilars Erfolg als Filmkomponist ermöglichten. Bevor er 1992 den ASCAP Award für die Musik zu Francis Ford Coppolas *Bram Stoker's Dracula* gewann, hatte er bereits mehr als einhundert Scores für polnische Filme geliefert. 1994 folgte die ebenso erfolgreiche Musik für Roman Polanskis *Death and the Maiden* (Der Tod und das Mädchen) [Auszüge aus beiden Partituren auf Marco Polo 8.225153] und 1996 jene für Jane Campions *Portrait of a Lady* (Porträt einer Dame). Die lebhaft-expressiven Themen und die quasi minimalistische Harmonik dieser Filmscores finden sich auch in Kilars Konzertwerken, nicht zuletzt in den vier Stücken dieser Aufnahme.

Bogurodzica (Gottesmutter) von 1975 ist eine Fantasie für gemischten Chor und Orchester über den alten polnischen Hymnus, der in Kriegs- wie Friedenszeiten gesungen wurde und im Westen durch seine Verwendung in Andrzej Panufniks *Sinfonia Sacra* am bekanntesten ist. Ferne Trommelschläge kommen allmählich näher, um dann wieder zu verschwinden; das zweite Crescendo ist mit einem Grollen der Pauken unterlegt. Dem Einhalt gebietend, intoniert der Chor inbrünstig die Eingangszeilen des Textes, feierlich unterlegt von Streichern und Schlagwerk. Kraftvolle Wiederholung und dissonante Ausbrüche verstärken die Intensität der Vertonung, die sich als eine Folge wiederholter Phrasen in rhythmischem Unisono mit col legno-Streichern und Schlagwerk im Vordergrund entfaltet. Schließlich führt eine Passage für Streicher und Harfe eine ruhige, distanzierte Atmosphäre herbei, in welcher der Chor die letzten Zeilen des Textes in entsprechend hieratischer Haltung intoniert. Diese Atmosphäre beschließt zunächst eine Quinte, dann eine vollkommene Kadenz, und es hat den Anschein, als würde das Stück auf einen glückseligen Abschluss zulaufen, doch eine herausfordernde Schlussgeste und der Klang der kleinen Trommel verlieren sich wiederum in der Stille und überlassen einen der Leidenschaft und der bedrohlichen Bedeutung der Musik.

Das *Klavierkonzert* (1997) gehört zu Kilars jüngeren Konzertwerken und greift auf so unterschiedliche Quellen wie die katholische Liturgie und die Klavierkonzerte Beethovens zurück. Obgleich traditionell dreisätzig, ist das eröffnende *Andante con moto* ungewöhnlich gedrosselt in Tempo und Ausdruck. Es beginnt mit dem Solisten, der sanfte Figuren vor statischem Streicher-Hintergrund wiederholt; die Violinen fügen einer Textur, die sich vornehmlich durch periodische Modulation in andere Tonarten entwickelt, gelegentlich melodische Phrasen hinzu. Während sich die Streichertexturen allmählich ausdehnen, weitet sich die Klavierstimme auf die gesamte Klaviatur aus, und die Dynamik steuert auf einen Höhepunkt zu, bevor die Musik in einer Stimmung zarten Bedauerns abnimmt. Eine abwärts gerichtete

Phrase der tiefen Streicher markiert den Beginn des *Corale*, in dem der Solist sogleich ein feierliches Choralthema einführt, das die Streicher inbrünstig in rhythmischem Unisono übernehmen. Solist und Streicher arbeiten dieses Thema wechselseitig aus, wobei sich die Stimmung zu einem nachdrücklichen Mittelabschnitt verdichtet, in dem Solostreicher effektvoll zusammen mit dem Klavier erklingen. Letzteres hat nun eine Kadenz, die Aspekte des Chorals aufgreift und bis zu einem kurzen Höhepunkt führt, bevor die Streicher in feierlicher Polyphonie zurückkehren und ein emotionales Crescendo herbeiführen. Am Punkt höchster Intensität stellt sich der Pianist mit einer treibenden Akkordpassage gleichsam in den Weg und markiert den Beginn der abschließenden *Toccata*. Bläser und Streicher fügen kraftvoll wiederholte Gesten hinzu, dann tritt erstmals in diesem Werk das Schlagzeug in Aktion, als die Musik unaufhaltsam an Geschwindigkeit gewinnt. Nun führen die Streicher eine akkordische Idee aus – die mit dem Choral des vorhergehenden Satzes verwandt ist –, bevor dem Klavier eine hektische Solopassage übertragen ist, über der die Bläser bedrohlich das Streicherthema intonieren, und das Werk seinem abrupten Ende entgegenrast.

Siwa Mgła (Grauer Nebel, 1979) für Bariton und Orchester könnte als vokale Tondichtung beschrieben werden; die Texte entstammen volkstümlichen Quellen. Sanft dissonante Streicher werden allmählich in ihrer harmonischen und strukturellen Komplexität aufgefächert, so dass eine Atmosphäre klaustrophobischer Intensität entsteht. Schließlich beginnt der Bariton einen leidenschaftlichen Monolog, dessen melodische Phrasen Violine und Viola in ekstatischem Einklang wiederholen. Bläser und Pauken fallen kraftvoll ein, bevor der Bariton fortfährt; sodann verändert eine über die Streicher hinweggehende Bewegung die vorherrschende Stimmung in wilde Entschlossenheit. Hörner, dann Trompeten führen die Musik zu einer Klimax energisch wiederholter Akkorde, bevor die Solostreicher ihre ekstatische Polyphonie fortsetzen, als sei nichts passiert. Der Bariton setzt in einer Stimmung erneuter Ruhe wieder ein; eine Anzahl diskreter, aber effektvoller Modulationen verleiht der Vokallinie Ausdruckstiefe. Es folgt eine kurze unbegleitete Gesangspassage, und das Stück endet mit einem kadenzierten Streicherakkord, der die Spannungen des Anfangs löst.

Kościelec 1909 (1976) ist eine weitere der lebhaft-anschaulichen Tondichtungen Kilars. Der Titel bezieht sich auf einen Gipfel in der Hohen Tatra im Süden Polens, an dem der Komponist Mieczyslaw Karlowicz beim Skilaufen in einer Lawine 32-jährig den Tod fand. Kilar schildert nicht mit tonmalerischen Mitteln die Tragödie, verkörpert sie vielmehr in Musik, die als Erinnerung an das Leben dient und eine Apotheose der Kunst von Karlowicz darstellt, der zum Zeitpunkt seines Todes bereits der markanteste polnische Komponist seiner Generation war. Am Beginn schaffen geteilte tiefe Streicher eine Atmosphäre von Grabesdüsternis, aus der schließlich ein Motiv erwächst, dem durch Fagotte klarere Kontur verliehen wird. Es weitet sich auf Celli und Bässe aus, Klarinetten und dann Oboen fügen eine Erwiderung hinzu; dieser Prozess wiederholt sich, wenn das Motiv allmählich Streicher bzw. Holzbläser durchläuft, wobei letztere mit jedem Einsatz dissonanter werden. Auf halber Strecke des Stücks gewinnen Bläser und Schlagwerk plötzlich grimmig-triumphale Pracht, bevor sie verschwinden, um Pauken und Bässe in einem unerwarteten Vakuum zurück zu lassen. Heftige, paukenartige Ausbrüche von Trompeten und kleiner Trommel fahren dazwischen, dann versetzt sich die Musik in kraftvolle Bewegung und führt eine stark ausgeweitete Version des Motivs vom Anfang einem Höhepunkt entgegen – dieser erinnert an die extemporierenden Verfahren Pendereckis –, der die vorherrschende Stimmung in schmerzliche Erhabenheit wandelt. Diese bricht ab, und die Streicher fallen zurück in die Tiefe, in der sie begannen. Daraus erwächst ein kurzes Crescendo, welches das Werk in einem Ton heftigen Trotzes beendet.

Richard Whitehouse

Deutsche Fassung: Thomas Theise