Grażyna Bacewicz and Social Realism: A Stylistic Comparison of Piano Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2

Takako Tokuda
University of Miami, tokudatokako@gmail.com

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ AND SOCIAL REALISM:
A STYLISTIC COMPARISON OF PIANO SONATAS NOS. 1 AND 2

By

Takako Tokuda

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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the requirements for the degree of
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GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ AND SOCIAL REALISM:
A STYLISTIC COMPARISON OF PIANO SONATAS
NOS. 1 AND 2

Takako Tokuda

Approved:

Santiago Rodriguez, M.M.
Professor, Chair of Keyboard Performance

Kevin Kenner, M.M.
Visiting Assistant Professor of Keyboard Performance

Naoko Takao, D.M.A.
Assistant Professor, Program Director of Keyboard Performance and Pedagogy

Maria Fenty Denison, D.M.A.
Lecturer of Vocal Performance

Gary Wood, M.M.
Assistant Professor of Professional Practice

Guillermo Prado, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School
Grażyna Bacewicz and Social Realism: A Stylistic Comparison of Piano Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2.

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Grażyna Bacewicz is known as one of the most successful Polish female composers in the twentieth century. Although she is known mostly for her orchestral and string compositions, her piano works are a major part of her output. Her Piano Sonata No. 2 is recognized as her most representative piano work. The sonata was written during a time that Poland was politically influenced by Stalin’s Soviet Union. Bacewicz needed to regulate her musical contents within the compositional restrictions imposed by the Polish Communist Party. By comparing the Sonata No. 2 with her unpublished Sonata No. 1, this thesis serves as the first study about Bacewicz’s Sonata No. 1, and it reveals Bacewicz’s expressive intentions in composing Sonata No. 2 under politically turbulent times.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could have never been accomplished without the tremendous support from Professor Kevin Kenner and Mrs. Katarzyna Cieślik. Your tireless devotion and kind help made this thesis possible. I would also like to thank Ms. Anna Czajkowska for assisting me in contacting Mrs. Alina Biernacka. It was impossible to research an unpublished work without Ms. Czajkowska’s kindness and continuous assistance. I truly appreciate Mrs. Alina Biernacka’s permission to study the unpublished work by Bacewicz, and additional thanks to the National Library of Poland for releasing the microfilm score.

The constant, generous help from Ms. Jenna Rae Lorusso cannot be understated. As a non-native English speaker, Ms. Lorusso’s continuous support meant the world to me. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Dr. Dan Sato, Ms. Rebekah Smeltzer, and all of my committee members. I am sincerely grateful for all of your indispensable help.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES</th>
<th>vi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter

1 INTRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of the Study</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intended Use of This Research</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature for Biographical Sketch</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence from Social Realism</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Bacewicz's Piano Works</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 METHODOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Period (1909-1938)</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second World War and the Social Realism (1939-1956)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Warsaw Autumn (1956-1969)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 BIOGRAPHY AND STYLISTIC PROGRESSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Period (1909-1938)</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second World War and the Social Realism (1939-1956)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Warsaw Autumn (1956-1969)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 ANALYSIS OF SONATA NO. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivic Development</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonality and Use of Folk Modes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folk Rhythms</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture and Pianistic Writing</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences from Other Composers</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 ANALYSIS OF SONATA NO. 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivic Development</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonality, Intervals, and Folk Influences</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 STYLISTIC COMPARISON OF SONATAS NOS. 1 AND 2………………. 54
   Comparison of Form………………………………………………………… 55
   Use of Motifs………………………………………………………………… 58
   Tonality…………………………………………………………………………. 58
   Use of Rhythms……………………………………………………………… 61
   Pianistic Writing……………………………………………………………… 62
   Conclusion…………………………………………………………………… 63

Bibliography…………………………………………………………………… 66
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example 1.1. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 2-4………………….. 27
Example 1.2. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 23-25………………… 28
Example 1.3. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 57-59………………… 28
Example 1.4. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, m. 1……………………… 29
Example 1.5. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 119-123…………….. 29
Example 1.6. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 1-4………………… 30
Example 1.7. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm. 183-187…………… 30
Example 1.8. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm. 1-8………………… 32
Example 1.9. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 29-32………………… 33
Example 1.10. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm. 64-65…………….. 34
Example 1.11. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm. 54-55…………….. 34
Example 1.12. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 25-26……………… 35
Example 1.13. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, II, mm. 8-9……………….. 35
Example 1.14. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, II, mm. 33-49……………… 36
Example 1.15. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm. 35-38……………… 37
Example 1.16. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm. 1-8……………….. 37
Example 1.17. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, III, mm. 123-124…………… 38
Example 1.18. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm. 96-97……………… 38
Example 1.19. Frederic Chopin, Sonata No.1, Op.4. I, mm. 46-47…………….. 39
Example 1.20. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 74-77………………. 39
Example 1.21. Igor Stravinsky, Petrushka, The Shrovetide Fair, mm. 21-22….. 40
Example 1.22. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm. 91-93……………… 40
Example 2.1. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, mm. 51-55………………….. 42
Example 2.2. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, mm. 3-4…………………… 44
Example 2.3. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, mm. 37-38………………… 44
Example 2.4. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, mm. 29-30………………… 45
Example 2.5. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, mm. 91…………………….. 45
Example 2.6. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, II, mm. 4-5…………………… 46
Example 2.7. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, II, mm. 38-39………………… 46
Example 2.8. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, II, mm. 44-46………………… 46
Example 2.9. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, II, mm. 67-68………………… 48
Example 2.10. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, III, mm. 204-205……………. 49
Example 2.11. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, mm. 17-19………………… 49
Example 2.12. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, mm. 98-106………………… 50
Example 2.13. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, II, mm. 63-70………………… 51
Example 2.14. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, m. 169……………………… 51
Example 2.15. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, mm. 64-68…………………… 52
Example 2.16. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, mm. 74-78………………… 52
Example 2.17. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, III, mm. 201-203……………… 53
Example 2.18. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, III, mm. 187-190……………… 53
Example 3.1. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 23-26…………………… 59
Example 3.2. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, I, mm. 3-6…………………….. 59
Example 3.3. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm. 145-146………………… 60
Example 3.4. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, IV, mm. 201-203………………… 60
Example 3.5. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, III, mm. 114-115……………….. 61
Example 3.6. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, III, mm. 135-140………………… 61

Example 3.7. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, II, mm. 63-70…………………... 62

Example 3.8. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 1*, IV, mm. 1-8……………………. 63
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1. Structure of Grażyna Bacewicz’s Sonata No. 2, II .............................................43

Table 2.1. Diagram of the First Movements of Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2..............................55

Table 2.2. Diagrams of the Second Movements of Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2 .........................56

Table 2.3. Diagram of the Last Movements of Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2. ............................57
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Grażyna Bacewicz was an enigmatic Polish composer of the twentieth century, called “the First Lady of Music” by critics of the time.¹ Her compositions for string instruments have gained considerable fame and are played all over the world. In particular, all her seven string quartets and the Music for Strings, Trumpet and Percussion have been recorded by major labels and are performed frequently in the present day.² Compared to her works for string instruments, her piano works are less well known, partially because they are few in number. However, critics have described her repertory of piano works as “impress[ive] with the power, architectural span, and emotional depth that belies its quantity.”³

Bacewicz was born in Łódź, Poland in 1909, and died prematurely in 1969 at the age of 61. According to the composer herself, her life could be divided into three periods.⁴ The first period (1909-1938) consists of her student years in Poland and Paris. The second period (1939-1955) spans from World War II to the Soviet Union’s control of Poland. The third period (1956-1969) could be described as her experimental period, taking place after her exposure to more avant-garde music at the Warsaw Autumn

2. Rosen, 57-61.
3. Barry Brenesal, "Bacewicz: Piano Sonata No. 2; Scherzo: Vivace; Rondino; Sonatina; Children's Suite; 3 Burlesques; 2 Etudes; Small Triptych; 10 Concert Etudes," Fanfare - The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors, March 2002, 74-76.
Festival of Contemporary Music in 1956. Most of her piano works were composed during first and periods, and in particular her most well-known piano works were composed during her second period, under the shadow of Soviet control. Currently, there are eleven of Bacewicz’s piano works published by Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne (the Polish Music Publishing House, abbreviated as PWM, the only Polish publisher which published Bacewicz’s works), and therefore available in most comprehensive music libraries located in the United States. Among those works, the most studied of her piano works is the Sonata No. 2, composed in 1953, which belongs to her second period. Through research of her Sonata No. 2, scholars such as Ned Kirk, Charlotte Rae Mills, and William Andrew Hudson deepen the knowledge of Bacewicz’s piano writing style in their theses. Kirk especially studied the relationship between the works of her middle period and the presence of socio-political influence among Polish composers including Bacewicz. According to Ned Kirk, the success of Bacewicz’s Sonata No. 2 is due largely to its satisfactory incorporation of the policies of Social Realism. The doctrine of Social Realism was a type of compositional regulation imposed by the Soviet-influenced Communist Party in Poland from 1949 until the death of Stalin in 1953. Kirk describes the relationship between Bacewicz’s compositional success and the influence of political climate at 1950’s in Poland as follows:


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.  

This confirms that Bacewicz’s second sonata was composed under the still-strong influence of the socio-political conditions that Poland was experiencing. It is peculiar that the only published Piano Sonata is called *Sonata No. 2*, and it raises the question of what happened to *Sonata No. 1*. She did not discard the first sonata, and yet the only one she wanted published was the sonata composed in 1953, which she labelled as No. 2. This curiosity has never been investigated by prior research, but it may imply that while she did not consider the first sonata a representative work, she still saw it as an important part of her compositional development. *Sonata No. 1*, composed in 1949, is listed on the Oxford Music Online Catalogue. However, according to the PWM, that particular sonata is unpublished and not available in the United States, or indeed, anywhere outside of Poland. The only resource available to us currently is a recording by Polish pianist Anita Krochmalska. Her recording issued in 2003 consists only of Bacewicz’s piano works, and it includes her *Piano Sonata No. 1*. According to the liner notes of the recording written by a notable Polish music scholar Małgorzata Gąsiorowska, one of the first to study Bacewicz, Bacewicz did not seem to be fond of the first sonata:

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7. Kirk, 70.


Grażyna Bacewicz wrote another piano sonata which she considered the first one. However, with time, she became more and more dissatisfied with the work and, when in 1953 Piano Sonata No. 2, a truly outstanding composition was born, Piano Sonata No. 1 had been forgotten for a long time.\textsuperscript{11}

The fact that the Grażyna Briel’s catalogue includes three unpublished sonatas (1935, 1942, and date unknown) in addition to the first and second sonatas is proof that Bacewicz completed several other sonatas before deciding to publish Sonata No. 2. According to her daughter, Bacewicz did not seem to reveal the reason of publishing Sonata No. 2 as a numbered sonata, even though none of her earlier works of the same genre were published.\textsuperscript{12} According to musicologist Gąsiorowska’s note; “The phenomenon of Piano Sonata No. 2 created in 1953 is based on creative continuation of achievements in developing the traditional form…”\textsuperscript{13}

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine Bacewicz’s artistic motive in composing the Sonata No. 2, which will be discovered through detailed comparison with the earlier Sonata No. 1. Through analysis within the political context of Social Realist doctrine, the author discovers the composer’s response to imposed compositional values. This thesis is the first resource to provide an analysis of the stylistic transition between both of Grażyna Bacewicz’s numbered sonatas.

There have been four academic studies of Bacewicz’s Sonata No. 2 in English, which all cite the Piano Sonata No. 2 as the most significant example of her writing style.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12} Alina Biernacka, March 8, 2016, e-mail message to author.

\textsuperscript{13} Gąsiorowska, liner notes.
Even though all theses include the analysis of *Sonata No. 2* from pedagogical, theoretical, or historical perspective, none are from the standpoint of the stylistic evolution of Bacewicz’s treatment of the sonata form from the first to the second sonata. As Gąsiorowska indicates, the fact that *Sonata No. 2* is “an outstanding work and *Sonata No. 1* was forgotten…,” hints at the unmentioned improvement in her writing between these works. This fact in and of itself merits special attention,\(^\text{14}\) as a clearer knowledge of what Bacewicz might have done differently in this *Sonata No. 1* may assist in a better understanding of her artistic values and goals realized more fully in the second sonata.

Because both sonatas belong to the era of Soviet oppression and the imposition of the doctrine of social realism, an analysis through the lens of these political events would be a meaningful resource for all those who wish to deepen their knowledge and understanding of her piano writing.

**Intended Uses of This Research**

In deference to the wishes of Bacewicz’s daughter, the author of this paper has agreed to publish only those passages of the *Sonata No. 1* which are relevant to the study. Their reference is solely intended as a tool for informing and enhancing and understanding of the *Sonata No. 2* and its performance. As a part of this research, the author will create a recording of the first and second sonatas. However, the recording will be kept exclusively in the Weeks Music Library at the University of Miami and be used there solely for research and references purposes. There will be no public release or distribution of any recorded material from the *Sonata No. 1*.

\(^{14}\) **Ibid.**
Translation

Translation of Polish literature will be provided by Mrs. Katarzyna Cieślik and Professor Kevin Kenner, and additional translation of German literature will be supplied by Professor Kevin Kenner. Any translations will be used only for the specific research in this document.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature for Biographical Sketch

Bacewicz’s compositions contain a wide range of styles, forms, and tonal constructions. Performers who are encountering her music for the first time may be surprised by the variety in her repertoire, but because her piano compositions are less well-known, it would be an added benefit to have access to a closer study of the circumstances surrounding her vastly different compositional periods, and therefore how her pieces may differ in style and meaning. Both piano sonatas, in particular, were written during her second period when her compositional activities were under the control of Social Realism. A more comprehensive knowledge of the events in her life that shaped and influenced her work is indispensable for those wishing to study and perform her compositions.

The most significant resources are Judith Rosen’s *Grażyna Bacewicz, Her Life and Works*, and Adrian Thomas’s *Chamber and Orchestral Music*. Rosen’s biography is the first monograph about Bacewicz’s life and works in English.¹⁵ She displays Bacewicz’s biographical background, while introducing Bacewicz’s major orchestral and solo works. Both Rosen and Thomas’s books provide Bacewicz’s biographical information. Thomas’s book discusses not only her life and major works, but also major compositional trends and influential composers in Europe during her lifetime.¹⁶ The style and character of the sonatas can be recognized by observing the musical influences in

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¹⁵. Rosen, 11.

Bacewicz’s life. Briel’s *Thematisches Verzeichnis der Werke von Grażyna Bacewicz: Mit einem biographischen Essay* (*Bacewicz: With a biographical essay*) also contains a more in-depth sketch of Bacewicz’s biography, with additional details on the schools and teachers she considered to be influential, as one of two sections.\(^1\) The second part is a catalogue of her compositions, which includes a small excerpt of *Piano Sonata No. 1* as a musical example.\(^2\) This catalogue is a precious record not only because of its inclusion of musical examples, but also because it lists a performance record for the premieres of both of her published and unpublished works. This catalogue supplies information about her other compositions, which were composed at the same time as her two sonatas.

Małgorzata Gąsiorowska’s *Bacewicz* also includes a brief description of *Sonata No.1* for piano.\(^3\) Even though Gąsiorowska explains how the musical materials of *Sonata No.1* were transformed to orchestral works, she did not mention the relationship to the second sonata. The developmental process seen between the two sonatas are covered in this thesis.

*Znak szczególny* (*Distinguishing Mark*) is the only available book written by Bacewicz herself.\(^4\) It is a collection of short essays which describe her experiences as a touring musician and a composer. Even though Bacewicz does not discuss her musical style in this book, her essays reveals her personality and general attitude toward music.

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18. Briel, 311.


Knowledge of the composer’s beliefs aids in understanding her feelings toward her *Sonata No. 1.*

**Influence from Social Realism**

Both piano sonatas were composed in the middle period of her life. Kirk states the significance of social realism imposed by the Communist Party in this period as follows, “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.”

This statement indicates that understanding the unique musical environment existing in Poland during the middle of the twentieth-century is crucial to a study of her compositions.

*Polish Music since Szymanowki* by Adrian Thomas is a significant resource for understanding the political situation in Poland in the 1940’s and 1950’s as well as how it specifically influenced Polish composers’ musical activity. Even though this includes information explaining the way in which the doctrine of social realism influenced Bacewicz’s orchestral works, it does not explain the specific relationship of her piano works and social realism. The detailed description of musical demands made by the Communist Party during the Bacewicz’s middle period provide the specific compositional guideline that she was required to follow when composing both piano sonatas. “The Ethical and Political Conditions of Musical Activity in Poland after World War II” by Justyna Humiecka-Jackbowska also lists the detailed musical restrictions imposed by social realism which constrained the musical language of composers of the


This resource also clarifies how the political condition influenced Polish composers’ musical activities.

The Communist Party in Poland was greatly influenced, and controlled by Stalin and the USSR. Russian Music and Nationalism by Marina Frolova-Walker explains the history of Stalin’s own policy of social realism and demands towards music.

Understanding the origin of social realism and the musical restrictions Stalin demanded of Russian composers is also important in understanding the circumstances that Bacewicz was experiencing, as the Polish Communist Party was strongly under Stalin’s control. According to Walker, Stalin’s Communist Party demanded that composers include folk music to create a national style. This mandate to use folk elements was transferred to Poland when the Soviet-influenced Polish Communist Party started to control Poland. Utilizing Polish folk idiom was strongly encouraged. As Kirk shows, Bacewicz incorporates the demands of social realistic doctrine in her second sonata. Therefore, Music in Poland by Ludwik Erhardt, and Anna Czekanowska’s Polish Folk Music Slavonic Heritage—Polish Tradition—Contemporary Trends will be used to understand the Polish folk idiom utilized in both sonatas.

24. Thomas, 44.
25. Ibid.
27. Thomas, 44.
28. Ibid., 45.
Erhard explains the origins of Polish folk music, which contains several different kinds of rhythmic and melodic characters.\[^{30}\]

**Analyses of Bacewicz’s Piano Works**

An intensive study of *Sonata No. 2* was conducted by Bożena Pawlina.\[^{31}\] Based on the analysis of the score, “Zagadnienia wykonawcze w II sonacie fortepianowej Grażyny Bacewicz” (Issues regulations in the second piano sonata by Grażyna Bacewicz) by Pawlina explores the possibilities of interpretation, such as nuances, phrasing, textures and articulations in various passages to achieve a more artistically successful performance. Charlotte Rae Mills’s “Grażyna Bacewicz: A Stylistic Analysis and Evaluation of Selected Keyboard Works” examines *Sonata No. 2* as well as selections from the *Ten Etudes*, *Children’s Suite* and *Mały Tryptyk* through the lenses of rhythm, harmony and melody.\[^{32}\] Both Pawlina and Mills suggest interpretations based on rhythmic and melodic analysis. Their stylistic analyses of *Sonata No. 2* serve to aid in understanding the unique writing style Bacewicz employed. In contrast to these two theses focused on a pedagogical and performance point of view, Hudson’s “Stylistic Evolution through Chromaticism in the Piano Compositions of Grażyna Bacewicz”\[^{33}\] includes a detailed analysis of *Sonata No. 2* as well of portions of the *Ten Etudes*,

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32. Mills.

33. Hudson.
Sonatina, and Rondino from a theoretical standpoint. These analyses focus on compositional techniques Bacewicz utilized in her piano works. Understanding specific theoretical elements Bacewicz employed in her melodic and harmonic treatment distinguishes Bacewicz’s unique voice present in Sonata No. 2. Similarly, Ann K. McNamee’s “Grażyna Bacewicz's Second Piano Sonata (1953): Octave Expansion and Sonata Form” introduces the analysis of Sonata No. 2 from a theoretical angle by investigating how Bacewicz employed her own unique compositional techniques in sonata form. In contrast to these four studies, Ned Kirk’s “Grażyna Bacewicz and Social Realism” explores the connections between the influences of social realism and a selection of her keyboard works. This dissertation is especially worth mentioning, as it is very specific in explaining the musical restrictions forced upon Polish composers, giving particular musical examples that display the influences of social realism rather than just discussing the philosophy. This makes recognizing the specific musical materials in Sonata No. 2 much clearer for the reader and performer.

Both Teresa Świercz’s “Problemy rytmu w 10 etiudach na fortepian Grażyny Bacewicz” (Rhythmic Problems in Ten Etudes by Grażyna Bacewicz) and Hellman’s “Grażyna Bacewicz's Ten Concert Etudes, 1956: An Examination of Etudes Nos. I, II, IV, and VIII” are the studies on the effectiveness of Bacewicz's etudes in performance. They both explain how rhythmic meter organizes Bacewicz’ Ten Etudes and creates unique characters. Both of these theses assist in recognizing Bacewicz’s unique writing.

34. McNamee.

in her second sonata. Hellmann especially highlights the relevancy of her piano works among other major works from the classical repertory by comparing her etudes to other major piano works such as Chopin’s *Etudes* or Bach’s *Preludes and Fugues* from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Even though there are many descriptions of *Sonata No. 2*, there are neither analyses nor even any mention of Bacewicz’s *Sonata No. 1* in any of these dissertations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Even though the Sonata No. 1 is listed on all of Bacewicz’s catalogues, it has never been published. Currently the scores of unpublished works are kept in the National Library of Poland. At present, all of her unpublished works are under the ownership rights of Mrs. Alina Biernacka, the daughter of Grażyna Bacewicz.37 The author was able to contact Mrs. Biernacka, with tremendous help from Professor Kevin Kenner, and Ms. Anna Czajkowska currently residing in Lodz, the home of Bacewicz. With the permission of Mrs. Biernacka, this research will utilize the microfilm manuscripts of Sonata No. 1 strictly for research purposes.38

The purpose of this study is to provide an analysis of Bacewicz’s Sonata No. 1 and compare it with her Sonata No. 2 in order to observe how her style transformed, from one to the other. Because these works were composed during politically difficult times in Poland, the political influence on musical activity needs to be constantly considered in the process of analyzing Sonata No. 1. An analysis of the Sonata No.1 will be used as evidence of her compositional transformation over the span of only four years when she composed her masterwork, the Sonata No. 2, and will reveal her compositional intentions.

As stated earlier in this thesis, political influences had an enormous effect on her life experiences. In order to better understand the two sonatas in the context of her

37. Briel, 307-316.
38. Upon the receiving the letter of request by the author to Mrs. Alina Biernacka sent on December 17th, 2015, Mrs. Biernacka contacted the National Library of Poland in order to release copies of the unpublished sonatas.
musical progression, it is necessary to understand her life experience itself. This will allow the reader to place her works in context as well as understand the very specific pressures under which she composed a large body of her work. Therefore, the first section of this paper is primarily concerned with Bacewicz’s life experience as it relates to her musical style, and is based on the available biographical sources about Bacewicz. Rosen, Thomas, Gąsiolowska, and Briel’s works provide the significant portion of this section. In addition, Kirk, Thomas and Walker’s study of the relationship between social realism and Polish composers contributes to a better understanding of political situation in Poland.

An analytical overview of the *Sonata No. 1* is presented in Chapter Five by drawing particular attention to factors that shaped her keyboard works. Pertinent musical examples will be referenced in the analysis section. Subsequently, an analysis of *Sonata No. 2*, extracting most pertinent information for performers from the documents by Mills, Hudson, and Pawlina will be presented in Chapter Six.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, the analyses of the two sonatas will be compared to offer a theory on the artistic goal Bacewicz attempted to convey by composing *Sonata No. 2*. From the performer’s point of view, recognizing the composer’s artistic aim is valuable since it helps in digesting the work in order to create a historically informed interpretation. This study will culminate in a recording by the author, offering one possible interpretation of her work. This recording will include *Sonata No. 1* for reference, as well a historically-informed interpretation of *Sonata No. 2*. 
CHAPTER 4

BIOGRAPHY AND STYLISTIC PROGRESSION

Early Period (1909-1938)

Grażyna Bacewicz started her musical training from a very young age. Her father was her first music teacher and she immediately showed talent in both violin and piano playing. She received her musical degrees in violin, piano, and composition from the Warsaw Conservatory in 1932. While she was attending the conservatory, she met one of Poland’s most representative composers of the 20th century, Karol Szymanowski. “To Paris,” was Szymanowski’s advice to all young Polish composers, advice which she followed, and she studied in Paris from 1932 to 1933 with Nadia Boulanger. 39 During her study there, her composition, *Wind Quintet*, was awarded the first prize in the Young Composer’s Competition in Paris. 40 She also composed the *Sonatina* and *Children’s Suite* for piano, both of which were written in a neo-classical style. 41 While she was studying in Paris in the 1930’s, the new music movement was blooming, as Paris was still a center of musical activity. Neo-classicism was one of the major musical trends, with Stravinsky residing in Paris, and Prokofiev touring the USA and European countries. 42 Nadia Boulanger’s teachings also influenced her use of the neo-classical style. Boulanger’s teaching focused on analyzing traditional masterworks and contemporary works such as

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40. Adrian Thomas, *Grażyna Bacewicz: Chamber and Orchestral Music* (Los Angeles: Friends of Polish Music, University of Southern California School of Music, 1985), 44.

41. Ibid., 16.

42. Briel, 19.
Stravinsky⁴³ for the purpose of securing an understanding of compositional techniques and being able to use those tools freely for musical expression.

Upon returning from Paris, she accepted a teaching position in music theory and violin at the conservatory in Łódź, but she eventually quit the job as she found it significantly interfered with her activities as a performer and composer. She decided to study in Paris again in 1934, and there she studied violin with renowned violinist Carl Flesch. Around this time, her compositions were given their first successful reviews by critics in Warsaw while she focused on her violin training. One of the reviews was as follows:

This composer has no need for sensational effects and is to be commended on the beauty and seriousness of the work. There is a sense of youth in her composition while simultaneously there is a high degree of maturity. The musical impressions will overwhelm you and the musical thoughts will absorb you. She has a lot to say, and she already knows how to say it well.⁴⁴

In 1936, Bacewicz became principal violinist in the Polish Radio Orchestra. While she was a member of the orchestra, she was able to premiere her orchestral works such as the Violin Concerto No.1 with them. Even though she was active as a performer, she did not stop composing. She described her compositional process thusly: “I am capable of working many hours daily…and I like to get very, very tired. It is sometimes then that I suddenly get my best ideas.”⁴⁵

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⁴⁴. Rosen, 19.

Second World War and the Social Realism (1939-1956)

From 1939 to 1945, Bacewicz and her family endured the Second World War along with the rest of Europe. Bacewicz and her family needed to evacuate from Warsaw for their safety, and stayed out of the city until the end of the war. She managed to compose several pieces such as Symphony No. 1 during that period; however performances of her music were restricted to coffee houses or private homes. After the World War, Bacewicz and her family returned to the ruined city of Warsaw.

From 1945 to 1955, Polish music was subjected to the rigorous control of the Soviet doctrine of social realism. Social realism originally referred to a movement against innovation in literature during the Russian Revolution. According to Walker, “good social realist artists were to depict the world as it was seen through ‘partiynost’ (Partly consciousness), with a view to the ‘glorious future.’” Stalin’s “socialism” implies the glorification of Stalin and his accomplishments. “Realism” is described as “the representation of things actual and real, with strict fidelity to nature and to real life, as distinguished from the abstract, speculative, etc., aspects characterizing Idealism” according to the Russian scholar Mikhail Alpatov. For music, “realist in form, socialist in content” was a slogan and composers could equate realism with folk music.

46. Rosen, 21.
47. Frolova-Walker, 312.
48. Ibid., 312.
50. Ibid., 313.
The Soviet political climate heavily influenced life in Poland, especially after Poland became a satellite country of the Soviet Union. Upon the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Hitler’s Nazis and Stalin’s Soviets each controlled one half of Poland because of a secretly established treaty: the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact. Because of this act, Poland lost its independence and ceased to exist as a nation during World War II. The Polish government went into exile and based itself in London. The Nazis eliminated education, closed performance venues, and banned all artistic activities. Since Nazi Germany had been weakened by the Soviet Red Army, Poland attempted an uprising against the Nazis in 1944. During the Warsaw Uprising, countless Polish lives were lost in the failed attempt. As a result of the Yalta Conference, the Soviet Union annexed the eastern portions of Poland and forced Germany to surrender large sections of its eastern border to Poland. In 1947, as a puppet entity of the Soviet Union, The Polish People’s Republic was founded.

Under the Communist and Soviet influence, musical activities were restricted by the “socio-political context.” The strict policy regarding music by the Communist party demanded that music needed to be “understandable” by the masses. The definition of social realism in Poland was described by the President of ZKP (Union of Polish Composers) in the periodical Ruch Muzynczy (Musical Movement) in 1949.

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52. Kirk, 10.
54. Majkowski, 28.
55. Erhardt, 75.
The Polish Composer’s Union conceives of musical realism as an expression of strivings of society and adopts an anti-formalistic stance. The composer is not an individual separated from society but one thanks to whom, through artistic expression, a musical work possesses an emotional content which can move the broad masses. Cosmopolitan language, being indifferent to manifestations of national style, is rejected. The composer is to create Polish music, though that does not mean folk quotations but music whose melodic contour, rhythm, form, harmonies and overall atmosphere add up to features that make it possible to distinguish a given work as belonging to or developing further the creative elements characteristic of Polish musical school.56

They regarded any music that showed creativity or individual ideas to be dangerous and threatening to communist society. By enforcing musical restrictions under the doctrine of social realism, they designated some notable works such as the Symphony No. I by Lutosławski as “formalistic.”57 Under such circumstances, the Polish Minister of Culture, Włodzimierz Sokorski demanded that music should be based on Polish heritage and culture, a view that encouraged composers to employ more nationalistic references in their works.58 Because Poland was one of the most important satellite countries of the Soviet Union, the doctrine of social realism and an emphasis on nationalism was imposed on its musicians. Musicians in Poland were restricted to composing exclusively within the guidelines of social realism, which had to be based on traditional forms and easily understood for a musically untrained audience.59


57. Rosen, 22. “Formalistic” is a government terminology for something opposed to “social realism.”

58 Thomas, 44.

59. Walker, 313.
In 1950, social realism became the major trend, and censorship was everywhere. Several composers such as Andrzej Panufnik could not bear any longer these restrictions to musical freedom and left Poland.\textsuperscript{60} Bacewicz was one of only a few successful Polish composers who followed the socialistic rules, and yet was still able to compose major works.\textsuperscript{61} During this period, she composed larger works including the \textit{Piano Concerto}, which contains folk elements (e.g. \textit{oberek}) in the third movement.

Bacewicz, like other Polish composers, was required to compose according to the specific stylistic rules which were imposed during this time; even then, she was successful at preserving her own voice through the use of specific compositional components.\textsuperscript{62} In fact, some of her most well-known works were composed during this period despite the oppressive climate. Her \textit{Piano Concerto} (1949), \textit{Violin Concerto No. 3} (1948), and the \textit{Olympic Cantata}, written for the 1948 London Olympic Games, are some of her notable works during this timeframe. \textit{The Violin Concerto No. 3} is the first of Bacewicz’s works that displays the utilization of the Polish folk idiom.\textsuperscript{63} She tended to write in a strict neo-classical style, and her major works from this period show some evidence of folk influence. Bacewicz became recognized as a representative composer of Poland and continuously received major prizes, such as the music award of the City of Warsaw.

\textsuperscript{60} Humięcka-Jakubowska, 13-20.
\textsuperscript{61} Erhardt, 82.
\textsuperscript{62} Grella-Możejko, 199.
\textsuperscript{63} Rosen, 24.
Her most notable works for other instruments were composed during her middle period, and likewise her most major piano work, *Sonata No. 2* was composed in 1953 and the work gained quick praise. Her *Ten Etudes* composed in 1956 were also complimented by Regina Smendzianka, who premiered the work, as “masterly work and providing fine incentive even to concert pianists.”

Her piano works from 1949 include *Krakowiak koncertowy (Concert Krakowiak)* and *Sonata No. 1*. As the name indicates, *Krakowiak koncertowy* features the rhythm of the *krakowiak*, which is a fast, syncopated dance in duple time. In 1955, Bacewicz left her performance career behind and focused solely on composition.

**After Warsaw Autumn (1956-1969)**

After the death of Stalin in 1953, the Polish Communist Party gradually started to weaken its control over the arts. In 1956, the rebellion against the Soviet Union resulted in a relaxing of the restrictions imposed by the Polish Communist Party. This new openness allowed musicians and artists more freedom in their activities. Upon the political change, the contemporary music festival named “Warsaw Autumn” took place in October of 1956. In 1950’s, modernity in Western Europe was blossoming, and composers were experimenting with possibilities in music beyond traditional styles.

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64. Briel, 338.
65. Rosen, 29.
66. Czakanowska and Blacking, 82.
67. Thomas, 83.
68. Kirk, 12.
The gap between Western European modernity and Eastern European social realism was expanding. The Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music was established specifically to fill the gap between these two styles. During the Cold War, the festival became a way to “bypass” lost progress in order to gain familiarity with modern ideas and aesthetics. The selections of the works to be performed were geopolitically-based and were chosen by the representative countries’ characteristics. Most of the performers were appointed by the Soviet Union. Works by leading composers of the time, such as Igor Stravinsky, Béla Bartók, Dmitri Shostakovich, Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, Anton Webern, as well as by Polish composers such as Witold Lutosławski, Artur Malawski and Grażyna Bacewicz herself, were presented at the festival.

For most of the Polish and Eastern European composers, the Festival provided them rare opportunities to listen to the latest compositions from Western European countries and the United States. In its inaugural year, works by Schoenberg, Berg, and Messiaen were presented at the festival alongside Russian pieces by composers such as Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky. The non-Russian works were based on twelve-tone technique or modes of limited transpositions. In 1958, John Cage’s *Music of Changes* and electronic music such as Stockhausen’s *Gesang der Jünglinge* were performed. They influenced younger Eastern European composers to explore the avant-garde styles with


70. Thomas, 321-322.

71. Ibid., 323-324.
greater intensity. Eventually the influences from dodecaphony, pointillism, aleatoricism, coloristic use of harmony, and unconventional articulations empowered Polish composers to explore the diverse range of musical styles.\textsuperscript{72}

The musical possibilities in piano playing were also expanded by twentieth century composers. The search for an enhanced dynamic and textural range caused composers to look for more colors in harmony and therefore extended techniques for pianists.\textsuperscript{73} Gradually, the Polish composers’ styles began to change and evolve. The musical modernism of Polish composers also indicated their cultural distance from the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{74}

Bacewicz was already in her late 40’s when she was first exposed to the avant-garde and serialistic compositions.\textsuperscript{75} Her compositional style was already firmly established so her reaction to these new compositional methods was less than enthusiastic. However, the exposure to new music did lead Bacewicz to paying attention to certain compositional ideas, such as a departure from tonality, greater attention to instrumental colors, and various rhythmic patterns. Bacewicz went into a “contemplative period” in 1960 to digest what she had heard so far from other contemporary composers.\textsuperscript{76} Her reaction to their music began to be more favorable, and she stated that, “the technique itself is very important because it provides the necessary rigor and formal

\textsuperscript{72} Humięcka-Jakubowska, 18.
\textsuperscript{73} Agnieszka Kopińska, “Uniwersum fortepianu w muzyce współczesnej—refleksja aksjologiczna”, \textit{Wartości w muzyce} 6 (2014): 143-155, 145.
\textsuperscript{74} Jakelski, 189-211.
\textsuperscript{75} Rosen, 28.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 30.
technique for the composer.” She used serialism for her String Quartet No. 6, but she was careful to keep her own voice as she found contemporary composers to often sound similar.

In the 1960’s, her compositional activity slowed down and she began to use quotations from her previous works in her new compositions. However, she managed to compose several larger scale works, such as the Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra in 1966. The three-part Maly tryptyk (Little Triptych) is the only solo piano work she composed in this period (1965). Each movement is in a loose ABA form, and includes very irregular phrase lengths, which was not a technique present in her earlier works. The collection of short motivic fragments without specific tonalities explores the possibility of extreme coloristic range of the keyboard. Instead of making a big statement through a creation of specific forms and thematic materials, Maly tryptyk explores the variety of different characters by employing the extreme dynamic and sonorous range of the instrument. This would also prove to be her last piano work, as Bacewicz’s life ended suddenly from unrecorded causes in 1969.

77. Ibid., 31.

78. Ibid., 31.


80. Rosen, 35.
CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF SONATA NO. 1

Bacewicz's Sonata No. 1 was composed in 1949. This was during the first year that the Social Realism Doctrine was imposed on composers in the People’s Republic of Poland. She also composed the krakowiak in the same year and both works were submitted for the Chopin Competition for Composers in Warsaw.⁸¹ Both the Krakowiak and the Sonata No. 1 were awarded Third Prize. Even though the Krakowiak was published by PWM in 1949, the Sonata No. 1 has never been published. Currently, the only recording of Sonata No. 1 is by Anita Krochmalska released by Acte Préalable. The first sonata contains four movements that take around seventeen minutes to perform in total.

Form

Each movement of the first sonata is composed in strictly conventional forms. The first movement is in traditional sonata-allegro form, the remaining three movements are either in regular or modified ternary form. The difference between each section is clearly audible due to the fact that each section is nicely concluded with a strong cadence. Sections are also easily differentiated by their distinctive characters. It is therefore easy even for musically uneducated people to understand the structure. Most of the repeated sections are exactly the same as previous sections so that it is not difficult for listeners to anticipate the music in subsequent sections. For example,

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⁸¹. Rosen, 44.
the recapitulation of the first movement employs exactly the same material as the first movement’s exposition.

Likewise, in the second movement, the return of the A section is exactly the same as the initial A section. Finally, although the last movement is in ternary form, the same musical material is used in each section. Even the normally contrasting second section is more like an A’ than a true B section. One of the important agendas of social realism was to avoid formalism in music, which placed significance on abstraction as explained in the previous chapter.82 Bacewicz seems to comply with this agenda by using repetition to audibly clarify the form for the listener.

**Motivic Development**

Also, Bacewicz made sure to utilize the same motif repeatedly so that the listener can be familiar with the material, making the music memorable. The melodic motif appearing in the first movement (mm. 2-4) is transformed and utilized several times within the movement.

Example 1.1. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 1*, I, mm. 2-4.

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82. Thomas, 44.
The motif seen in mm. 2-4 is transposed to a lower key, G minor, and is used as the first main theme (mm. 23-25); the second theme is derived from the first, making use of the same pitches (mm. 57-59) from the initial motif in mm. 2-4.

Example 1.2. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 23-25.

Example 1.3. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, I, mm. 57-59.

The close relationship between all of the important themes creates unity throughout the piece, making it predictable for listeners. The motif introduced at the first measure of the first movement also appears three times at the end of the development.
Example 1.4. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 1*, I, m. 1.

Example 1.5. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 1*, I, mm. 119-123.

By employing a memorable motif three times (mm. 119, 121, 123), the return of the recapitulation is easily anticipated. Instead of developing the motif to create a sophisticated statement, this sonata tends to repeat the motif relatively unchanged. For example, the coda in the third movement consists of the same musical figure from the
previous section of the same movement. Similarly, the first four measures of the first movement are also used as the last four measures of the last movement, creating symmetry in the sonata as a whole.


![Example 1.6](image)


![Example 1.7](image)

In general, instead of developing and creating new material, she chooses to repeat the same material in a later section.

Employing this predictable musical language is likely a result of her adherence to the social realist agenda.\(^\text{83}\) So much repetition of musical material ensures that listeners become familiar with repeated phrases and motifs, fulfilling the requirement that music composed during this period be simple and memorable.

\(^{83}\) Thomas, 45.
Tonality and the Use of Folk Modes

One of the prominent characteristics of this work is that each section maintains a clear tonality. Even though Bacewicz modulates occasionally, there is little tonal ambiguity from phrase to phrase, allowing the melody to unfold within a consistent tonal center. Polish and Hungarian scales are significant components of her tonal language, which employ competing modes and result in increased chromaticism. Employing a various mixture of modes, such as major, minor, Aeolian, and Dorian in the melody is characteristic of traditional Polish melodies. Although the use of folk elements naturally results in some accidentals, Bacewicz avoids excessive use of chromaticism, keeping the tonality stable throughout.

The first theme of the first movement is in G minor, which is introduced after the appearance of a G-minor Hungarian scale, which then smoothly transitions into the primary material. The second theme is in D major, which is the dominant of G minor. Modulating to the dominant for the second theme also complies with the normal tonal structure of the sonata-allegro form. The theme is comprised of small intervals in a narrow range, making the tune memorable and easy to sing. Another example of traditional tonal structure can be found in the introduction of the last movement, where the harmony is always provided (mm. 1-8) by the chordal figure between the hands, and the direction of the melody is constantly moving forward to the tonal center (B flat).

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84. Czekanowska and Blacking, 191.

The transition process from each section to the next is also grounded in the traditional harmonic modulations. The first sonata contains a relatively bright key signature in many sections. Even though it starts from G minor in the first theme of the first movement, the second theme is in the bright and uncomplicated key of D major. The main theme in the last movement is in B-flat major, and then modulates to D major. Even though the third movement is in D minor, it does not convey a heavy or serious feeling because of its humorous *scherzo* character, which is also the title of this movement. The A section in the second movement is written in a D Dorian mode. However, the configuration of the melody gives the impression of A minor, which lends a darker and more serious hue to this section. However, this is immediately balanced by a major mode melody in the B section, inserting some of the light mood from the previous movements into an otherwise

serious section of the work. Her frequent use of major modes throughout the entire work gives the piece and lighthearted quality that is likely an attempt to comply with social realism, which prefers that music be optimistic rather than reflect the real hardships of Polish citizens.  

Folk Rhythms

Polish dance rhythms are also an influential part of Bacewicz’s music. *oberek*, the fastest of the Polish national dances, is implied in the A section of the fourth movement. The tempo marking *Molto allegro*, combined with the fast rhythmic movement and the rapid sixteenth-note figures with accented second and third beats is reminiscent of the traditional *oberek* rhythms, such as found in mm. 29-32.

Example 1.9. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 1*, IV, mm. 28-32.

The section beginning in m. 64 includes continuous *staccato* eighth notes in the inner voice, which evoke the constant footsteps of the dance.

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86. Thomas, 46.

87. Czekanowska and Blacking, 92.
Example 1.10. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 1*, IV, mm. 64-65.

The lyrical melodic section in m. 54, however, evokes the rhythms of the *mazur*, another kind of Polish traditional dance, which is in the middle ground between the fast *oberek* and slower *kujawiak*.  

Example 1.11. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 1*, IV, mm. 54-55.

Even though the composer did not indicate it explicitly in her musical markings, the use of specific modes or rhythms implies the major influence of Polish culture. Her clear use of these specific rhythmic patterns would immediately be familiar to her local audience. This makes the music both recognizable and nationalistic—both important parts of the social realist agenda.  

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89. Thomas, 45.
Texture and Pianistic Writing

One prominent feature of Sonata No. 1 is the use of a pedal tone octave in the bass. By holding an octave in the bass for more than a measure, she is able to use the sonority to ground the melodic material. In the first theme of the first movement, she places the octave bass in m. 25 with a sforzando and indicates that it should be sustained with the pedal.


This sustaining of the bass results in a natural decay of the sound, and creates a diminuendo effect. In the second movement (m. 8), she indicates a sustaining of the bass within a soft dynamic, while the melody is played in a higher register.

Example 1.13. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, II, mm. 8-9.

By using the overtones of the bass, a special sonority is created which implies a sound heard from a distance.
The use of the sustained bass line and actively moving inner voice above it helps in the build-up of tension to a dramatic climax (m. 35). The accumulation of dynamic momentum fueled by multiple moving voices that arrives at a sonorous climax is drastically contrasted by an extreme thinning of textures. This is further accentuated by an indication of pianissimo that doubly demands a sudden transfiguration of dynamic and atmospheric qualities (m. 46).


Another common technique is the employment of rapid sixteenth-note figures, which create “motor-like” energy. Usage of continuous rapid notes at various dynamics creates this excited energy as can be seen throughout the beginning of the A section of the fourth movement (mm. 1-51).

90. Mills, 94.
Contrary motion between the right and left hand is another prominent tool that Bacewicz tends to use frequently in this sonata. This technique occurs in the introduction of the fourth movement, which succeeds in creating excitement and forward motion by mirroring the octaves of the right hand with the left hand as they both approach the tonic of B-flat.

Sometimes the stepwise contrary motion of rapid sixteenth notes in forceful dynamics appears as an interruption of a contrasting texture, as seen, for instance, in the third (mm. 123-124) and fourth (mm. 96-97) movements.

Example 1.18. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 1*, IV, mm. 96-97.

**Influences from Other Composers**

The *Sonata No. 1* was influenced by her predecessors, Frédéric Chopin and Karol Szymanowski. Similar to their frequent use of Polish folk melodies and rhythms, this work is also deeply colored by Polish folk idioms, such as the *oberek* and *mazur*. There is an obscure relationship to Chopin as it appears in the second theme of the first movement, which bears similarities to the transition of the first movement of Chopin’s *Sonata No. 1 in C minor*. 
It is possible to surmise Chopin’s direct influence on Bacewicz’s motivic ideas, especially because Bacewicz’s *Sonata No. 1* was submitted for the Chopin Competition for Composers.

While she was living in Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger, both Stravinsky and Prokofiev’s influence were significant as they were also residents of Paris and their works were frequently performed in the 1930’s.

Bacewicz came into Paris when neo-classicism was in full bloom with contributions from Igor Stravinsky, Bohuslav Martinů, and Sergei Prokofiev. She stood in the tradition of Polish artists, who were in Paris to further their knowledge. Relations with French musical circles were of great importance to the younger generation of Polish composers.91

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91. Briel, 19.
The A section of the last movement is in constant motion driven by the “motor-like” rapid figure using alternating hand technique, resembling that of Prokofiev’s Toccata in D minor, Op. 11, or The Shrovetide Fair from Stravinsky’s Petrushka.

Example 1.21. Igor Stravinsky, Petrushka, The Shrovetide Fair, mm.21-22.

Example 1.22 Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm.91-93.

Conclusion

The Sonata No. 1 resembles works by Bacewicz’s compatriot predecessors, Chopin and Szymanowski, who both made frequent use of Polish folk melodies and rhythms. The apparent use of Polish forms and folk idioms aided in Bacewicz’s successful composition of a sonata that represents a distillation of her country’s musical culture. The agenda of social realism was manifested through the repetitive use of a specific motif, a strict form, and an implication of folk elements. It is easily understandable why this piece was awarded a prize at the competition in 1949.
CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF SONATA NO. 2

The second sonata was composed in 1953, four years after Bacewicz composed the Sonata No. 1. After numerous experiments in composing sonatas, this became the only published sonata. It was premiered by the composer herself, and gained instant acclaim once it was performed in public. Currently there are three recordings of this work available: by Ewa Kupiec (2000), Anita Krochmalska (2003), and by Krystian Zimerman (2011). Also, there is a LP recording of this work by Regina Smendzianka, who premiered another of Bacewicz’s representative works, Ten Etudes. The Sonata No. 2 is widely recognized as Bacewicz’s representative piano work because it adopted the doctrine of social realism by introducing Polish folk elements into the sonata form. Today, this sonata is known as Bacewicz’s most significant piano work.

93. Briel, 314
95. Briel, 328.
96. Kirk, Abstract.
Form

Overall the sense of any specific form is weakened in \textit{Sonata No. 2}. As McNamme indicates in her analysis of the second Sonata, it is difficult to identify the end of the exposition and the beginning of the development in this sonata.\textsuperscript{97}

This is because the closing theme of the exposition already hints at fragments in the development. Starting in m. 51, two main alternating features characterized by a \textit{staccato} motif and a \textit{legato} motif start to emerge, foreshadowing the development.


By including materials hinting at the character of the development in the second theme of the exposition, the progression between the exposition and development becomes smoother. At the same time, however, it also conceals the boundaries between these sections and diminishes the sense of traditional form.

Likewise, the impression of the second movement’s overall form is unclear. The form of the second movement is $ABCB'A'$, with a particularly expansive C section.

\textsuperscript{97} McNamme.
Table 1.1. Structure of Grażyna Bacewicz Sonata No. 2, II.

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<td>mm. 20-28</td>
<td>mm. 29-81</td>
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The length of each section is not equal, therefore it is difficult to feel the symmetrical structure of this movement. This is because the musical material from the A and B sections is used and developed extensively within the C section, resulting in an overall structure that feels unbalanced and formless. Even though the Sonata No. 2 resembles the traditional structure associated with sonatas, this form is now radically expanded and developed. She explores more intensively the various ingredients of the motifs, and these explorations are inserted into transitional and developmental sections. This in turn results in a re-balancing of the structure in favor of transitions and expanded development, which differs from traditional sonatas that tend not to expand on unstable elements like transitions. Extensive use of motivic development is also found in her Symphony No. 3 composed in 1952, a year before Sonata No. 2.98

**M motivic Development**

Bacewicz succeeds in creating a diverse range of expression and color through the development and transformation of the several motifs within the first movement. The augmented seconds which characterize the melody of the left hand, and which are expressed as chordal figures (mm. 37-38), are reminiscent of those same intervals in the

98. Thomas, 72.
first theme (mm. 3-4),\textsuperscript{99} but with an added sense of broadness and majesty in contrast to the more agitated and restless quality of the opening.

Example 2.2. Grażyna Bacewicz, \textit{Sonata No. 2}, I, mm. 3-4.

Another example of motivic development can be seen in m. 3. The opening theme’s left-hand accompaniment figure consisting of the interval of a seventh (m. 3) has risen in importance to the function of melody in dialogue with a similar left-hand figure in the transition (m. 29).

\textsuperscript{99} Mills, 38.
Example 2.4. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, I, mm. 29-30.

This same figure consisting of the interval of a seventh appears again later in the development as a repetitive motif to create a “breathless feeling” (m. 91).\(^{100}\)

Example 2.5. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, I, mm. 91.

Bacewicz transformed the function of the transitory material from a mere bridge into a substantial independent section.

Similarly, the character and scope of the second movement’s dramatic aspects are driven by the initial motif of the A section in the same movement; the melodic motif in the A section (mm. 4-5) becomes the significant statement in the C section (m. 38), supported by octaves in both hands and at a *fortissimo* dynamic.

\(^{100}\) Pawlina, 34.
Example 2.6. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, II, mm. 4-5


Immediately afterwards, this motif is heard in a timbrally contrasting register, giving an impression of distance with its thinner texture (mm. 45-46).


**Tonality, Intervals, and Folk Influences**

It is difficult to identify the tonality in *Sonata No. 2* because non-functional harmonies are continuously placed on every beat. Harmonic sonorities are
used for coloring purposes, rather than cadential functions.\textsuperscript{101} Because of the difficulty in specifying the tonality, some scholars have decided not to analyze according to the traditional harmonic progression, but rather through the use of intervallic cells.\textsuperscript{102}

As seen in the previous example, the first theme includes the interval of an augmented second (mm. 3-4). The augmented second is a particularly important interval for Polish folk music.\textsuperscript{103} One of the important melodic characteristics of Polish folk melody is that it simultaneously employs intervals from several different modes such as major, minor, Aeolian and Dorian in a single line.\textsuperscript{104} Some of these characteristic intervals consist of flattened sixths and raised sevenths.\textsuperscript{105} The combination of different modes results in an assortment of chromatic tones that collectively impress upon the listener the sound world of Polish folk music. As a result, Bacewicz uses augmented seconds, fourths, and sevenths repeatedly in this movement.\textsuperscript{106} These intervals were also frequently used by her predecessors, Chopin and Szymanowski in their stylized Polish music, such as the \textit{mazurka}.

McNamee’s analysis indicates that Bacewicz uses the Podhalean mode with additional tones in octave expansion in mm. 64-129 in the first movement.\textsuperscript{107} The Podhalean mode is one of the Polish traditional modes, which consists of a major scale

\begin{footnotes}
\item[101] Mills, 58.
\item[102] Hudson, abstract
\item[103] Czekanowska, 191.
\item[104] Ibid.
\item[105] Ibid.
\item[106] Mills. 36.
\item[107] MacNamee.
\end{footnotes}
with a sharpened fourth and flattened seventh scale degrees. The chromatic notes added to the Podhalean mode further intensify its folk-like sonority. Bacewicz’s use of chromaticism is especially apparent at dramatic high points in this work, as seen in the climax in the C section of the second movement.

Example 2.9. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 2, II, mm. 67-68.

A particularly prominent use of chromaticism, emphasized by strong articulation and dynamic markings, occurs in mm. 67-68 in the second movement. Although it is based on the B Dorian mode, this line’s expressiveness is additionally colored by semitones similar to McNamee’s example of the octave expansion in the development of the first movement. Bacewicz’s use of extremely loud dynamics such as fortissimo for these chromatic areas also greatly intensifies the character.

**Rhythm**

Throughout the third movement, Bacewicz features the rhythm of the fastest of the Polish dances, the triple meter oberek. However, because this rhythm is so strongly emphasized with articulation and dynamics, it becomes almost an insistence on using traditional folk rhythm, rather than a natural expression derived from her culture’s music.

Example 2.10. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, III, mm. 204-205.

The composer’s overly emphatic articulation of the rhythm is prevalent in this sonata. This is almost a rejection of the social realist demands, which require composers to include nationalistic elements without sounding forced or artificial.

Another rhythmic device derived from folk music can be observed in the bass line of the first movement. The continuous “short-short-long” accompaniment figure is seen in several places. This is reminiscent of the *krakowiak* rhythm, a fast dance in duple meter which employs syncopated rhythm.\(^\text{109}\)


This rhythm is intensified with dynamics and repetition of the motif.

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\(^{109}\) Thomas, 95.
Texture

By frequently employing the repetition of sustained octave in a lower range, Bacewicz is able to generate momentum leading to a dramatic high point within the phrase. The climaxes of the first movement (mm. 99-105) or of the second movement (mm. 38, 63) include a sustained bass octave or melody in almost every measure.


This frequent use of sustained notes in increasing dynamics successfully contributes to an accumulation of sound which climaxes dramatically. By placing the bass octave and the melody in distant registers (m. 63), she covers a wide span of the keyboard, creating starkly contrasting colors.
The end of the first (m. 169) and second movements (m. 69) makes use of a sustained bass under a melody softly played in the higher register, giving the impression of distance and the perception of depth (m. 169).\(^{110}\)

Another important musical figure, a “motor-like” pattern of rapid sixteenth notes, create both energetic excitement and delicate nuances in the second sonata.

The development in the first movement, for example, contains this “motor-like” sixteenth-note figure (m. 64).

\(^{110}\) Pawlina, 43.
Example 2.15. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, I, mm. 64-68.

The extendedness of this type of passagework contributes gradually to the overall dynamic excitement of the first movement.\textsuperscript{111} By m. 74, this figure becomes extremely prominent and the major source of the energy.

Example 2.16. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, I, mm. 74-78.

The third movement features aggressive use of a “motor-like” figure at an intense dynamic level (m. 201).

\textsuperscript{111} Mills, 33.
Example 2.17. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, III, mm. 201-203.

Clustered notes passed back and forth between hands within the same register form “motor-like” patterns which in turn create rhythmic drive and power.

Bacewicz also makes use of a figure that is characterized by contrary motion between linear scale passages in both hands.

Example 2.18. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, III, mm. 187-190.

This contrary motion figure between the right and left hands is repeated in increasing dynamic levels in the third movement (m. 187). The addition of pedal to this pattern can allow for both atmospheric colors and frenzied articulation.
Chapter 7

Stylistic Comparison of *Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2*

The policy of social realism was introduced to the People's Republic of Poland by the Soviet Union in 1949. Its imposition was designed to reinforce Soviet domination, and its doctrines were strongly enforced from its introduction until the death of Stalin in 1953. According to Adrian Thomas, the censorship imposed by the Polish Communist Party was extremely strict, which made it inconceivable to the Polish people that Soviet control would weaken.  

According to the tenets of social realism in Poland, the composer was not considered an individual separated from society. Rather, the composer should be one who conveys the emotional content of music to the masses through his compositions, and melodic contour, rhythm, form, harmony, and overall atmosphere should imply the Polish musical school. Because Włodzimierz Sokorski, the Minister of Culture, disliked abstract ideas in any type of art form including music, composers were implicitly encouraged to compose in absolute form. Bacewicz is regarded as one of the most successful composers who incorporated the ideas of social realism into her works. Bacewicz's *Sonatas No. 1 and No. 2* were written at opposite ends of this period of social realism in Poland and as such may well reflect the composer’s emotional reactions to its domination of the political climate.

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112. Thomas, 58.

113. *Instrumenty perkusyjne we współczesnej orkiestrze* (Kraków: PMW, 1963), quoted in Thomas, 45.

114. Thomas, 44.

115. Ibid., 44.
**Comparison of Form**

As displayed in the diagram below, the first movement of the first sonata closely follows the conventions of a classical sonata-allegro form; however, the second sonata veers away from this traditional structure in its expansion of the transitional and developmental sections.

Table 2.1. Diagram of the First Movement of *Sonata Nos. 1* and 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sonata No. 1</th>
<th>Sonata No. 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>mm. 1-22</td>
<td>mm. 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>First theme</td>
<td>mm. 23-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>mm. 42-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second Theme</td>
<td>mm. 57-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing theme</td>
<td>mm. 74-101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>mm. 102-119</td>
<td>mm. 64-119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-transition</td>
<td>mm. 120-126</td>
<td>mm. 120-129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recapitulation</td>
<td>First theme</td>
<td>mm. 127-145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>transition</td>
<td>mm. 146-157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second theme</td>
<td>mm. 158-175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing theme</td>
<td>mm. 175-189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The recapitulation of *Sonata No. 2* also differs from *Sonata No. 1* as it does not simply repeat the same material of the exposition explicitly. Instead, Bacewicz slightly modifies the initial material in order to create subtle variations. These adjustments do not easily correspond with the expected appearance of the musical material as found in the traditional sonata-allegro form.
The same technique is employed in the second movement. The *Sonata No. 2*’s second movement is in arch form, ABCB'A', and the C section is enlarged resulting in an inequality among the various sections and an overall sense of formal ambiguity. Even though the A and B sections come back at the end, the order of these sections is reversed and the material is modified from the initial sections. The *Sonata No. 1*, however, employs a clear sense of form in simple ABA' form. Even though the B section in first sonata is larger than the A section, a clear return to the A' section is perceived because it includes the exact same musical material as the initial A section.

Table 2.2. Diagrams of the Second Movements of *Sonata Nos. 1* and 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sonata No. 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>mm. 1-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B a:</td>
<td>mm. 19-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B b:</td>
<td>mm. 50-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A'</td>
<td>mm. 77-94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sonata No. 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>mm. 1-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>mm. 20-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C a:</td>
<td>mm. 29-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C b:</td>
<td>mm. 50-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C c:</td>
<td>mm. 63-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B'</td>
<td>mm. 71-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A'</td>
<td>mm. 79-90</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The third movement of *Sonata No. 2* can be compared with another toccata-like movement, the fourth movement of *Sonata No. 1*. While the earlier sonata employs ternary form and repeats similar material three times, the second sonata’s third movement has an unbalanced form. Even though it is analyzed as AA'BA" form, a typical form for an *oberek*, the A' section is irregularly expanded compared to the initial A

section. In addition, the B section is twice as long as the initial A section, therefore the relationship between each section becomes uneven in this movement.

Table 2.3. Diagram of the last movements of Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2.\textsuperscript{117}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sonata No. 1</th>
<th>Sonata No. 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>mm.1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>mm. 9-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>mm. 91-118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A'</td>
<td>mm. 119-173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>mm. 174-187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though Bacewicz uses recognizable forms to accommodate her musical ideas in the Sonata No. 2, she does not fit the musical material exactly within the traditional structure. In this way she violates the objectives of social realism which demand the composition of clearly delineated forms. In performance, awareness of the different characters in each section needs to be emphasized in order to show the clear sense of form in Sonata No. 1.

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\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 65.
Use of Motif

There are substantial differences between the first and second sonatas in regards to the treatment of motivic repetition. Most repeated motifs in the second sonata are continuously transformed and varied, which was not an apparent trait of the first sonata. In the Sonata No. 2, she tends to re-use the motif that includes fourths and sevenths, which are characteristic intervals of Polish folk melody. Excessive repetition of these motifs at *forte* and *fortissimo* over-emphasize these Polish-influenced intervals, which may be interpreted as a “passive-aggressive” response to social realism. Performers should be always aware of the reoccurring motifs that employ the folk-influenced intervals, and should seek a great range of expression, from outwardly majestic feelings to introspective and intimate moods.

The extensive use of chromaticism in Sonata No. 2 is also derived from Polish folk modes.\(^{118}\) And the intense use of chromaticism in the *fortissimo* climax (mm. 63-68 in the second movement) may indicate a frustrated response to social realism. It is not necessary to reinforce the Polish folk idiom so strongly since the use of folk elements was already required and expected in works of this period. Therefore, the overemphasis on folk elements reads as something closer to caricature than obedient nationalism.

Tonality

While the first sonata tends to employ functional harmonies, the second sonata utilizes non-functional harmonies and frequently treats harmony as color. Since the doctrine of social realism demanded an understandable and clear musical language for the

\(^{118}\) Mills, 60.
masses and an avoidance of stylistic abstractness, Bacewicz seems to follow their guidelines in the first sonata. However, the tonality becomes much more vague in the second sonata because of its polytonality and the shift away from functional harmony. While the first theme of the *Sonata No. 1* is written in G minor (m. 23), it is difficult to specify a clear mode or tonality in the first theme in the *Sonata No. 2* (m. 3) because of the constant presence of the chromatic inner voice and frequent harmonic shifts to different modes.


Example 3.2. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, I, mm. 3-6.

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119. Thomas, 44.
Another example of the “motor-like” figures appears in the last movement of both sonatas. This figure is always used within diatonic harmonies in the *Sonata No. 1* (m. 145), however, the second sonata employs chromaticism in this figure to create clustered sounds (m. 201).

Example 3.3. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 1*, IV, mm. 145-146.

In this example (3.5) from the *Sonata No. 2*, even though Bacewicz sometimes includes diatonic chords in the right hand, they are always accompanied by chromatic notes in the left hand, which employ a different mode (D-sharp Pentatonic) than the right hand leading to a weakened sense of tonality. The section starting at measure 114 is marked *forte* to emphasize the dissonant aspect of chromaticism. The constant chromaticism in extreme dynamics create a sense of uneasiness and anxiety. Careful attention to the chromaticism can enhance the tense atmosphere created through sound.
Example 3.5. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, III, mm. 114-115.

As it is shown in these examples, chromaticism and polytonality in *Sonata No. 2* seem to be reinforced by extreme dynamics and articulation compared to *Sonata No. 1*. The chromaticism and tonal instability of the *Sonata No. 2* may correspond to the turbulent societal conditions.

**Use of Rhythms**

Obsessive emphasis on folk dance rhythms in the third movement of the *Sonata No. 2* once again insinuates a critical response to the agenda of social realism. The obsessive accentuation of the second and third beats reinforces the rhythm of the *oberek* more than is necessary for the form to be recognized (mm. 137).

Example 3.6. Grażyna Bacewicz, *Sonata No. 2*, III, mm. 135-140.

While the first sonata employs the rhythm of the *mazur* or *oberek* in the fourth movement without forceful insistence, the use of these folk rhythms in the second sonata
seems to be overly stressed. In addition, the *krakowiak*-like rhythm in the bass line in the Sonata No. 2’s first movement always appears in an agitated character, and this agitation only increases over time. Exaggerated adoption of folk rhythm may also indicate a satirization of social realism.

**Pianistic Writing**

Even though both sonatas employ the sustained bass to create a massive sonority, the second sonata is more successful in creating a large-scale dramatic effect by continuously expanding the register through a succession of held bass-notes. For example, the section from m. 63 in the second movement of *Sonata No. 2* shows the heightened drama achieved by the expanding registers and continuously sustained bass notes. The steady stretching of the extreme registers eventually burst at the seams at an explosive dynamic of *fortississimo*.

Sonata No. 1 also includes the sustained bass in multiple places to enhance the sonority. However, the continuous expansion of the registers occurs with diatonic pitches in contrast to the chromatic motion in the second sonata.

Example 3.8. Grażyna Bacewicz, Sonata No. 1, IV, mm. 1-8.

Although Bacewicz frequently used the sustained bass in the first sonata for dramatic amplification, the underpinning of tonality limited the intensity of the drama. The same technique yielded more potent results in her second sonata through chromatic means.

Conclusion

As it is seen in the above comparison, the second sonata has a more expansive range of expressiveness in comparison to the first sonata, while simultaneously locating itself on the fringes of social realistic doctrine. Bacewicz’s usage of traditional forms and insistent repetition of Polish-influenced intervalllic and rhythmic motifs in the Sonata No. 2 serve as evidence of her adoption of social realism. However, it also indicates an intention to push the limits of those strictures placed upon her. The drastic range of expression in the second sonata presents a stronger individual voice not seen as vividly in the first sonata. Her music may have expressed her own agony of living in a country in
which creative activity was so severely restricted and checked by the government.

The recording of two sonatas by the author attempts to show the stylistic differences, as well as a historically-informed interpretation. While the first sonata shows clarity of form and emphasis on optimistic-sounding characters, the second sonata represents agitation through the use of non-functional harmonies and chromaticism. The second sonata also contains a noticeably broader spectrum of expressive nuances and dynamics.

Bacewicz is one of those rare composers who decided to stay within her country under the control of Stalin’s Soviet Union in the 1950s. While other composers in her generation like Andrzej Panufnik, for example, left Poland in 1951, Bacewicz decided to remain in her country and never gave up on her compositional activity. Even though this choice placed her under a highly restrictive environment, she indeed “had the craft, flexibility and willpower to survive,”120 and it can be easily argued from this analysis of these two sonatas that her creativity even flourished in spite of it.

Unlike Panufnik and Lutosławski, Bacewicz never talked about her compositional style and methods in public.121 However, the compositional transformation from Sonata No. 1 to Sonata No. 2 in and of itself explains not only the progression of her compositional writing, but also the strength of her willpower and courage to pursue her own creative path in the face of social realism. Bacewicz once mentioned that, “For me, composing is like chiseling stone, not like intuitively transferring tones from our

120. Thomas, 73
121. Trochimczyk.
imagination or inspiration to paper.”122 This quote reveals Bacewicz’s compositional aesthetic of crafting her musical messages most intently as opposed to writing music as a gesture of unfiltered expressional outpouring. The quote reflects more effort, because chiseling is hard work and there is resistance from the stone. By comparing these two sonatas based on their historical context, the anguish Poland experienced at that time is clearly evident in the transformation between these two compositions. The great art is often born in oppressive environments. Perhaps because the need for personal expression of one’s frustrations is so great, perhaps also because boundaries are a necessary component in the search for new solutions. Whether Bacewicz consciously intended to evoke this anguish through her compositional activity or whether it was simply a natural consequence of the adverse conditions in which she struggled to individuate artistically, Grażyna Bacewicz’s Sonata No. 2 stands out as an expression of creative genius, social protest, and a living witness to the oppression her country endured.

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