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**Lauds by Krzysztof Penderecki –
a musical transmission of a spiritual message:
*Поem Твою, Христe, спасительную Страсть,
и славим Твое воскресение!***

This year marks the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of one of Poland's most outstanding composers, considered a 'classic' of contemporary music – Krzysztof Penderecki. His music still does not allow the listener to remain indifferent; it 'draws' the listener into the vortex of sounds and colours that make up the space of the master's artistic vision. In his oeuvre, the composer reached for the quintessence of humanism, building a sound world inspired by the spiritual values most essential to the hierarchy of notions of the good and the beautiful. Penderecki's drawing on the sphere of *sacrum*, using the area of Christian spirituality as inspiration for his works, was a kind of protest against the reality prevailing in Poland in the 1960s. The creation, forming the cycle *Passion Triptych*, of the works: *Passion*, *Lauds I – Laying in the Tomb* and *Lauds II – Resurrection*, was a decisive response to the socialisation, in material and spiritual terms, of the world of the time. By referring to Christian spirituality in its creative inspiration (Western in the *Passion*, Eastern in the *Lauds*), it challenged the prevailing reality, becoming a protest against the moral enslavement of society. Many years later, the composer characterised the embedding of his work in this dimension as follows: "My art, growing out of deeply Christian roots, seeks to rebuild the metaphysical space of man shattered by cataclysms. Restoring the sacral dimension of reality is the only way to save man"¹. Arranged in a single liturgical narrative, *Passion* and *Laudes I* and *II* constitute an evangelical record, closed in the sound area, depicting the passion, death, laying in the tomb and resurrection of Christ.

¹ *Passio artis et vitae*. Z Krzysztofem Pendereckim rozmawiają Anna i Zbigniew Baranowie, in: K. Penderecki, *Labirynt czasu. Pięć wykładów na koniec wieku*, Warszawa 1997, p. 67–68.

In the *Passion*, the composer uses the text of St Luke's Gospel as the basis for the verbal layer, supplementing it with excerpts from St John's Gospel that are important from the point of view of the work's construction. As a situational reference to the scenes taking place in the Gospel description, Penderecki introduces, in the form of a reflective commentary, excerpts from the psalms and Latin hymns of the Holy Week liturgy. The work as a whole, which derives from the tradition of the great Baroque masters (Bach, Handel or Telemann), touches the most sensitive emotions of the audience with the extraordinary depth of its drama. The work is a synthesis of tradition and the present, in which the old form and timeless content are presented in a contemporary, unconventional dimension, acquiring their deep meaning and extraordinary power of transmission. Zygmunt Mycielski – composer, publicist and music critic – wrote the following after the premiere of the *Passion*: “The whole is a great synthesis of musical elements, from Gregorian chant, through the shaped form of the Baroque *Passion*, to the sound achievements of recent times. [...]. The *Passion* is authentic”². The composition refers to the Good Friday liturgy of the *Passion*, which is the quintessence of the mystery of life and death and the theology of the Cross (*theologia crucis*), which is central to the teachings of the Protestant church. In this context, the last words of the *Passion* – *Deus Veritatis* (True God), presented in a consonant tone of the E major chord, take on special meaning as the highest value for which the Saviour gave His life for humanity.

The composer continued the mystery of the liturgy of Holy Week in the *Lauds* composed in 1970–1971³. Its inspiration came from the Orthodox rites of Holy Saturday and Sunday. The spirituality of the Eastern Church triggered in Penderecki's music an unusually emotional experience of the time of mourning for the dead Christ, laying his body in the tomb, keeping vigil at his side and, finally, the joyful, victorious resurrection. The composer divided *Lauds* into two sections: *Lauds I – Laying in the tomb* (1970) and *Lauds II – Resurrection* (1971). The work is part of the trend of the composer's great oratorio works, both because of the message concluded in it, its size and its extended performance line-up – five soloists (soprano, alto, tenor, bass, profundo bass) a boys' choir (in the *Resurrection* section) two mixed choirs and an extended (especially with percussion instruments) symphony orchestra ensemble. Reaching for inspiration from Eastern Church spirituality was an act of extraordinary courage in the 1970s, given the political

² „*Passio et mors Domini nostri Jesu Christi secundum Lucam*” Krzysztofa Pendereckiego, „Ruch Muzyczny” (1966) nr 10, p. 3–7.

³ The premiere of the first part, *Laying in the Tomb*, took place on April 8, 1970 in Altenberg Cathedral, the part, *Resurrection*, on May 28, 1971 in Münster Cathedral Church.

situation at the time. The creation of the *Passion* and *Lauds* became a kind of opposition manifesto, in which Penderecki expressed his opposition to the existing 'order'. This is how he characterised that time in his statement: "It is hard to believe today, but after all, sacred music [...] was forbidden [...] Religious works written at that time were not allowed to be performed at concerts"⁴. The composer probably owes his interest in Orthodoxy to his father, who, being of Greek Catholic faith, often took his son to the Orthodox church, where he could soak up the prayerful atmosphere of the Passion mystery.

In the service of Holy Saturday Lauds, the Orthodox Church recalls the laying of Jesus' body in the tomb and His descent into hell to declare victory over death there. The praises of Christ's sufferings are sung, the sorrow of the disciples and the horror of all who experience the Lord's death are described. At the same time, many of the hymns of this service announce the glorious Resurrection.

Krzysztof Penderecki's *Lauds* uses fragments of Old Orthodox Slavonic texts taken from the Holy Week rites. It opens with a *troparion* in honour of Joseph of Arimathea – Благообразный Иосиф..., sung during the raising of the holy shroud (Gr. *sinclon*, scs. *plaszczanica*). In Holy Week services, the tropar about Joseph is sung solemnly on the second tone. Its sound introduces the listener to a world of spiritual contemplation filled with emotion during the removal of Christ's tormented body from the cross.

⁴ K. Janowska, P. Mucharski, *Rozmowy na nowy wiek*, vol. 1, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2002, p. 193.

Example 1. Krzysztof Penderecki – *Lauds p. 15* – *troparion* in honour of Joseph (pc. Part I).

The musical material of this excerpt is formed by episodes diverse in expression and sound. The one taking the main textual thought is based on the words Пречистое Тело Твое. This fragment becomes the key thought, entwined with the textual sequence плащаницею чистою обвив. The composer uses various ways of emitting vocal sound: traditional singing, whispering, glissandi, melodeclamation. He begins with cluster-like consonances of male voices of the first and second choirs, superimposing litany-like melodeclamations on them. By multiple divisions in the voices and endowing them with independent sounds, he achieves a remarkable spatiality of sound, creating the acoustic depth of a large orthodox church⁵. The *a cappella* sound refers to the tradition of Orthodox chant, which does not allow the use of instruments during liturgy.

Another sound that contrasts with the contemplative nature of the *Troparion* is Величание – which appears between the verses of the performed psalm. This prayer becomes a ritual praise of Christ's victory over death. In the *Lauds* it is constructed in three narrative phases:

- instrumental, distinguished by brilliant rhythmic, dynamic and textural passages;
- vocal – solo, assuming the character of a dramatic lamentation full of pain, grief, but also deep faith in immortality;

⁵ See first bars of the example no. 1.

– vocal – choral, based on the actual text of the liturgical Величания – Величаем Тя, Иисусе Царю, и чтем погребение и страдания Твоя, имиже спасл еси нас от исления. The whole ends with the doxology with the announcement of the resurrection – Аллилуйя, floating in the delicate sound of *piano pianissimo* dynamics.

In this part, the composer uses selected verses of psalms 118 (119) and 50 (51), interspersing them, pursuant to the liturgical rhythm, with choral invective and deeply emotional character – e.g.: vowels with indefinite pitch, *glissando*, whisper, the lowest and highest sound possible for the human voice or half-voice (*mezza voce*).

Example 2. Krzysztof Penderecki – *Lauds I* p. 50 – Величание (pc. Part II).

The third part of *Lauds I* is *Irmos*, a strophe-based ode based on a unified melodic course in the liturgy. The text used is *Irmos* of song 5. In this part, the composer again refers to the tradition of liturgical *a cappella* singing. He uses variable textures: from antiphonal melodeclamations creating homophonic, sometimes polychorally dialogued constructions, through aleatoric runs overlaying mutually independent melodic lines, and finally chorale-sounding structures based on long rhythmic values, contrasting in character with the other musical layers. In this part, the composer extends the ways in which sound is emitted to include, for example, whistles, *parlando* and percussion effects.

The image shows a page of a musical score for Krzysztof Penderecki's 'Lauds I', page 82, specifically the 'Irmos' section. The score is written for multiple voices and instruments. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics in Latin: 'siga - va Ho - bla - go - sfo - vi - tye' and 'spo - di - sla - va Ho - spo - di - sla - va'. Below this is another vocal line with lyrics in Russian: 'жегозхе отрози благословитые свяшчехемилси воспойте, лудије превозноситје во vsya vyecl'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'ff'. There are also performance instructions like 'fischio' and 'stacc. quasi pizz.'. The score is arranged in a multi-staff format, typical of a choral or orchestral score.

Example 3. Krzysztof Penderecki – *Lauds I* p. 82 – *Irmos* (pc. Part III).

Krzysztof Penderecki's *Lauds*, being an artistic – not liturgical – work, subordinates the text of the service to musical needs, using it as an inspiration for the spiritual values concluded in the music. It is difficult, therefore, to find in it the preservation of the liturgical canon. Rather, one should look for the values it contains in its prayerful layer.

The next part of *Lauds I* is *Irmos* from song 9: Не рыдай мене мати. In the musical structure of this part, two dialogical solo bass voices (*basso* and *basso profondo*) meet. The colour of the beginning is shaped by two contrasting sound structures created by brass instruments (6 French horns, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones and 2 tubas) supported by a single blow of the baton on the lowest piano string, and a contrasting sounding group of 8 double basses *divisi*. Against the background of their sound, the composer exposes the text of the lesser doxology (Слава Отцу и Сыну и Святому Духу), into which he weaves the lyrical melody of *Irmos* from song 9. The whole concludes with the choral, dynamically rocking Величание of the Passion of Christ, expressing the close link between the Mariological and Christological ideas.

The final part of *Lauds I* is the *Stichira*, which takes the form of a liturgical hymn. With its moodiness (cluster consonances in low registers), it builds up the mood of being laid in the tomb. The lamentation of the *a cappella* choir emerging from these notes leads to the highest climax in the entire work, which, extinguished in a litany-like melodeclamation, calms the emotions. The final Величание, extending the rhythmic values, calms the emotions, leaving us in a unifying 'd' sound with the Sacred Body deposited on the altar of repose.

CORO

II

Vye - li - cha - yu stras - ti Tvo - ya pyes - no - slo - vlyu i po - gre - be - ni - ye Tvo - ye so vos - kre - sye - ni - yem

T

Vye - li - cha - yu stras - ti Tvo - ya pyes - no - slo - vlyu i po - gre - be - ni - ye Tvo - ye so vos - kre - sye - ni - yem

B

Vye - li - cha - yu stras - ti Tvo - ya pyes - no - slo - vlyu i po - gre - be - ni - ye Tvo - ye so vos - kre - sye - ni - yem

pp *ff*

Armeda - ti Panie

Ho - spo - di, sla - va Tye - bye

T

Ho - spo - di, sla - va Tye - bye

B

Ho - spo - di, sla - va Tye - bye

mf *p*

Example 4. Krzysztof Penderecki – *Lauds I*, p. 90 – *Величание* (pc. Part IV).

CORO

Meno mosso

p

I B

II B

vb 1-8

timp

Meno mosso

18

CORO

morendo e rall.

I B

II B

timp

vb 1-8

Example 5. Krzysztof Penderecki – *Lauds I*, p. 108 – *Величание* (pc. Part V).

After the performance of the first part of the work (*Lauds I – Entombment*), the management of the radio station WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk) commissioned the composer to write the second part of the composition, which was performed on May 28, 1971 in the Gothic Cathedral of Münster, the same place where the premiere of the St Luke *Passion* had taken place five years earlier⁶. *Lauds II – Resurrection* is therefore a continuation of the first part of the work using, almost entirely, the text contained in the liturgy of the Paschal Lauds, beginning at midnight of Saturday to Sunday of Holy Week. During the service, to the sound of bells, chimes, knockers and prayerful chants, a procession takes place around the church. This is the image of the Resurrection we find in Krzysztof Penderecki's work. The jangling bells, clattering knockers, shouts of the faithful, and the singing of choirs create a joyful atmosphere of the Resurrection feast. As the guiding idea of the musical narrative, the composer repeatedly introduces a motif recurring in the work with the text of the Easter Tropar (Христос воскрес из мёртвых, смёртию смерть поправ, и сущим во гробех Живо́т даровав).

Example 6. Krzysztof Penderecki – *Lauds II*, p. 24 – Tropar – Христос воскрес.

Maintained in a consonant tone, this theme becomes the main axis of the entire work. By giving it a chorale-like character, the composer emphasises the importance of the fact of the resurrection as an act that defeats death and thus all the evils facing humanity. The second part of the *Lauds* is thus an apotheosis of the victory of life over death.

⁶ The Polish premiere took place in Kraków on 16 September 1971, with the soloists and ensembles of the Kraków Philharmonic conducted by Jerzy Katlewicz.

In the Orthodox Church's Paschal ritual, we find numerous elements of the old Christian passion mystery, which creates Easter as the *Feast above feasts*⁷ – the *Mysterium Christi*, as Odo Casel⁸ calls it⁹, is played out in the music of *Lauds II* from the very beginning of the work. The first notes of the Gospel section find us in a processional march around the church. Rhythmic values in the orchestra mark every step of this walk. The sound of knockers, rattles and the uncoordinated prayer of the faithful create a sound picture of the moving crowd. When everything finally quiets down, the theologically most important moment arrives – the cry of the male voices announcing to the whole world: Христос воскресе and the response of the gathered people: Воистину воскресе resounds above everyone. The bells begin to toll, there is an outburst of great joy – He is Risen!

The next part of the *Stichira* begins, with the text: Воскресение Твое, Христе Спасе, Ангелы поют на небесех. Its prototype is the original *Stichira* of the Easter holiday, sung on the 6th tone. Again there are shouts of Resurrection, again the mood of joyful euphoria embraces everyone. The cluster sounds of choir and orchestra superimposed on the rhythmic ringing of bells releases an extraordinary emotion – let us rejoice, He is risen. The *Tropar* – Христос воскресе – makes its first appearance in this part, initially in a duet of the rising melody of the two basses solo, then in the choral refrain.

The next part – a Psalm with a Paschal Tropar – opens with a lyrical chant by tenor and solo basses, using the text of Psalm 117 (118) verse 24: Сей день, егоже сотвори Господь, возрадуемся и возвеселимся в онь¹⁰.

⁷ A quotation from the hymn of the paschal canon by the Doctor of the Church, one of its most eminent theologians, St John Damascene.

⁸ Dom Odo Casel – Benedictine monk, liturgist. Owing to his efforts, the concept of mystic-mystery in the context of the Paschal Mystery of the Saviour's death and resurrection was restored to the theology of the liturgy and sacraments.

⁹ O. Casel, *La Fête de Pâques dans l'Église des Pères*, Paris 1963, p. 93–94.

¹⁰ „Oto dzień, który Pan uczynił: radujmy się zeń i weselmy!”, tłum. według Biblii Tysiąclecia, Poznań 2021.

Example 7. Krzysztof Penderecki – *Lauds II*, p. 22 – *Psalms* (pc).

The choral form of the *Troparion* – Христос воскресе (the *Troparion* text was also used by the composer in Latin and Greek) appears repeatedly in the part, against a background of dialogic phrases shifted tonally. The composer assigns an important task to the boys' choir, which, creating a separate timbral world, exposes the *Troparion* with the Latin text. The work's linguistic multiplicity is explained by Teresa Malecka – an eminent expert in K. Penderecki's oeuvre: [...the composer...] introduces Greek and Latin as symbols of European culture in its eastern and western varieties¹¹. The Psalm with *Paschal Tropar* is the most elaborate and varied part of the entire composition.

The musical mystery of *Lauds II* continues in its next two parts, the *Songs of the Paschal Canon*. The music begins with the *Paschal Zadostojnik* (Задостойник Пасхи)¹² performed by the soloists. In this lyrical excerpt, the composer highlighted the word: Богородице, with coloratura runs giving it the meaning of 'key', representing the most important phrase in the prayer. The exposed sounds of brass instruments emphasise the close union of the person of the divine Mother with the glorious and saving act of her Son. Between the texturally, structurally and timbrally diverse sections, the *Troparion* motif – Христос воскресе – recurs repeatedly.

The next part, *Kontakion*¹³, contains a moving and emotionally charged lament performed by a quintet of soloists (Еже прежде солнца, Солнце зашедшее иногда во гроб...) dialoguing with the choral ensembles against a background

¹¹ T. Malecka, *Krzysztof Penderecki a kultura prawosławia w perspektywie intertekstualnej*, in: *Krzysztof Penderecki – muzyka ery intertekstualnej. Studia i interpretacje*, red. E. Siemadaj, M. Tomaszewski, Kraków 2005, p. 84.

¹² *Zadostojnik* is a liturgical hymn sung as part of the Eucharistic canon instead of the song *Достойно есть*. Thus it received its name. It glorifies the figure of the Divine Mother in the context of a particular feast.

¹³ *Kontakion*, a liturgical hymn, appeared as a prayer as early as the first centuries of Christianity.

of low-register double bass sounds. The whole creates an unusual colour plane passing into the colour of the sublime sound of percussion instruments, with which in our imagination we participate in the anointing with the fragrances of the Holy Body.

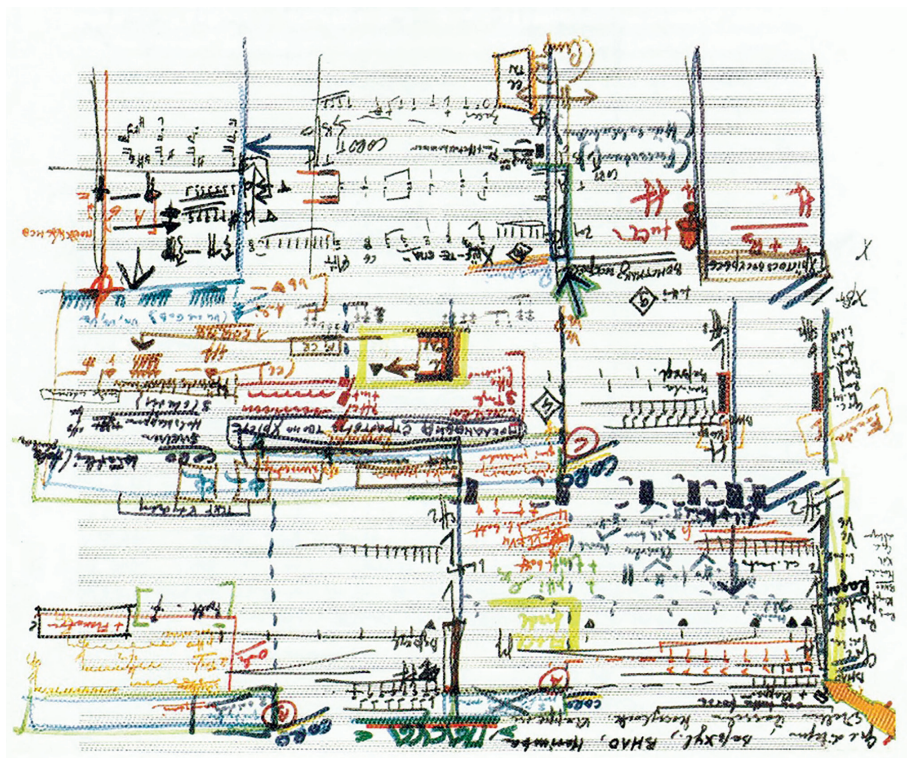
The part following the *Kontakion* is the *Oikos*¹⁴ – held in a dark colour scheme, which is formed by an ensemble of male voices and a soloist, a *basso profundo*.

Example 8. Krzysztof Penderecki – *Lauds II* p. 28 – *Oikos* (pc).

Like the *Kontakion* that precedes it, it evokes the image of the washing and anointing of Jesus' body. The music expresses great pain and grief – the lamentation combined with the hymn-like *Oikos* allows the listener to focus on experiencing the sorrow of Death and then the joy of the Resurrection.

¹⁴ *Oikos* (Gr. *Ikos*) – a specially constructed strophe in honour of a particular festival, sung together with the *kontakion*. *Oikos* develops the ideas expressed in the *kontakion* and usually ends with the same words as the *kontakion*.

The final part of *Lauds II* becomes a return to the joyful experience of the Resurrection. It is full of uncoordinated prayer threads, arranged in sound structures that work extremely suggestively on our imagination. It sets us in the theological dimension of the feast of Pascha, and gives us an ascent to live in faith this great Paschal Mystery of Orthodoxy.



Example 9. Krzysztof Penderecki – *Lauds II* – extract from the manuscript.

Abstract

Lauds by Krzysztof Penderecki – a musical transmission of a spiritual message: *Поem Твою, Христе, спасительную Страсть, и славим Твое воскресение!*

The centre of research interest described in the article is the analysis of the relationship of the work of the eminent Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki, *LAUDS I – Złożenie do grobu (Laying in the Tomb)* and *LAUDS II – Zmartwychwstanie (Resurrection)*, with the texts of the Orthodox rite of Good Friday and Holy Week Saturday. The first part of the article presents the political and historical context of the work, its influence on the choice of content and form of composition. The liturgical coherence of Penderecki's three works is presented: *St Luke's Passion* and both *Lauds*, as a unity combining the cohesiveness of the Paschal themes. The construction of the work itself according to the division into individual parts is discussed. Each is placed within the liturgical, timbral and semantic layers of the Holy Week liturgy and discussed in terms of its musical construction, which makes use of extremely varied and often unconventional means of artistic expression. The article concludes that Krzysztof Penderecki's *Lauds*, being an artistic – not liturgical – work, subordinates the text of the service to musical needs, using it as an inspiration for the spiritual values subsequently contained in the music. It is difficult, therefore, to find in it the preservation of the liturgical canon, or its setting in the direct course of an Orthodox Paschal service. Rather, one should seek, translated into musical language, the values contained in the prayer layer of the Good Friday and Saturday rites. Crucial for all the considerations carried out in the article are the relations between the verbal layer of the service and the form and musical layer of the work, which is an unprecedented, until then, artistic approach to the Easter rite. The whole is illustrated with examples taken from the scores of the work, referring to the descriptions presented in the article.

Keywords: Penderecki, Lauds, Orthodox church music

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Stanisław Krawczyński – He was successively the manager of the Polish Radio and Television Choir in Krakow and then of the Krakow Philharmonic Choir. Under his direction, these ensembles performed at, among other venues, the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Basilica di San Marco in Venice, Teatro Regio in Turin, Academia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Leipzig's Gewandhaus, Beethovensaal in Stuttgart and Brucknerhaus in Linz. From 1986 to 2008 he was associated, as a conductor, with the ensemble "Capellae Cracoviensis", presenting to the Krakow public the first Polish performances of compositions by, among others, F. Martin, P. Vasks, K. Nystedt. Owing to these activities, he became one of the key figures in the Krakow musical environment, creating its shape and image. In 1992 he took over the direction of the Tarnów Chamber Orchestra, giving concerts with this ensemble in the country and abroad (Spain, France, Switzerland). He has performed at important venues for European art and culture, including the Thomas-Kirche in Leipzig, the Wigmore Hall in London, the UNESCO Concert Hall in Paris, the Conservatory in Kiev and at music festivals in many countries around the world. In 1990, he initiated the formation of the Krakow Chamber Choir – considered by critics to be one of the best Polish choral ensembles. As a choir-master he cooperated with famous conductors such as Y. Aronovitch, Z. Mehta, K. Penderecki, H. Rilling, W. Rowicki, S. Wisłocki. He premiered newly discovered works by A. Bruckner and many works by Polish composers such as: Z. Bargański, Z. Bujarski, H. M. Górecki, R. Maciejewski, R. Palester, M. Stachowski. In 2000, he conducted an international ensemble presenting, during a tour across Europe, works of nine cities holding the status of European Capital of Culture. In 2001, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Internet, he conducted, as part of an electronic experiment, a concert – conducting from Krakow – singers singing in Warsaw: the ensemble "Vocal Consort" and in Gdansk: the choir "Schola Cantorum Gedanensis". Between 2012 and 2016, acting for the milieu of Polish art academies, he served as Chairman of the Art Section of the Central Commission for Degrees and Titles. Parallel to his artistic activity, he remains a teacher at the Academy of Music in Krakow. At this academy he was appointed (1995) to the position of Head of the Department and then the Chair of Choral Music. In 1999 he became dean of the Department of Music Education. He served as rector from 2004 to 2012, 2016 to 2020. He has participated as a juror in international and national choral and conducting competitions. His area of academic inquiry is the manifestation of choral music in all aspects and dimensions. He has published numerous articles on this subject.