

GEOMETRIC MUSIC OF HENRYK MIKOLAJ GO. RECKI

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Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki (b. 1933) is commonly acknowledged as one of three leading Polish composers of the past decades, along with Witold Lutoslawski and Krzysztof Penderecki. In his music of 1960s, Gorecki gave evidence of a deep interest in geometry, and particularly of his inclination towards symmetry.

Symmetrical order appears at first in the space of performance, which is **organized** by way of a peculiar, non-traditional location of the performers and instruments on the stage. Their relations, visualized by the composer in special diagrams, form figures of high-degree internal symmetry, being at the same time symmetrically located on the opposite sides of the central axis that divides the stage into two halves.

Soon, beginning from *Genesis* (1962-63), symmetry appears in the graphical space of Gorecki's scores and, finally, in the musical space of his pieces. Interestingly, symmetry of notation (score) does not necessarily condition symmetrical organization of music. In Gorecki's earlier pieces, e.g. in *Canti strumentali* (1962), symmetrical organization of the score has no effect upon music itself but, instead, upon the visual aspect of the performance. Yet, in many Gorecki's pieces, symmetrical organization of the score is an equivalent of a musical symmetry arising in the space fixed by the dimensions of time and pitch. In such cases both graphical and musical figures are developed into broad symmetrical patterns not only by means of reflection, but also translation. The most sophisticated symmetrical operation used in Gorecki's pieces is the dilatation that occurs in *Muzyczka II* (1967). In that piece, as well as in his earlier *Choros I* for string orchestra (1964), the three synunetrically organized spaces—those of performance, score and music—cooperate and reinforce each other.