

Much as composers had previously created new melodies or harmonies, now they were looking for new sounds. In Poland, music associated with the “Polish School” was usually called Sonorism, from the Latin word *sonus* meaning “sound”. The originator of this term was the musicologist Józef M. Chomiński, who, in studying the evolution of music, noticed a growth in the meaning of colour after periods in which melody, rhythm and harmony had dominated. The expanding orchestra, to which new instruments were introduced, allowed for a continual broadening of the sound colour palette. In the mid-20th century, a multitude of new colouristic effects emerged from unusual ways of producing sounds from instruments.

In his works, Krzysztof Penderecki – who had taken violin lessons in his youth – required violinists, violists, cellists and double bassists to tap the bodies of their instruments or rub their top plate with the bow, to play between the bridge and the tailpiece or on the tailpiece. If the audience was prompted with a suggestive programme, then they approved of such unconventional sounds. In this way, Penderecki beat a path to the concert hall for his *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*. This music dedicated to the victims of the first atomic bomb was heard by the audience as a poignant illustrative and programmatic piece; they did not expect nice sounds or a predictable musical process.

Listeners reacted differently to music in which what underwent transformation was the colours, density of sound, volume and mobility of individual sounds or motifs than they did to works in which melody and harmony were the most important thing. Such music evoked feelings of awe, amazement, and even terror. This was quickly discovered by horror film directors. In 1973, William Friedkin used Penderecki’s music in *The Exorcist*, and soon after that, Stanley Kubrick used it in *The Shining*, where he had a “sound salad” comprised of four tracks (*De natura sonoris II*, *Canon*, *Polymorphia* and *Utrenja_II*) montaged for the film’s finale. The unusual sounds produced from acoustic instruments, as well as the whispers and screams of the choir, were exceptionally effective in intensifying the horror of the world in which the ghosts inhabiting the Overlook Hotel lived, and in reinforcing the atmosphere of madness engulfing the main character. These examples proved contagious, with Martin Scorsese making use of Penderecki’s music for the horror scenes in *Shutter Island*, and David Lynch making use of it several times as well. In his homeland, the composer is considered the personification of patriotic-religious and spiritual music; abroad, he is associated with horror films and ghosts.

Kazimierz Serocki created a different sonic landscape in his works. He had a predilection for using delicate, diverse, often vibrating sounds. From segments of contrasting instrumentation, full of unconventional sounds, he created pieces of diverse

dramaturgy, sometimes based on classic models. In 1965-66, he composed the first important piece in Polish music for percussion alone: *Continuum*. Six musicians positioned around the audience produced subtle sounds from 123 instruments in a quiet dynamic. Serocki was a pianist, so he displayed an inclination toward finding new ways to play the piano. He prepared the instrument, required the performer to pluck or strike the strings, or tap on the instrument’s wooden parts as if playing the drums. *Phantasmagoria* was scored for his favourite instruments, i.e. percussion and piano. The pianist plays on the keys and the strings with hands and sticks.

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Gwizdalanka is the author of almost 20 books on music, including textbooks, biographies and a glossary of musical terms.