

## IN SEARCH OF HARMONY: THE WORKS BY ANDRZEJ PANUFNIK

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**Annotation.** *Andrzej Panufnik belongs to those composers, who were able to create their own musical language and technique of composing. The life way of prominent composer in postwar Poland and well-known conductor in Europe was dramatic: then he emigrated in England in 1954, his music turned out to be performed in the countries of the Eastern Europe. That's why in Russia during decennials till now he didn't share the fame, which the other Polish composers received. After some break in composing he realized in his works ideas, which were the most exiting for him and revealing the interaction between musical mentality, geometric schemes and nature's phenomena. The features of Panufnik's works consist in consequent development of traditions of the European music; using such traditional genres as symphony, concerto, overture, he interpreted them anew and created the new forms of musical structures. Differing in their individual construction of the forms, Panufnik's symphonies are penetrated through really symphonic dramaturgy that emphasizes their attribution to classical symphonic traditions. In spite of pure originality and boldness of experiments, the works by Panufnik never lose the relationship with the Polish traditions and culture, which are revealed in the subjects of his music and also in the accordance of abstract perfection with the richness of emotional content. All this give us evidences of rare composer» creative talent and explains the incontestable interest to his music. In the Russian musicology the works by Panufnik had no analyzed with the exception of some articles of the author.*

**Keywords:** *the Warsaw Autumn Festival, the Union of Polish Composers, the Warsaw conservatoire, Leopold Stokowski, the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Polish music, symphony works, Andrzej Panufnik, composer's mentality, techniques of composing.*

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Polish music have achieved notable artistic importance and presents the enormous interest for musicians not only, but also for all amateurs of music. Passed 2013 has become particularly rich by music events in Poland — aside from this year itself was declared the Year of Witold Lutosławski in connection with his Centenary, great celebrations of eight-decennial anniversaries passed in honor of Krzysztof Penderecki and Henryk Mikołaj Górecki. Present 2014 is standing out many actions in relationship with Centenary of the other Polish composer — Andrzej Panufnik. Many concert events were dedicated his works in London, Warsaw, Krakow and also many other cities and countries. Andrzej Panufnik belongs to that Polish composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who, being «stars of the first value», were not the well-known composer not only for Russian music lovers. Being person of the same age and close to Witold Lutosławski since their conservatoire's studies, Panufnik became one of that a few composers, who were able to create his own music lexis and system of composing, noted of bright individuality. However, then he emigrated to England in 1954, composer had to renew its quarry «with a clean sheet», forfeited many privileges, which he received as official «composer No. One» in postwar Poland. His music turned out to be performed in the countries of the Eastern Europe. That's why during decennials till now he didn't share the fame, which the other Polish composers received not only in Poland, but also in Russia. Being claimed in many countries,

his music returned to its native land only at the end of Panufnik's life.

Andrzej Panufnik was born on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1914 in Warsaw. His father, Tomasz Panufnik, was not only the well-educated engineer, but also talented constructor of string instruments, many famous performers (including David Oistrakh) played on his violins. It is possible to say that his parents were introduced thanks to the violin — mother, Matilda Thonnes (in nature Englishwoman), being talented up-and-coming violinist, searched for the new instrument... Englishwomen were fated to render the special influence upon composer's life way. In 1925–1926 Andrzej



FOTO 1. Andrzej Panufnik in London, '50s.



FOTO 2. Andrzej Panufnik (on the left), Witold Lutosławski, violinist Eugenia Umińska in Stawisko, 1942.

began to study playing the piano, but had to finish «for absence of musical talent» (but practically — for absence of experienced teacher) that did not disturb him soon to compose many songs, which became popular in Warsaw. In 1932, when his parents had understood, that music is the main interest in Andrzej's life, father allowed him to continue the music career and enter the class of percussion instruments in the Warsaw conservatoire. Quickly turned on the missed time due to lessons with Jerzy Lefeld, he re-entered the department of music theory leading the famous Polish musicologist Kazimierz Sikorski. Simultaneously he studied composition under the direction of Witold Maliszewski and both conducting with outstanding master Walerian Bierdiajew. *Piano trio* (1934) became the first «recognized» composition by Panufnik.

After brilliant graduation from the Warsaw conservatoire in 1936 Panufnik received the scholarship of the National Culture Fund and also a fee for musical arrangement to short-film «Three Etudes by Chopin» by Eugeniusz Cękański (1937), which won the First Prize at the «Venice Biennial». That fee allowed him to continue his education, but unlike many other young colleagues, he decided to last his training not in Paris, but in Vienna, where in 1937–1938 studied conducting under the direction of Felix Weingartner. Here he acquainted with the absolutely new for Polish composer works by Schönberg, Webern and Berg. The Anschluss Österreichs events made him to return to Poland. Nevertheless after receiving of payment for his original music to the following film by Eugeniusz Cękański «Dreads», in October 1938 Panufnik has newly left Poland — now he has interested in French

contemporary music, as well as some possibility an acquaintance with the absolutely other conductor school. In Paris it took the lessons of conducting with Philipp Gaubert, famous performer of compositions by Debussy and Ravel. Spring and summer 1939 he spent in London with relatives, and returned in Warsaw just before the outbreak of World War II.

In the years of the II World war Panufnik had to stay in Warsaw, participating in hard regulated by the Nazi cultural life. In time of occupations Panufnik and Lutosławski, as well as many musicians, earned his living by playing the piano at different cafes (during four war's years they played above 1300 concerts!). Their repertoire included many transcriptions of popular compositions and jazz improvisations (apropos, in spite of risk — some fragments from music by Szymanowski and Gershwin). As Panufnik mentioned, «before to start the playing we drew the diagram, outlining the tempo and harmonic development in some determined amount of bars. Using such drawing, imaged the tune, counterpoints and rhythmic formulas, risking that someone from us «carries» our irrepressible fantasy, however we never showed before public of our secret,— that perform studiously prepared composition, rather than improvise»<sup>1</sup>. At the concerts the only one circle of listeners was presented, so the musicians had move on mastering of enormous repertoire — for these years they had to prepare around two hundred compositions. All of these manuscripts perished in time of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising with the exclusion of *Variations on the Theme by Paganini*, — Lutosławski took this manuscript with his scanty baggage, abandoning Warsaw three days before the Uprising.

During the years of occupation Panufnik composed a little, apropos, continuing ingenious juvenile experiences, he had become the famous author of many underground patriotic songs. However at the end of the war the neighbors threw out the all of Panufnik's manuscripts at the apartments, where he stayed with Stanisława Litewska. At the days of the Warsaw Uprising Andrzej lost his senior brother Mirosław, a radio operator in the Polish Underground: he perished at the threshold of their native house. The last months of the war Andrzej with parents spent in the mountains of the Southern Poland — in Zakopane, trying to take a refuge from war's ruins and hunger. After the Soviet Army had appeared in spring 1945 Panufnik with parents moved in Krakow, that was connected with his professional activity: two seasons from 1945 till 1947 Panufnik led the Krakow Philharmonic Orchestra (from 1946 simultaneously had to restore the orchestra of the Warsaw Philharmonic), in 1945 together with Tadeusz Ochlewski he organized the

<sup>1</sup> Andrzej Panufnik o sobie / autoryzowany przekład z angielskiego M. Glińskiej.— Warszawa: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1990. S. 121.

Polish Music Publishers (PWM) and collaborated with the Polish Film Studio in Łódź. In this time Panufnik had no any possibilities for composing and that compositions, which were considered as the best (*Piano trio, First Symphony, Tragic Overture* and *Five Polish Peasant Songs*), Panufnik reconstructed thanks to his perfect memory and offered for publishing to the PWM<sup>1</sup>. Many features of Panufnik's style — expression of lyricism, conscious aspiration to strict organization of motives, dynamics and texture,— were appeared in compositions, which were reconstructed in 1945.

As from 1946 composer took part in many great events with the leading orchestras in Berlin, London, Paris, Zurich, Geneva, Amsterdam, these programs under his conducting made him the most prominent Polish conductor in Europe. Soon he was recognized as avant-guard composer due to compositions *Circle of Fifths* (for piano) and *Lullaby* (for 29 strings and two harps, both 1947), which were mentioned as the beginning of the Polish music avant-guard. Thanks to the following compositions Panufnik took the reputation as «the star of first value» in Poland: his symphonic *Nocturne* (1947) won the First Prize at the Szymanowski contest (1948), and *Sinfonia rustica* — the First Prize at the Chopin contest (1949). In Panufnik's biography 1949 is one of the most eventful: his *Tragic Overture* was performed at the Carnegie Hall by Leopold Stokowski, *Polish Suite (Hommage á Chopin)* for soprano and piano was made to order to the Centenary of Chopin's death for the UNESCO's festival. In spite of his refusal of entering to the Party and of blame his creative activity at notorious All-Polish convention of composers in Łagów «for formalism and cosmopolitanism in music» (the list of «formalists» also included such famous composers as Witold Lutosławski, Tadeusz Baird, Józef Turcki), Panufnik's compositions won many Polish Awards, but composer himself — the high State Award — «Order Sztandaru Pracy I Klasy» (the Banner of Labour, the First degree) and the all-world reputation. In 1950 he had already come in for lodgment in Warsaw.

In '40s. many innovations in Polish music were introduced exactly by Panufnik — moreover he founded new techniques decennial earlier than the other Polish composers (mention the sonoristic and aleatoric methods, combining of serial techniques with folk music material). In 50s Panufnik composed the pieces of various stylistics (*Old Polish Suite* (1950), *Gothic concerto (Concerto in modo antico)*, 1951), *Heroic Overture* (1952)), had received the State Prizes of the PRP. In 1949 he was also elected Vice-President of the Music Council of UNESCO in Paris (however the Polish authorities did not allow him to attend any ceremonies or concerts). It is interesting to mention that in 1950

Panufnik as member of Polish delegation get acquainted with the education process at the conservatoires in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, met with Schostakovich and Khachaturian. As composer and conductor «No. 1», greatly respected throughout Europe, he participated in many official cultural actions and international delegations. In spite of the fact that during several postwar years he occupied many responsible appointments as conductor and composer, he was not a member of the Communist Party and reserved for himself a choice of his own creative position. All this allowed him to leave for border, and in time of one of such trips at July 1954 in Zurich he took unexpected for all of his friends decision to remain in the West: «I had leapt from my Polish position of No. One to No One in England». At the press-conferences in London he has explained its action as «protest against political pressure on artistic creative activity». Panufnik's music was immediately forbidden in Poland, and during 23 years his name was forgotten<sup>2</sup>.

There are the miscellaneous versions of such unexpected turnout of leading Polish composer's fate. The Polish authors preferring to interpret this story in politics' way prefer the version of composer's protest against the dictates of the authorities' restrictions and intolerable political pressures on his creative activity. However the real events and reasons are remained in a shade — but composer himself gave the explanation of his choice in published autobiography, the Polish Panufnik's biographer — Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska also follows them (monograph, 2001). In 1950 Panufnik fell in love with the Irish-born Marie Elizabeth O'Mahoney, all named her Skarlett according with her similarity with the main hero of Margaret Mitchell's novel. In spite of the fact that Marie has arrived to spend the honeymoon with her third husband-Polish, between her and Andrzej has flashed up the tempestuous novel and in 1951 they married. Meantime, this marriage changed composer's household life into sequence of tempestuous scandals — being «star» of all banquets and evening parties in Warsaw, his wife made all to tear the husband away from calm creative atmosphere, which he needed. Were are exist the versions and evidences (in this case from Lutosławski's family to Irina Nikolska), on which exactly she in blast of fury drowned their recently born daughter during bathing — about this tragedy Panufnik has heard during his trip with delegation to China in April 1953. Official version stated that the reason of accident became the epileptic fit with Skarlett...

Dead of child became enormous tragedy for composer. Skarlett, using husband's despair and weariness from official and occasionally «unattractive»

<sup>1</sup> His *First Symphony* was recomposed and published later as *Sinfonia rustica* (1948).

<sup>2</sup> Panufnik took British nationality in 1961.

commissions, beforehand having come to London, has organized their escape to England: using their connections she has got an invitation for husband for recording of his compositions in Zurich. Rash «operation» on escaping to London was organized perfectly. However in England as before his household life remained unbearable, and Panufnik divorced with enormous efforts, promising himself to get married never more. Only his young secretary Camilla Jessel was able to touch his heart by fondness and sincerity, she did not think her life without object of her dreams. Since 1959, being the author and photographer, she directed the all correspondence, for Panufnik English did not become native till the end of his life. She took care, having adjusted regulated his professional contacts and after the wedding, in 1963, then they settled in her grandmother's old house by the Thames in Twickenham (Richmond), created an atmosphere of «Polish» garden where he could compose uninterrupted. Composer with veneration pertained to trees and at the end of park had «laboratory» (former a stable), reconstructed and specially being provided with many instruments. How recalled Lady Camilla (at the meeting with author of this publications in Warsaw, in February 2014), in Panufnik's life the music was the only religion. On the whole the order of his day was devoted to composer's work; he continuously and for a long time searched for the forms of expression of his ideas and music thoughts and rejoiced as a child finding ways to realize them. Happy life with Camilla and two children (Roxanna now is known as successful classical composer and Jeremy, graphic artist and composer of electronic music) made obliterated from press some evidences about mentioned family's tragedy. However it has leaved some trace, and it was possible to expect that Panufnik's professional career could develop much more successful on native land, where in that years the unprecedented development of music creative activity had began. In England, there in '50s-'60s the situation was not so rich in respect of music events; he turned out to be in isolation, deprived of many perspective lines of development of his own composer activity and forced to search for the new facilities to express his ideas.

After sensation, connected with his escape to the West, Panufnik entered the difficult way of international confession» receiving, he was necessary to create anew the name of a composer. For this he again returned to conductor's quarry, had performed with the BBC orchestra. The English friends assisted his appearances in Birmingham, then, in 1957, he was invited as a Chief Conductor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO). 1957 become the important point in the life way of Panufnik: his compositions has performed by Leopold Stokowski in Huston and London, but the main — he has signed the agreement with the most



FOTO 3. Panufnik's family at the rehearsal, the beginning of '70s.

largest publishers in London «Boosey & Hawkes» and began to prepare to republication his earlier written compositions (some — in new reductions). Personal acquaintance with Stokowski, which has turned into close cooperation between composer and conductor, took place as far back as 1955, when Panufnik was present at the concert in Detroit there *Symphony of Peace* has performed. On music material from this symphony, excluded by composer from his list of compositions, in 1957 was composed *Sinfonia elegiaca*, this work later received its US première conducted by Stokowski (also in Huston). Leopold Stokowski become the first performer (but sometimes and the commissioner) of many compositions by Panufnik, that certainly assisted the international confession of composer's works. In 1970 Stokowski has recorded some compositions by Panufnik, such famous conductors as Sir Georg Solti, Seiji Ozawa, Jascha Horenstein and André Previn also performed them.

Since 1959 Panufnik concentrate on composing and performed as conductor only with the most world-known orchestras. In 1956, then the BBC commissioned *Rhapsody* for orchestra, practically the all large compositions were commissioned for the most known orchestras, organizations and performers. Years 1954–1967 become the main period in Panufnik's Works. Composer with enthusiasm studied treatises on mathematics and geometry, finding interaction between the music art and the science. Understanding of music as an art and simultaneously as a science becomes the reason of delimitation of composing process to the spheres of spiritual-voluptuous and of intellectual in Panufnik's aesthetic position. It is necessary to say that his artistic position had its pre-history. In 1930 composer's father has wrote the treatise «The Music and the Law of Harmony in the Universal», in which we may find the prototype of his son's ideas. It is possible to acknowledge that both concepts carry



FOTO 4. Andrzej Panufnik with Leopold Stokowski at the rehearsal, New York, 1970.



FOTO 5. Andrzej Panufnik with Sir Georg Solti in Chicago, 1982.

on themselves the stamps of Pythagorean ideas: the numeric symbolism, symmetry and geometric proportions are also bound up with Panufnik's inherent thinking. Each composition consequently develops certain artistic idea and is noted by individual interpretation of the form. Compositions of 1962 — *Landscape* and *Autumn music* — combine the former principles of a structure's symmetry and bright sound effects with composer's original method of the motives development, this syntheses is else more obvious in *Sinfonia sacra* (1963), which along with *Jagellonian Triptych* was for the first time performed at the concerts in London and New York to the Millenium of Christianity and Statehood in Poland. In the same 1963 Panufnik won the coveted Monaco composition prize for his *Sinfonia Sacra*, this Prize became the climax point in foreign quarry for Panufnik. Such Prize, but already for all his works Panufnik received in 1983.

1968 has marked the fracture in composer's thinking and aesthetic. After long-lasting search in *Reflections* for pianoforte he has demonstrated formed by him a new technology of composition on the base of three-tone «sound cell». This technique has turned Panufnik's stylistics to limited interval context and abstract principle to construct the composition on the base of mathematical calculations (in his system like a palindrome). As a result Panufnik created such system of compositions, in which the all elements of composition become subordinated to strict hierarchy, adjusting process of development of the form. 1970s become for Panufnik the most sufficient period. From 1973 to 1981 he has wrote five symphonies — *IV Sinfonia concertante* (1973, for flute, harp and string orchestra), *V Sinfonia di sfere* (1975), *VI Sinfonia mistica* (1977), *VII Metasinfonia* (1978, for organ, kettledrum and strings), *VIII Sinfonia votive* (1981); chamber and vocal pieces (in that list mean cantatas on the text of his wife), compositions in a concert genres.

Mature works by Panufnik (it is possible to select two stages: 1968–1980 and 1981–1991) is remarkable of constant searching for clear outline logical base of composition, revealing its «up-music» idea. This idea occasionally personified the mystic proportion in the constructions of sound-scale, dynamics, rhythm and texture of composition. It is connected with creative credo by Panufnik, who intened on creation of own composer's world, which is formed up in borders of elected idea due to geometric rationalism and strict control of the form. Composer not accidentally accompanies nearly all his compositions with author's comments, presenting the source of inspiration, symbolism and «design». At the same time the prominent dignities of Panufnik's music are the emotionalism of music utterance, which has filled strict «computable» schemes by authentic life. As far back as 1952 in manuscript «Artistic Credo», dated April 25, he has declared: «Music is an expression of emotions and feeling. My ideal is a piece, in which poetical contents is connected with perfection of music craft. Poetics itself is not a music value of composition in the same way, either as craft itself changes in dead and empty formulas. The authentic beauty is only born in the balance beetwen these two elements»<sup>1</sup>. This credo became the main aesthetic impulse, characterizing composer's personality and leading his creative activity. At the beginning of '80s the compositions by Panufnik find the smaller dependency from «up-music» ideas that in many cases is explained by the intention to create long-lasting compositions. The manifestation of neo-romantic impulses is also become apparent.

In '70s Panufnik's works has received the international confession, to them addressed not only prominent conductors, but also such famous per-

<sup>1</sup> Quot. on: Siemdjaj, E. Andrzej Panufnik. *Twórczość symfoniczna*. — Kraków, Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie, 2003. S. 294–295.



FOTO 6. Andrzej and Camilla in Twickenham, '80s.



FOTO 7. Andrzej Panufnik with Witold Lutosławski, Warsaw, 1990.



FOTO 8. Panufnik's family after receiving a knighthood, London, January 1, 1991\*.

\* Fotos from Panufnik family's archives are published with Lady Camilla Panufnik's personal agreement at the meeting with the author in Warsaw, February, 2014.

formers as John Ogdon, Yehudi Menuhin, Mstislav Rostropovich. The close co-operation with the London Symphony Orchestra began since 1970; known companies «Unicorn-Kanchana» and «Hyperion» started to record the works by Panufnik. Only in 1977 the pieces by Panufnik began to return to Poland, firstly the cantata *Universal Prayer* (1969) was performed in the Warsaw Autumn Festival, for the first time introduced by Stokowski in New York in 1970. In connection with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of «The Collaboration of Young Polish Musicians in Paris» leaders of the Union of Polish Composers — Jan Stęszewski, Witold Lutosławski and Tadeusz Kaczyński, — obtained removing the forbid with names Andrzej Panufnik and Roman Palester. However composer himself was not on the native land during 36 years, in the last years he was afraid to destroy his memories by unacquainted to him reality. Only in 1990 Panufnik accepted the invitation to perform at the Warsaw Autumn Festival, on which eleven his compositions were presented.

Among the events of last decennial Andrzej Panufnik's life mention the composer's recital with the London Symphony Orchestra to his 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, honorary membership in the London Royal Academy of Music; the Royal Philharmonic Society to its 175 anniversary commissioned *Ninth Symphony (Sinfonia della speranza)*, which was premiered by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer in 1987, as well as the *Tenth Symphony*, which was commissioned by Sir Georg Solti for the Centenary of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Panufnik's autobiography, «Composing Myself», was published in 1987 by London publishers «Methuen», and in 1989 the republications of Panufnik's records on CDs has began. Last years Andrzej and Camilla drew the curtain on information about his fatal illness from the whole world and all close to them friends, before the last of days he continued the work: in September 1991 was finished *Cello Concerto*, commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra for Mstislav Rostropovich. Before that in June his last appearance



## Harmony within polyphony

«The Vienna Polyphonic Youth Orchestra» is the first European Youth Orchestra that unites young people with different cultural and social backgrounds throughout playing music on a high level. In society their artistic work contributes to a more positive image of immigrants. Beyond that the young people overcome through their work stereotypes and prejudices, learn to work together and extract advantages from their diversity.

### Art Director: Alexander Znamensky

was born in Moscow, studied violin, later viola at the Central Music School of Moscow. In 1997 he moved to Austria and studied at the Mozarteum Academy of Salzburg in the classes of Prof. Thomas Riebl and Prof. Veronika Hagen, where he finished his M.A. studies with outstanding results.

Following his master classes with Hagen-Quartet and Altenberg-Trio and Borodin-Quartet, Alexander Znamensky initiated together with Matthias Adensamer the foundation of the Viennese Razumovsky Quartet.

Since 2003 Alexander Znamensky lives in Vienna. He is a vice president of the «Razumovsky society for art and culture» and has numerous appearances as soloist and chamber musician in Austria, Germany, England, Russia, Poland, Slovakia, Portugal, Canada and Mozambique. He works regularly with artists such as Elisabeth Leonskaja, Paul Gulda, Anna Kandinsky, Eugene Mursky.

His conducting studies at the Vienna Music University in the class of Prof. Uros Lajovic and Prof. Johannes Wildner inspired him to found the «Vienna Polyphonic Youth Orchestra» in 2012.

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took place: Panufnik had recorded with the LSO *Sinfonia della speranza* and *Piano Concerto*. Composer died on 27<sup>th</sup> October and was buried in Richmond. In January 1991 he received a knighthood for services to British Music.

The most important sense of Panufnik's creative activity is concluded in conservation of traditions of the European music. He applied to many traditional genres and traditional forms, he interpreted them anew thanks to new forms of musical structures. Differing in their individual construction of the forms, the all symphonies by Panufnik are penetrated through really symphonic dramaturgy that emphasizes their attribution to classical symphonic traditions. In spite of pure originality and boldness of composer's experiments, the works by Panufnik never lose the relationship with the Polish traditions and culture, which are revealed in the subjects of his music and also in the accordance of abstract perfection with the richness of emotional contents. The emphases on dramatic-heroic subjects, aspiration to fine lyricism characterize Panufnik as bright national artist. His compositions personify the national mentality on many levels — in choice of mentioned subjects in his music, in emotional formation,

in significance of the national motives, in address to traditions of ancient Polish music. Curiously enough that in the late compositions Panufnik used the allusions own early compositions, penetrated by national themes. The characteristic of composer's mentality were structural and system features, developed during decennials and connected with searching for new methods of structuring of compositions and creation of own ways, adjusting the process of music development. In Panufnik's compositions «radical innovations» combined with refined sound palette, longing to using elected sound-complexes and sound beauty. This «romantic» quality is marked by underlined by «programs» of Panufnik's works, consisted in row elected national ideas (the religion, history, culture, landscape), as well as determined by symbolism of music language, which reveals the geometry of nature phenomena. All this give us evidences of rare creative talent and explains the incontestable interest to his music. In spite of mentions Panufnik's name as an English composer of Polish origin in the press of our time, it is impossible not to acknowledge that Andrzej Panufnik really is one of the most important Polish composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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