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## Tonal Structure in the Mazurkas Op. 50/I of Karol Szymanowski.

Thais Egydia Perkins

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**TONAL STRUCTURE IN THE MAZURKAS OP. 50/I  
OF KAROL SZYMANOWSKI**

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

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This monograph is dedicated to my husband, Will, whose loving and constant support has sustained me throughout my work.

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## ABSTRACT

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) is generally considered to be one of Poland's most significant composers after Frederic Chopin (1810-1849). His work represents a nationalistic link between Chopin and the twentieth-century Polish school, which includes Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994) and Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933).

Szymanowski's twenty *Mazurkas*, Op. 50 (1922-1924), are an important contribution to piano literature because they demonstrate the first true development of the genre after Chopin. Written during Szymanowski's 'Nationalistic' period (1920-1937), the *Mazurkas* reflect the composer's intent to utilize elements of Polish folk music in a twentieth-century musical context, thus contributing to the development of the modern Polish nationalistic school.

This study examines the tonal structure of the first four mazurkas in Op. 50. The format for the analyses includes an identification of the tonic pitch or group of pitches asserted in each piece, a discussion of the form, and an examination of the relationship of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic materials to the tonal center. It is the author's intention to provide the performer with insight into Szymanowski's tonal language, noting specific ways in which the composer defines the tonality of each piece. Interpretive suggestions for performance are included in the text.

Two techniques found to be pervasive are Szymanowski's use of articulation to note important tonal events and the tendency to withhold immediate identification of mode, thereby emphasizing the importance of a particular pitch. Other factors, such as long-range bass movement, rhythmic patterns, and Szymanowski's use of dual-modality are discussed when relevant.

Analysis of the individual pieces is preceeded by an overview of Szymanowski's life and works and a brief discussion of the mazurka as an indigenous folk dance.

## CHAPTER 1

### KAROL SZYMANOWSKI

Let our music be national in its Polish characteristics but not falter in striving to attain universality, let it be national but not provincial.

Karol Szymanowski, "Thoughts on Polish Criticism in Music Today" <sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1 Biographical Information

Karol Szymanowski was born on October 3, 1882, at his family's estate in Tymoszcówka, a village in the Ukraine. Szymanowski's father, Stanisław Korwin-Szymanowski, was a talented amateur pianist and cellist; his mother, the Baroness Anna Taube, was a linguist in addition to being a competent pianist. Although all of Szymanowski's siblings were musically inclined, it was his sister Stanisława (Stasia) with whom Szymanowski had the closest musical relationship. Stasia was a successful soprano, and she frequently performed her brother's music.

At age seven, Karol began to study the piano with his father. Three years later, he was sent to the neighboring town of Elisavetgrad. The music school there was under the direction of Szymanowski's cousin, Gustav Neuhaus. Recognizing Szymanowski's talent for composition, Neuhaus

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<sup>1</sup> Karol Szymanowski, "Thoughts on Polish Criticism in Music Today," The Warsaw New Literary Review (July 1920): 91, in B.M. Maciejewski, Karol Szymanowski and Jan Smeterlin: Correspondence and Essays (London: Allegro Press, 1969), 85-95.

introduced him to the music of the German masters as well as that of Chopin and Skryabin. During that time, Szymanowski also acquired all the available piano scores of Wagner's operas.

At age nineteen, Szymanowski went to Warsaw to study privately with Noskowski and Zawirski.<sup>2</sup> Although the music of Wagner, Strauss, and Debussy flourished elsewhere in Europe, these composers were not well known in Warsaw. The capital was culturally isolated at that time, and the legacies of Chopin and Mendelssohn still pervaded the musical environment.

In Warsaw, Szymanowski met three musicians with whom he was to remain associated throughout his life: pianist Artur Rubinstein, violinist Pawel (Paul) Kochanski, and conductor Grzegorz Fitelberg. These friends were to premiere many of Szymanowski's compositions; two of his major works, the *Myths*, Op. 30, for violin and piano, and the *First Violin Concerto*, Op. 35, were written for Kochanski. It was through the influence of Fitelberg that Szymanowski signed an agreement with Universal Edition in Vienna.

'Young Poland in Music' ('Młoda Polska') was a group of Noskowski's composition students that included Szymanowski and Fitelberg. Formed in order to promote more progressive musical tendencies in Poland, the group 'Young Poland' brought their music before the public and into print. Prince Wladislaw Lubomirski became their patron, helping to establish the Young Polish Composers Publishing Company (Spółka Nakładowa).<sup>3</sup> Subsidized performances of their music were given in Poland and in Germany.

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<sup>2</sup> Zygmunt Noskowski was a principal Polish composer and teacher in the late nineteenth century. Szymanowski studied harmony with Marek Zawirski and counterpoint and composition with Noskowski at the Warsaw Conservatory from 1901 to 1905.

<sup>3</sup> Jim Samson, *The Music of Szymanowski* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1981), 19.

From 1901 until the advent of World War I in 1914, Szymanowski traveled extensively, both as a composer and as a performer. His disillusionment with German Romanticism began during a trip he made to Italy and Sicily in 1910-11. Around that time, he discovered the music of Stravinsky, and in a letter to his friend Stefan Spiess, he wrote, "I am terribly impressed with his [Stravinsky's] work and *par consequence* am becoming indifferent to German music."<sup>4</sup> In 1914, Szymanowski again visited Italy and Sicily, as well as North Africa. On that trip, he became intrigued by Islamic culture. Always interested in expanding his intellectual horizons, he began to study the history and culture of the Arab world, keeping notebooks detailing his findings. In the same year, Szymanowski went to Paris and London, spending much time with Artur Rubinstein and coming into contact with Ravel, Debussy, and Stravinsky.

In the summer of 1914, World War I began with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo. Although Ignaz Paderewski invited Szymanowski to join him in Switzerland, the composer chose instead to remain quietly in Tymoszkówka. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 destroyed the Szymanowski estate at Tymoszkówka, along with valuable Szymanowski autographs and manuscripts. The Szymanowskis moved to their remaining property in Elisavetgrad. In 1919, when Austria invaded Odessa and Elisavetgrad, they sold their land and moved to Warsaw.

In the years that immediately followed the war, Szymanowski began to explore indigenous Polish folk music, and his own music moved from a personal variety of exoticism towards a more nationalistic flavor. The first

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<sup>4</sup> Christopher Palmer, Szymanowski, BBC Music Guides (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1983), 13.



important indication of this trend was the song cycle *Słopiewnie*, set to poems by the Polish poet Julian Tuwim.<sup>5</sup> Szymanowski continued to travel, giving concerts in London and Paris, and making his first trip to New York with Rubinstein and Kochanski in 1921. From New York, the trio took a side trip to Florida and Cuba, where Szymanowski found himself particularly enchanted with Latin culture.

After returning to Poland in 1922, Szymanowski was introduced to a resort area in the Tatra mountains known as Zakopane. Originally a spa, Zakopane had become something of an artist's colony. This area was to become Szymanowski's home off and on for the next fifteen years. He rented a villa known as Atma, and he became a student of the local folk music. It was in Zakopane that Szymanowski actively began to incorporate elements of Polish folk music into his own compositions. Among the works of this period are the twenty *Mazurkas*, Op. 50, for solo piano and the ballet *Harnassie*.

In 1926, Szymanowski was offered two positions: Director of the Cairo Conservatory, and Principal of the Warsaw Conservatory. Although the position in Cairo was much more lucrative, Szymanowski chose to serve his own country. His feeling about music education in Poland was that immediate and drastic changes were necessary if Poland was to be brought into step with the rest of Europe. Opposition to his methods was great, and the stress of his new position was detrimental to his health. A heavy smoker, drinker, and, according to some sources, possibly a drug user, Szymanowski's health began to decline rapidly.

In 1928, he took treatments at a sanatorium in Edlach, where he spent several months. Szymanowski resigned from the Conservatory in 1929 and moved again to Zakopane. He took a position as Rector of the new State

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<sup>5</sup> Samson, *Szymanowski*, 157.

Academy of Music in Warsaw, but he was dismissed shortly after his appointment; the Academy dissolved in 1932.

Szymanowski received an honorary doctorate from the University of Cracow in 1930, and in the same year he was awarded the Polish State Prize for music. Although his works were being performed, and he was finally gaining some tangible recognition from his countrymen, he was unable to enjoy the fruits of his labor due to illness. In addition, he found himself in financial trouble because of his general lack of business acumen and his tendency to live beyond his means. Without a position that earned a regular income, Szymanowski was forced to use his dwindling energies to concertize again.

In 1933 he performed in Warsaw, Copenhagen, Madrid, Paris, and Bologna, as well as in various cities in Russia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Hungary.<sup>6</sup> Friends arranged performances at the homes of various patrons of the arts in London, and, while there, Szymanowski participated in several BBC broadcasts. In 1934, he agreed to take part in what was supposed to be a "cultural exchange" in Berlin, but he ultimately did not perform owing to programming demands made by the Nazis. Szymanowski went to Cannes, where he attended a performance by Rubinstein. Shortly thereafter, he was sent to Lausanne for medical treatment. He died in Lausanne while awaiting transfer to a sanatorium at Lugano.

Ironically, the Polish government spared no expense for funeral arrangements. There was a great deal of publicity, and Szymanowski's body was brought by train to Krakow, where a state funeral was conducted. He was buried in the church at Skalka, alongside Poland's greatest national figures. According to Artur Rubinstein, "They put on the catafalque the insignia of

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<sup>6</sup> Palmer, 19.

the Grand Cross of Polonia Restituta, the nation's highest honor. What a bitter irony! For years they had made my poor Karol suffer through their meanness and now they were willing to spend a fortune on this big show. And what really infuriated me was the fact that they asked Hitler's government to make the train with Karol's body stop in Berlin long enough to receive military honours." <sup>7</sup>

## 1.2 Works

The works of Szymanowski have been divided into three creative periods: the Viennese (1899-1913), when he was influenced by Chopin, Skryabin, and the music of late Romantic composers; the Impressionistic (1914-18), when he was influenced by his travels to Paris, Italy, and north Africa, as well as by the music of Stravinsky; and the Nationalistic (1921-33), during which he was mainly influenced by Polish folk culture and the work of Bartók and Kodaly. <sup>8</sup>

Szymanowski's earliest works include two piano sonatas (G minor and F# minor), and most of the *Nine Preludes*, Op. 1. The Preludes were published in 1901, although two of them were actually written in 1896 when the composer was fourteen. The Preludes are strongly influenced by the music of Chopin. Several of them (particularly nos. 1 and 7) are similar to Chopin's nocturnes in texture, with singing melodies and an arpeggiated accompaniment. The melodies are generated motivically, and they are varied as they are restated. The Preludes also exhibit a Wagnerian influence in their harmonic and chromatic exploration. But it is in Op. 1 that

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<sup>7</sup> Palmer, 21.

<sup>8</sup> B.M. Maciejewski, Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Music, with a foreword by Felix Aprahamian (London: Poets and Painters Press, 1967), 7-9; Zdzisław Sierpinski, ed., Karol Szymanowski: An Anthology, trans. Emma Harris (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1986), 7-19.

Szymanowski demonstrates a clear understanding of the legacy of Chopin. Samson states that, although the Preludes are derivative, they are significant because they show Szymanowski's ability to see beyond the external elements of Chopin's music.<sup>9</sup>

The *Four Studies*, Op. 4, written from 1900 to 1902, show the influence not only of Chopin but also of Skryabin. This work suggests parallels to Skryabin's *Etudes*, Op. 8, and Samson has presented strong evidence that Szymanowski used the Skryabin studies as a direct model. Op. 4/3 in Bb minor remains one of the most popular of Szymanowski's works for piano, and it was made famous through performances by Paderewski. The early works of Skryabin were to remain an influence in the music of his next period.

The *Variations*, Op. 3 (1901-03), are classical in design. The harmonic structure of the theme is retained, but few of the variations provide a recognizable version of it. Instead, Szymanowski develops motivic cells taken from the theme, much as Beethoven did in the *Diabelli Variations*. The *Variations* include a waltz and a mazurka.

The *Variations on a Polish Theme*, Op. 10 (1900-1904), are built on a theme taken from Tatra folk music. According to Samson, the theme appears in Jan Kleczynski's 1888 collection of authentic forms of Polish folk dances.<sup>10</sup> This collection is mentioned in a 1930 article by Szymanowski, wherein he questions the authenticity of some of the notations, believing that some were perhaps 'sentimentalized' in a minor key.<sup>11</sup> Samson believes

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<sup>9</sup> Samson, *Szymanowski*, 28.

<sup>10</sup> Jan Kleczynski, *Melodie zakopiainskie i podhalanski*, vol. XXII of *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* (Cracow, 1888), cited in Jim Samson, *The Music of Szymanowski* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1981), 168.

<sup>11</sup> Karol Szymanowski, "About Goral Music," *Muzyka*, no.1 (1930): 95, in *Karol Szymanowski and Jan Smeterlin: Correspondence and Essays* (London: Allegro Press, 1969), 95-97.

that Szymanowski's Op. 10 theme is presented in a slightly altered form in order to make it "more palatable." The adjustment of the original theme may have been Kleczynski's and not Szymanowski's. This early use of folk material is not directly related to Szymanowski's later association with music from the same region. The formal organization of this work includes an overall tonal scheme, and the variations are arranged in progressively larger groups similar in character, creating forward motion. Some of the later variations of Op. 10 show Szymanowski's early use of Impressionistic sonorities. The set culminates with a fugue.<sup>12</sup> Op. 10 was programmed in Warsaw as part of the first concert given by the Polish Composers Publishing Company.

Szymanowski's *First Piano Sonata*, in C minor, Op. 8 (1903-04), is a four-movement work in classical form. The first movement is in sonata form, and it is followed by an adagio, a minuet and trio, and a fugal finale. According to Samson, the sonata is "competent, but conventional," and not particularly notable.<sup>13</sup>

Szymanowski's *Fantasy*, Op. 14, shows the influence of Liszt in its elaborate texture, virtuosic piano writing, and the use of thematic transformation. Szymanowski's heavy use of chromaticism and avoidance of definitive cadential points helped to disguise the tonal outlines of the piece. In this way, the *Fantasy* marks the beginning of Szymanowski's break with his German Romantic training and points toward the music of his second period.

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<sup>12</sup> Samson, *Szymanowski*, 32.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47.

The *Second Piano Sonata*, Op. 21(1909-10), was first performed by Artur Rubinstein in Warsaw in 1911. It begins with a subtle rhythmic accompaniment in the bass, and the melodic phrasing is set in a metrically flexible pattern, suggesting Brahms. The influence of Reger is seen in Szymanowski's chromatic procedures. He employs harmonic devices in this sonata that "threaten tonal stability," another sign of his increasing break with traditional harmonic practice.<sup>14</sup> The second and third movements are a set of slow variations and a fugue, respectively. Szymanowski's neo-classical bent is apparent in his use of the sarabande and the minuet in the variations, as well as in his adept handling of contrapuntal and chromatic textures.

Referred to by Maciejewski as Szymanowski's Impressionistic period, the war years (1914-1918) were perhaps the composer's most productive.<sup>15</sup> The chronology of Szymanowski's compositions during this period is confusing, because he was working on several new pieces at once, as well as putting final touches on works begun previously.

In the works of this period, traditional goal-oriented (or common-practice) tonality is still present, but Szymanowski's harmonic language begins to show the influences of Debussy and Ravel. Among the characteristics of the works of this period are the use of unresolved dominant harmony, modal, pentatonic, and whole-tone scales, and white-key/black-key bitonality.<sup>16</sup> Piano works from this period include two cycles, *Metopes*, Op. 29 (1915), and *Masques*, Op. 34 (1915-16), the *Twelve Studies*, Op. 33 (1916), and the *Third Piano Sonata*, Op. 36 (1917).

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<sup>14</sup> Samson, *Szymanowski*, 56.

<sup>15</sup> Maciejewski, *Szymanowski*, 50.

<sup>16</sup> Samson, *Szymanowski*, 80.

During the war, Szymanowski enjoyed periods of relative isolation in Zakopane. In addition to composing, he studied Greek literature, Roman civilization, Islamic cultures, and the work of Leonardo Da Vinci. Szymanowski's study of literature at the time is reflected most directly in the *Metopes*, Op. 29, in which each of the three pieces is inspired by Homer's *Odyssey*. The pieces that make up this cycle ("The Isle of Sirens," "Calypso," and "Nausicaa") are intended to suggest the sculptural metopes of Sicily.<sup>17</sup> Among the musical characteristics of these pieces are the increase in dissonance and the use of bitonality.

The *Masques*, Op. 34, bear some relationship to the previously composed *Metopes* in that both are "mythological pianoforte poems written in impressionistic style."<sup>18</sup> The *Masques* are parodies of literary figures-- "Scheherazade," "Tantris the Jester," and "Don Juan's Serenade." This cycle is thicker in texture and more complex harmonically than the *Metopes*. Although all the subjects chosen by Szymanowski for the *Masques* had been previously used by other composers, no allusions are made to these precedents. It was Szymanowski's intention to orchestrate this cycle; the project was never completed.

During the years immediately following the war (1918-1920), Szymanowski completed various works that he had previously begun, but otherwise this period was not very productive. In 1919 he was invited by a representative of Universal Edition to move to Vienna and to supply what the

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<sup>17</sup> Metopes are architecturally significant parts of a Dorian frieze; pictures carved into these stones alternate with triglyphs (plain stone facings covering the ends of crossbeams extending from the roof structure of the building). Szymanowski was inspired by metopes he viewed while in Sicily, and composed his *Metopes* to serve as musical representations of pictures frozen in time, as are their stone counterparts.

<sup>18</sup> Maciejewski, *Szymanowski*, 54.

representative referred to as 'war-time compositions'. The *Twelve Studies*, Op. 33, and the *Third Piano Sonata*, Op. 36, were completed in response to this invitation. Although both compositions were written at the height of Szymanowski's Impressionistic period, they show a turn from the programmatic and improvisatory styles towards more abstract genres. These works summarize Szymanowski's textural and harmonic developments, and they are good examples of the composer's ability to create and sustain large structures.

The *Third Piano Sonata*, Op. 36, although a one-movement work, can be viewed as containing four distinct sections. The opening section of the piece is followed by a slow section, after which a brief scherzo provides an introduction to the fugal finale. Each new section is linked to the preceding one by a note that is either sustained or sounded through the transition from one section to the next.

The *Twelve Studies*, Op. 33 (1916-1918), avoid the occasional traditional harmonies and generally impressionistic texture of the *Metopes* and *Masques* of the same period. However, one shared aspect between the *Studies* and the piano cycles is the use of white-key/black-key triadic bitonal harmony. The *Studies* were intended to be played in their entirety. The conception of each study is the result of its place (or context) within the whole of the work.<sup>19</sup>

Szymanowski's mature style was emerging in these and other works of the period. Although his melodies always retained their expressive quality, new techniques emerge, such as experiments with more coloristic sound, the

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<sup>19</sup> Maciejewski, *Szymanowski*, 66.



use of tonal centers rather than functional harmony, and a more subtle use of dynamics.<sup>20</sup>

Szymanowski's "Nationalistic" period (1920-1937) began with the publication of the song cycle *Słopiewnie*, Op. 46.<sup>21</sup> The twenty *Mazurkas*, Op. 50 (1923-1926), and the two *Mazurkas*, Op. 62, are the only piano compositions of Szymanowski's final period, with the exception of a single mazurka submitted as a contribution to the 1926 Oxford University Press publication Folk Dances of the World.

The twenty *Mazurkas*, Op. 50, were written during Szymanowski's first years in the Tatra mountains. Palmer describes the Op. 50 *Mazurkas* as a cross-breeding of "the traditional dance forms of the mazurka as defined and stylized by Chopin--the *mazur*, the *oberek* and the *kujawiak*--with the melodic idiosyncrasies (and related harmonies) of Goral music, thus bringing both into a wider perspective."<sup>22</sup> Szymanowski was able to revive the mazurka form by taking the tradition of Chopin, whose mazurkas are a stylization of Polish lowland folk music, and infusing elements of Tatra highland music into the genre. With his *Mazurkas*, Op. 50, as well as with other major pieces composed during this period, Szymanowski was able to accomplish what he considered to be a necessary fusion of personal goals: to

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<sup>20</sup> Samson discusses tonal experimentation in Szymanowski's Impressionistic period, and states that "It is more characteristic of Szymanowski's later music that it relies heavily on local tonal associations--Rudolph Reti refers to 'indirect tonality'--while making no attempt to establish any single predominant tonic to which the harmonies and melodies of the piece as a whole might relate." (Samson, Szymanowski, 67). A tonal center of a single pitch or group of pitches is asserted, in this context, rather than a tonal framework based on a hierarchical system, such as what is referred to as common-practice tonality.

<sup>21</sup> Samson, Szymanowski, 157; Maciejewski, Szymanowski, 69.

<sup>22</sup> Palmer, 93.

write music that was national in character and representative of twentieth-century music in its overall content.

Szymanowski's last works for the piano (in fact his last completed compositions) are the two *Mazurkas*, Op. 62. Sources do not give these works more than slight mention. Samson states that in these mazurkas " . . . the dance elements have been stylized to the point that they are barely recognizable." <sup>23</sup> The Op. 62 *Mazurkas* are more dissonant, longer, and more texturally complex than those of Op. 50.

### 1.3 Szymanowski's place in piano literature

Kisielewski states that Chopin "raised the folk element to the level of humanity; the task that Szymanowski set himself was to raise the Polish to the European." <sup>24</sup>

Chopin's music was neither immediately preceded nor followed by an established Polish musical tradition; his legacy would have to wait before a successor would make full use of his stylistic achievements. <sup>25</sup> Among the Polish composers who showed promise of continuing the tradition established by Chopin were Antoni Stolpe (1851-72), whose development was tragically arrested by his early death at the age of twenty-one, and Wladyslaw Zelinski (1837-1921), who was more influenced by German Romantic composers (Mendelssohn in particular) than by Chopin. Chopin's advances in the field of harmony did not have any immediate Polish successors. <sup>26</sup> The music of Szymanowski fills the gap in the evolution of

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<sup>23</sup> Samson, Szymanowski, 172.

<sup>24</sup> Zdzislaw Sierpinski, ed., *Karol Szymanowski, An Anthology*, trans. Emma Harris (Warsaw 1986): 10-19, citing Stefan Kisielewski, "Karol Szymanowski," *Gwiazdzbior muzyczny [Musical Constellation]* (Krakow, 1972).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Polish music between Chopin and the modern Polish school. It is Szymanowski who created the framework of a new technique that allowed Polish music once again to become an individualized voice in European music.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout his career, Szymanowski's music retained elements inherited from the music of Chopin and Skryabin. The influence of the works of those two composers is especially evident in Szymanowski's earliest published works. For example, his *Preludes*, Op. 1, are modeled after Chopin's *Preludes*, Op. 24. Elements that reflect this influence include arpeggiated accompaniment figures supporting a cantabile melodic line (Example 1.1a), within a texture that includes polyrhythmic decorative elaboration (Examples 1.1b and 1.1c).

Karol Szymanowski Op. 1 No 1.

Andante ma non troppo.

*dolce cantando*  
*len.*

PIANO. *pp legato* *p*

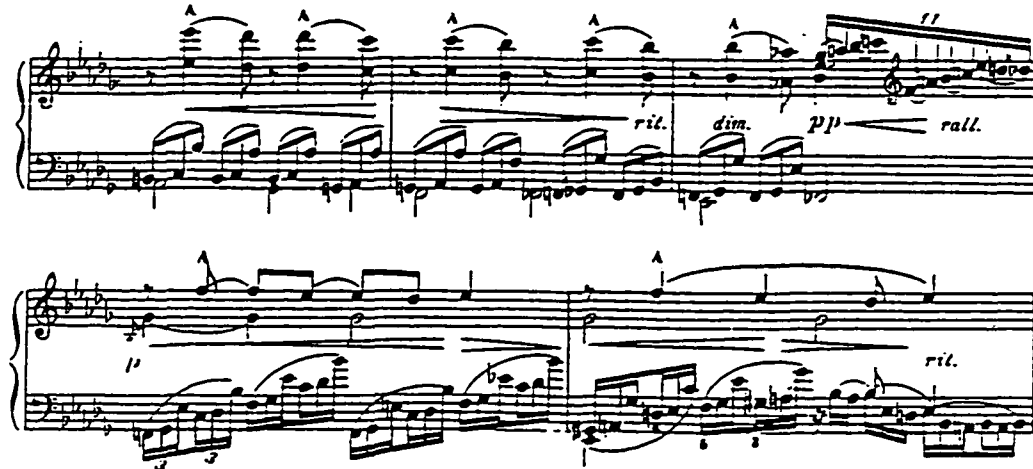
Ex. 1.1a Szymanowski, Prelude, Op. 1 no. 1 (mm. 1-11)

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<sup>26</sup> Henryk Swolken, "From Chopin to Szymanowski," in *An Outline History of Polish Music*, ed. Tadeusz Ochlewski, trans. Magdalena Mierowska-Paszkiewicz (Warsaw 1979), 91-94.

<sup>27</sup> Sierpinski, 11.

(Lento mesto)



Ex. 1.1b Szymanowski, Prelude, Op. 1 no. 9 (mm.7-11)

(Moderato)

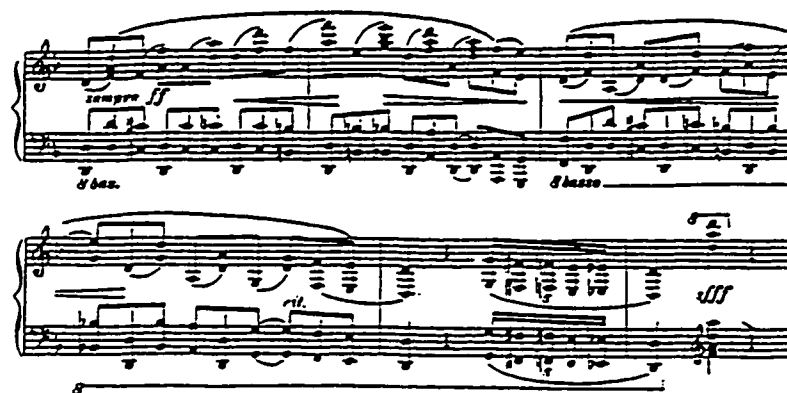


Ex. 1.1c Szymanowski, Prelude, Op. 1 no. 7 (mm. 40-47)

Noting that there are instances of 'direct modeling' between Chopin's music and Szymanowski's Preludes, Samson cites the similarity in character and texture between Szymanowski's Op. 1 no. 5 and Chopin's Study Op. 10 no. 10, as shown in Examples 1.2a and 1.2b.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Samson, *Szymanowski*, 28.

(Allegro molto - impetuoso.)



Ex 1.2a Szymanowski, Prelude, Op. 1 no. 5 (mm. 43-48)

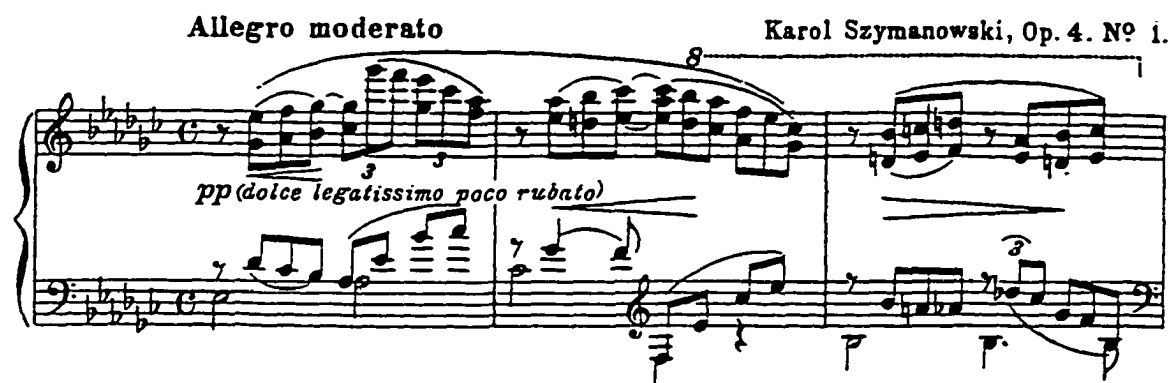
(Vivace assai)



Ex 1.2b Chopin, Study, Op. 10 no. 10 (mm. 6-11)

Szymanowski thought that Chopin's legacy was taken up by Russian rather than Polish composers. As mentioned above, it was through his study of Skryabin's early works that Szymanowski came to more fully understand Chopin's music. Szymanowski's *Studies*, Op. 4 (1900-1902), are closely related to Skryabin's *Studies*, Op. 8 (1894). Samson notes the general textural

similarities apparent between the beginnings of Szymanowski's Op. 4 no. 1 (Example 1.3a) and Scriabin's Op. 8 no. 6 (Example 1.3b).



Ex. 1.3a Szymanowski, Study, Op. 4 no. 1 (mm. 1-3)



Ex. 1.3b Scriabin, Etude, Op. 8 no. 6 (mm. 1-2)

A similarity can be seen by comparing the opening bars of Szymanowski's Op. 4 no. 3 and Scriabin's Op. 8 no. 11:

Karol Szymanowski, Op. 4. № 3.

Andante--*in modo d'un cannone--*  
(con dolore)

ppp legatissimo m.d. (rit.) m.d. (rit.) cresc. mf

Ex.1.4a Szymanowski, Study, Op. 4 no. 3 (mm.1-7)

<sup>1)</sup> Andante cantabile  $\text{♩} = 63$

p mf

Ex. 1.4b Scriabin, Etude, Op. 8 no. 11 (mm. 1-3)

Scriabin's harmonic experiments, particularly those devices that work to obscure tonality, had a direct influence on Szymanowski's work. Two

examples are Szymanowski's use of the tritone and disguised dominant relationships.<sup>29</sup>

Szymanowski's preludes and etudes, in the traditions of Chopin and Skryabin, are important additions to piano literature, because they provide harmonically progressive examples in each genre at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Szymanowski's first and second compositional periods contain works for the piano that revert to classical forms. Both sets of variations are examples of this, as are the three piano sonatas. His *First Piano Sonata*, Op. 8, was written during his first compositional period, the Second and Third during his Impressionistic second period. As a group, the sonatas are significant in their reflection of Szymanowski's treatment of form. The First Sonata has distinct movements in classical form. His *Second Piano Sonata*, Op. 21, combines a similar format with more complex writing and an abundance of harmonic experimentation. The *Third Sonata*, Op. 36, is a sectional one-movement work.

The Impressionistic sounds achieved by Szymanowski in his middle period works are part of his new pianistic style, inspired as they were by the music of Debussy and Ravel. The *Metopes*, Op. 29, and *Masques*, Op. 34, of this period are by far the most difficult piano music he wrote. Stylistically, Szymanowski's piano writing in this period gives new structural importance to texture rather than harmonically driven patterns, a trend begun in the nineteenth century with Liszt (*Nuages Gris*) and continued in the music of Debussy (*Estampes*) and Ravel (*Jeux d'Eau*). Elements of Szymanowski's more

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<sup>29</sup> Peter D. Roberts, Modernism in Russian Piano Music: Skriabin, Prokofiev, and Their Russian Contemporaries, Russian Music Series (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 1-23.



mature style include virtuosic arpeggiations, orchestral effects, parallelism, black-note/white-note bitonality, and the use of whole-tone and pentatonic melodic material. Samson compares Szymanowski's cycle *Metopes* and Ravel's *Noctuelles*, citing their similarity in texture and harmonic treatment.<sup>30</sup> The *Masques* are more harmonically complex than the *Metopes*. The pieces in this cycle reflect not only Impressionism but also late Skryabin. Samson notes the similarity of semi-tonal tension between Skryabin's *Fifth Piano Sonata* and the first *Masque*, "Scheherazade." This harmonic device is coupled with an upward-moving melodic line in both pieces.

Szymanowski's move towards greater textural complexity and extreme chromaticism is not unlike that of many other early twentieth-century composers. In part, the nationalism expressed in the music of his final period provided a format that allowed him to combine all the compositional influences he had incorporated thus far. In their genre and through their specific content, the twenty *Mazurkas*, Op. 50, are Szymanowski's contribution to a renewed Polish nationalistic trend. Szymanowski's piano writing in this last period becomes more accessible, his harmonic intent more easily grasped. Stylistically, the *Mazurkas*, Op. 50, are influenced not only by Chopin but also by Bartók and Stravinsky. Szymanowski frequently incorporates melodic and rhythmic Polish folk elements into his mazurkas. Although the basic rhythmic and melodic structures found in Polish folk music are represented in Chopin's mazurkas, direct modeling from specific folk sources is rare. Folk music in its original form was incompatible with Chopin's nineteenth-century harmonic language.

Harmonically, the mazurkas make use of many of the same devices Szymanowski employed in earlier works, such as bitonality and tritone

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<sup>30</sup> Samson, *Szymanowski*, 100.

relationships. These are combined with Polish folk scales and the open fifth drone of the bagpipe. The resulting tonal implications are part of Szymanowski's solution to his search for a personal twentieth-century harmonic language. The mazurka provided Szymanowski with a genre that was thinner in texture than the music of his middle period, and was cast in a more traditional musical format. In these two ways, his final compositions are similar to his early works.

In his autobiography, My Young Years, Artur Rubinstein frequently mentioned the close friendship he shared with Szymanowski, and he spoke with great enthusiasm of Szymanowski's piano compositions. By frequently programming his piano works, Rubinstein was instrumental in ensuring their success.<sup>31</sup>

Rubinstein was not the only great pianist to admire and perform Szymanowski's works. Vladimir Horowitz programmed them as well, and spoke with equal admiration of the composer.<sup>32</sup> The fact that these pianists actively promoted his compositions provides evidence of their important place in early twentieth-century piano literature.

Szymanowski's works for solo piano reflect one composer's struggle to incorporate traditional elements and modern trends. In each chosen genre he speaks to the twentieth-century ideal of a new harmonic and stylistic language. The establishment of a Polish national musical tradition in this century is partially due to Szymanowski's compositional achievements, his work with 'Młoda Polska', and his efforts to raise musical consciousness in

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<sup>31</sup> Artur Rubinstein, My Young Years (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 208, 366.


<sup>32</sup> Harold C. Schonberg, Horowitz: His Life and Music (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 60; Glenn Plaskin, Horowitz (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1983), 42-43, 51, 137-145.

Poland. Szymanowski's piano works, much admired in his time and temporarily overshadowed after his death by the works of pre- and post-World War II schools of contemporary music, are enjoying a much deserved renaissance.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE MAZURKA

#### 2.1 The importance of the mazurka in Polish history

Poland's official national anthem is the Dabrowski Mazurka. Although the anthem was adopted in 1927, the melody and the basic text had been in use since the late eighteenth century. The Dabrowski Mazurka is based on a typically Polish tune with a mazurka rhythm (  ).<sup>33</sup>

With the third partitioning of Poland in 1795, Russia gained control of the eastern part of the Ukraine. The southwest part of Poland was controlled by Austria, and the northwest by Prussia. Until Poland became an independent state at the end of World War I, the Polish people tenaciously maintained their cultural traditions, displaying fervent nationalism in both literature and music. Polish legions were formed within French revolutionary armies, and were led by General Jan Henryk Dabrowski (1755-1818). General Jozef Wybicki, a legionnaire serving in Italy, wrote the text for the Polish national anthem in 1797, and it was first sung when General Dabrowski led his troops into Poznan in 1806.<sup>34</sup> The text has been changed from time to time to reflect a series of political struggles, and Dabrowski's

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<sup>33</sup> Paul Nettl, National Anthems, trans. Alexander Gode (New York: Storm Publishers, 1952), 118-119.

<sup>34</sup> The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, s.v. "National Anthems," by Malcolm Boyd.

name was replaced by those of other Polish patriots; nevertheless, the anthem is still known as the Dabrowski Mazurka.<sup>35</sup>

Chopin's mazurkas for solo piano were the first examples of a stylized instrumental version of this national dance. They are based on melodies and rhythmic patterns from the area in Mazovia where the composer spent his youth, and they express yearning for his homeland, frustration over the failed uprising, and concern for the family he left behind, coupled with some guilt over not having participated in the fighting.<sup>36</sup> An expression of patriotism, they were written after Chopin left Poland in 1830. His mazurkas are considered to be nationalistic in their intent, although there are few direct references to specific folk elements.

Nearly a hundred years after Chopin's first mazurkas were written, Karol Szymanowski composed his twenty *Mazurkas*, Op. 50, for solo piano. Poland had finally been liberated at the end of World War I, and the mazurka as a symbol of Polish Nationalism was just as relevant in the twentieth century for Szymanowski as it had been for Chopin in the nineteenth century (and actually before Chopin in the establishment of a Polish national anthem). The Op. 50 *Mazurkas* are part of Szymanowski's contribution to the twentieth-century movement towards preservation of ethnic folk cultures in Europe.

## 2.2 Origins of the mazurka

To state that the mazurka is a Polish national dance is to imply that there is something unequivocally Polish about the dance and the music

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<sup>35</sup> Zdzislaw Mach, "National Anthems: The Case of Chopin as a National Composer," in *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, Martin Stokes, ed. (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), 61-69.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

associated with it. Anna Czekanowska, in a detailed comparison of folk elements in Poland, states that the roots of Polish dances are found in mediaeval culture. According to Czekanowska, it is difficult to determine whether the "... essence and substance of gestures which later came to be identified [as Polish]" are indigenous or adopted.<sup>37</sup> References to the mazurka as a dance form are especially significant, as the dance steps and gestures are often reflected in the music. The rhythmic patterns of poetry, such as the minor Ionicus ( ∪ ∪ — — ), also influenced the dance in Poland; this pattern is similar to the mazurka rhythm.<sup>38</sup> It should also be noted that there are instrumental pieces titled 'mazurka' that actually would be more correctly identified as one of the other types of Polish dances.<sup>39</sup> A brief overview of the characteristics of related dances is presented below.

The mazurka is related to the *Polski* (Polish Dance) and to associated forms such as the *oberek* and *kujawiak*. The *Polski* (also called the "wedding dance," as it served to accompany episodes in a lengthy wedding ceremony) eventually evolved into the *polonaise*. Characteristics of the *Polski* include: (1) bowing and kneeling gestures, with shifts and delays, represented in the music by syncopated rhythms, and (2) a processional introduction to the dance that results in the use of regular equal time units. The *Polski* is also sometimes referred to as the 'walking dance'.<sup>40</sup>

The area of Poland known as Mazovia (near Warsaw) is considered to be the birthplace of several Polish national dances. In addition to the

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<sup>37</sup> Anna Czekanowska, Polish Folk Music: Slavonic Heritage - Polish Tradition - Contemporary Trends (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 43.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Kathleen Dale, Nineteenth-Century Piano Music: A Handbook for Pianists (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 258.

<sup>40</sup> Czekanowska, 145.

*mazurka* (mazur), other dances originating in this region include the *oberek* (oberta), the *kujawiak* (from the neighboring Kujawy region), the *powislak*, and the *swiatowka*. There are shared characteristics among the dances, but there are also notable differences in tempo and style. All of them are in triple time, with strong accents (accompanied by the tap of a heel) on the second or third beat of the measure. An obvious difference between the dances is tempo; for example, the *oberek* is typically faster than the mazur.

The occasion for the dance sets the general mood and types of steps involved, all of which are reflected in the musical accompaniment.<sup>41</sup> The traditional accompaniment for this dance, provided by an ensemble of violins, drum, and harmonium, is enhanced by stamping and kneeling. In the *oberek* there is free oscillation in tempo rubato, with erratic shifts of the beat.<sup>42</sup> The *kujawiak* is danced by couples in a circle, either walking or turning. Usually in ternary form, the *kujawiak* ends with a final acceleration in tempo.

It is interesting to note that each dance is usually meant for a specific number of couples. The mazurka is usually danced with either four, eight, or twelve couples (although it can be danced by an indefinite number of couples). The dance is improvisatory in style with a variety of steps. Its various moods can express 'pride of bearing' and 'wildness'. The endings of some mazurkas seem inconclusive; for instance, repeats can be made *ad libitum*, or the last bar can end on the dominant, unaccented.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, s.v. "Poland II: Folk Music, General Characteristics," by Jan Steszewski.

<sup>42</sup> Czekanowska, 91-93.

<sup>43</sup> The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, s.v. "Mazurka," by Jaroslav Mracek.

### 2.3 Instrumental accompaniment

The following general discussion of the ensembles that traditionally accompany the dance is necessary in order to provide an understanding of the genre as adapted for the piano.

The earliest accompaniment for the mazurka was a type of bagpipe known as the *duda*, which can produce either one drone (on the tonic) or two (tonic and dominant). There are five types of bagpipes used in Polish folk music, all with single reeds. Each type of bagpipe has a range of notes that can extend from six (the *koza*) to eleven (the *kozol*).<sup>44</sup> In the mazurka for piano, the drone of the bagpipe is represented by an open fifth, usually in the bass. Found occasionally in Chopin's mazurkas, this figure was used extensively by Szymanowski in his Op. 50 compositions.

The violin is commonly used along with the bagpipe in the accompaniment of the mazurka. The melody is frequently played on the E and A strings, while the G and D strings are used for the drone accompaniment figure. The playing is most often in a *non-legato* style. In addition to the bagpipe and violin, a stringed bass instrument with two to four strings (the *basetla* or *basy*) is often included in the ensemble, as are percussion instruments such as the tambourine and double-headed drum (in the twentieth century, these have been supplemented by the triangle and cymbals). Since the nineteenth century, the ensemble has also included wind instruments, such as the cornet (or trumpet), and the concertina and accordion.

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<sup>44</sup> The *koza*, from the Podhale region, differs considerably from the other types (Steszewski, 34). Although it has a range of only six notes, it has three drones, whereas the other types have only one.



The most common ensemble for accompanying the mazurka is one stringed instrument (violin) and one rhythmic instrument (the drum or *basy*). In areas where bagpipe playing is prevalent, the combination would be one or more bagpipes and one stringed instrument. In the twentieth century, a second violin is common, adding chordal accompaniment, as well as both a drum and bass instrument.

The drones from the bagpipes, the limitations imposed on the stringed instruments, and the timbre of the percussion instruments particular to the original dance provide the basic sound materials. Imitation of the instrumental accompaniment can be found in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*, Op. 50, as will be seen in the analyses presented in Chapter 3.

#### 2.4 Melody, rhythm, and form

The following information provides a brief summary of traditional mazurka elements in these three areas.

Particular scales used as melodic material in the mazurka are associated with specific regions. For example, the pentatonic scale is more prevalent in musically conservative regions (such as Kurpie), but it is virtually unknown in the Carpathian region (which includes Podhale).

The Lydian mode is widely used in Polish melodies. The scale using the first six notes of this mode is referred to as the "Polish mode."<sup>45</sup> In some types of Polish scales, the third and seventh degrees are altered. The Podhalean mode (a Lydian scale with a lowered seventh) is used frequently in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*, Op. 50. The major and minor modes are used throughout Poland.

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<sup>45</sup> Ann McNamee, "Bitonality, Mode and Interval in the Music of Szymanowski," *Journal of Music Theory*, 29 (1985): 61-84.

Mazurka melodies move mostly in seconds or thirds. Larger leaps are most often found at the beginning of a phrase. Although the general contour of the melody is undulating, a descending or falling melodic line is often present. The melodies in Chopin's mazurkas are most often based on the major and minor modes, whereas Szymanowski relies mainly on folk scales as the basis of melodic material in his Op. 50 compositions.

All dances associated with the mazurka, such as the *oberek* and *krakowiak*, use mazurka rhythms. The rhythm typically decreases in complexity with each bar or phrase, a common feature of many types of Polish folk music. A dotted rhythmic pattern and the alternation of duplet and triplet figures are frequently used as unifying rhythmic features. An accent on the second or third beat of each measure can prevail throughout the piece, or the accent can alternate, creating a rhythmic pattern two or more measures long.

The improvisatory nature of the mazurka can result in shifting accents over the typical four-bar phrase. The differentiation of steps employed in the dance is reflected in the rhythm, resulting in:

- 1) pauses (shifts between standing and kneeling positions)
- 2) sharp accents (stamping, heel tapping, etc.)
- 3) periods of regular tempo (walking or processional introductions)
- 4) acceleration (the whirling finale of the *kujawiak*)
- 5) the use of tempo rubato (associated with the *oberek*)

Mracek's chart reflecting potential combinations of rhythmic figures (see Example 2.1) is enough to show the more basic traits used by Szymanowski (and Chopin).<sup>46</sup>



Ex. 2.1 Chart of mazurka rhythms

Traditionally, the mazurka is in two or four sections, each part consisting of six or eight bars. The most significant structural feature is repetition. Chopin's mazurkas are typically in three-part form (ABA); section B is often more lyrical than section A. This is the basic format adopted by Szymanowski for use in his *Mazurkas*, Op. 50. Because Szymanowski was influenced most directly by the music of the Podhale region, his melodies are often constructed in irregular phrase lengths (five,

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<sup>46</sup> Mracek, 865.

three, and six bars), whereas a four-bar phrase is more commonly used by Chopin, and is more typical of folk music from the plains of Mazovia.<sup>47</sup>

## 2.5 Summary

Szymanowski placed great importance on Chopin's mazurkas. As a representative of Polish national music, Chopin provided both a tradition and an example for Szymanowski. In an article published in the inter-war literary magazine "Skamander," Szymanowski wrote:

The Polish character of Chopin's work is unquestionable; not because he also wrote polonaises and mazurkas . . . as an artist he looked for forms that stood apart from the literary-dramatic character of music which was a feature of Romanticism, as a Pole he reflected in his work the very essence of the tragic break in the history of the people and instinctively aspired to give the deepest expression of his nation that transcended history.<sup>48</sup>

In the spirit of nationalism and artistry, Szymanowski continued Chopin's example. However, the materials used by Szymanowski remain truer to the actual folk music he encountered, thus making the content of his pieces stylistically very personal. Since the native music Szymanowski incorporated was modal, and not based harmonically on 'common practice' principles, he gained the freedom to speak in a twentieth-century voice. The *Mazurkas*, Op. 50, are considered by Zielinski to be the " . . . most perfect expression of the [Polish] national style in Szymanowski's works."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Tadeusz A. Zielinski, "Szymanowski's Mazurkas," Polish Folk Music 17, no. 3-4 (1982): 309.

<sup>48</sup> Karol Szymanowski, "On Frederic Chopin (1923)," Polish Music 12, no. 3 (1977): 7-9.

<sup>49</sup> Zielinski, 4.

## CHAPTER 3

### Karol Szymanowski's Mazurkas Op. 50/I

#### 3.1 Introduction

Chopin's 56 mazurkas were written in sets of three, four, and five over a span of twenty-four years (1825-1849).<sup>50</sup> Although they were written in a nineteenth-century tonal idiom, they contain some of the composer's more daring harmonic experiments.

Chopin explored the countryside of his rural Mazovia and collected folk music as it was performed by the local people. He adapted the scales and rhythms peculiar to this folk music in his development of both the polonaise and the mazurka. The resulting effect was quite foreign to the nineteenth-century western European ear.<sup>51</sup> This perhaps explains the reaction by the famous critic Rellstab, who wrote the following about Chopin's Op. 7 Mazurkas, published in 1832:

In the dances before us the author satisfies the passion (of writing affectedly and unnaturally) to a loathsome excess. He is indefatigable, and I might say inexhaustible, in his search for ear-splitting discords, forced transitions, harsh modulations, ugly distortions of melody and

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<sup>50</sup> George C. Ashton Jonson, A Handbook to Chopin's Works (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1905), 10-13.

<sup>51</sup> Edgar Stillman Kelley, Chopin the Composer: His Structural Art and its Influence on Contemporaneous Music (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1969), 14.

rhythm. Everything it is possible to think of is raked up to produce the effect of odd originality, but especially strange keys, the most unnatural position of chords, the most perverse combinations with regard to fingering . . . If Mr. Chopin had shown this composition to a master, the latter would, it is to be hoped, have torn it and thrown it at his feet, which we hereby do symbolically. <sup>52</sup>

One important difference between the mazurkas of Chopin and those of Szymanowski is geographic. Chopin's mazurkas are influenced by the Polish music of the lowland areas around Mazovia, whereas Szymanowski's pieces reflect his interest in the folk music of the Podhale region, an area in the foothills of the Tatra mountains. Although both types represent the traditional music of the Polish people, the music of the highland areas was considered more crude and dissonant. Szymanowski argues that the Goral music of the highlands is misunderstood rather than unsophisticated, and he states that its peculiarities are due to the harsh environment and beauty of the mountainous landscape (see Example 3.1). <sup>53</sup>

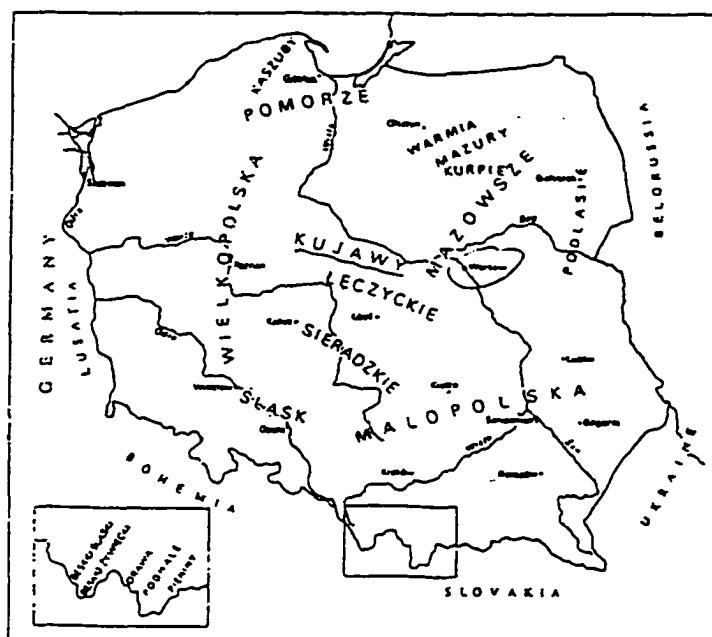
As composers in this century experimented with new tonal principles, many were intrigued by the modes used in European folk music. It was not the historical significance of the modes that interested twentieth-century composers, but rather the potential for new melodic resources that could be used to diffuse the effects of the major-minor system. <sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Jonson, 17.

<sup>53</sup> Karol Szymanowski, "About Goral Music," *Muzyka* 1(1930), in *Karol Szymanowski and Jan Smelterlin: Correspondence and Essays* (London: Allegro Press, 1969), 95-97.

<sup>54</sup> Leon Dallin, *Techniques of Twentieth Century Composition: A Guide to the Materials Of Modern Music*, 3rd edition (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1974), 19-20.



Ex. 3.1 Map of Poland showing major cultural regions <sup>55</sup>

Rudolf Reti, in his discussion of 'melodic tonality', asserts that melodies constructed of oriental, exotic, or folk scales necessarily had to disappear from the compositional scene during the period of common-practice tonality, only to re-emerge in the music of Debussy. <sup>56</sup> Straus notes that Bartók's use of folk music was an attempt to overcome harmonic tradition, and that the

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<sup>55</sup> The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 1980 ed., s.v. "Poland II: Folk Music, General Characteristics" by Jan Steszewski.

<sup>56</sup> Rudolph Reti, Tonality, Atonality, Pantonality : A Study of Some Trends in Twentieth Century Music (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1958), 22-29.

intensity of his interest in folk music is a measure of how burdensome that tradition was.<sup>57</sup>

Debussy and Stravinsky used folk elements in a general way, adopting folk scales or ethnic rhythmic figures as part of a new harmonic language.<sup>58</sup> Others, like Manuel de Falla, used certain specific elements from the music of their native countries, incorporating these elements into their own personal style. For a few composers, such as Bartók, Kodály, and Szymanowski, the nationalistic trend in music included the preservation of folk traditions that were in danger of dying out. These composers used their native folk music in a more direct way, following more closely the actual melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic structure as it existed in the music performed by local musicians. Polish highland folk music, with its striking use of dissonance and unusual instrumentation, helped Szymanowski form a tonal language that could express nationalism in twentieth-century terms.

The use of modal material in a harmonic context was unexplored territory for twentieth-century composers. Prior to the twentieth century, the use of modal material had been primarily melodic or contrapuntal. Examples of techniques used for harmonization of modal melodies include the use of successions of triads in root position (Bartók's Bagatelle Op. 6/4), the addition of chordal sevenths and ninths, and harmonizations that relate neither to the modal theme nor to any key. The use of modal materials offers the composer an extensive palette of chordal possibilities, as each mode has its own set of triadic relationships.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Joseph N. Straus, Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 40-42.

<sup>58</sup> Simms, 233.

<sup>59</sup> Dallin, 106.



Modality, as defined by Simms, refers to a collection of pitches in which one pitch is emphasized as central through repetition or other methods of assertion. This is a device used often by Bartók, Kodály, and Vaughan Williams.<sup>60</sup> The first of Szymanowski's Mazurkas, Op. 50, is another excellent example of tonality by assertion in a modal context, as will be shown below.

### 3.2 The Op. 50 Mazurkas, Book I

The *Mazurkas*, Op. 50, composed between the years 1924-1926, are grouped in several books. Although Szymanowski did not list these twenty mazurkas in groups or books, he indicated the grouping of the first four pieces by placing a double bar only at the end of the fourth piece. The four mazurkas of Book I are examined in this study. For consistency, the first book of the Op. 50 *Mazurkas* is referred to as Op. 50/I and each piece is designated in the following way: 50/i, 50/ii, et cetera.<sup>61</sup>

The mazurkas of Op. 50/I are similar in texture, design, and content. Constructed with modal melodic material, each has a tonal center established through emphasis on a single pitch class.<sup>62</sup> Szymanowski frequently uses a drone of a single pitch or an open fifth in the bass, and outlines specific modal scales in the melody. Types of harmonization include the use of parallel chords, inclusion of motives not generated by the melodic line, bitonal writing, and accompaniment with fourths and seconds. Each

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<sup>60</sup> Paul Wilson. *The Music of Béla Bartók* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 2-5; Bryan R. Simms. *Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1986), 237.

<sup>61</sup> The *Mazurkas*, Op. 50/I are dedicated to Artur Rubinstein.

<sup>62</sup> Simms defines the term 'pitch class' by stating that "we shall consider all notes an octave apart to be structurally equivalent, and introduce the term 'pitch class' to refer to a representation of all notes of the same or enharmonically equivalent spelling" (29).

mazurka is divided into distinct sections, with outer sections that serve to emphasize the tonal center and one or more central sections that draw attention to specific tonal relationships within the piece. Each section is governed by a particular rhythmic pattern.

In this chapter, an analysis of the tonal structure of each mazurka is presented, supported by musical examples and graphs. It is hoped that these analyses will provide the performer with insight into Szymanowski's compositional process as it relates to the mazurka form. Edward T. Cone states that all art, including music, is subject to a variety of interpretations, or readings. Each reading is an effort to expose the essence of the work, and each is valid, though imperfect. Any individual interpretation involves a series of choices concerning which relationships, when brought out in performance, will best reveal this essence.<sup>63</sup> The following analyses expose some of those relationships in Szymanowski's mazurkas, providing the performer with information that should prove useful in making interpretive decisions.

### 3.3 Op. 50/i

The tonal structure of Op 50/i is built around a single pitch (E). This use of a single pitch (rather than a tonic triad and the associated tonal hierarchy) to delineate tonality may be an influence of Bartók. Samson discusses Bartók's use of a single pitch rather than a triad to create a tonal center.<sup>64</sup>

Melodic, harmonic, and bass features that support the designation of E as tonic comprise the majority of material in the piece. Some of these

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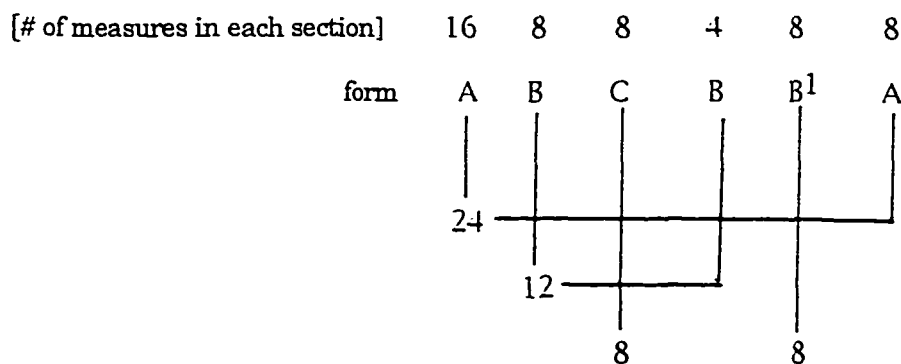
<sup>63</sup> Edward T. Cone, Musical Form and Musical Performance (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1968), 32-56.

<sup>64</sup> Samson, Music in Transition, 42.

features include the use of E scales of different types. Szymanowski uses the open fifth (E-B) in the bass throughout the piece, either at the beginning of a phrase, on the first beat of the measure, or as a drone.

Within this tonal framework, a three-note motive (CDE) is used extensively. This motive is present in each formal section of the piece, providing harmonic color and tension. The motive could easily go unnoticed, but in fact it is an integral part of the fabric of the piece. It fulfills different functions and appears in different voices as the piece progresses. There is harmonic tension between this ubiquitous motive and all forms of the E scale found in the piece.

The form of Op. 50/i can be expressed as A B C B<sup>1</sup>A. As shown in the graph below, the piece is balanced in part through the proportions of each section. The A sections total 24 measures, while the contrasting material in the B sections total half that, or 12 measures. The more complex inner sections (B<sup>1</sup> and C) total 8 measures each.



Graph 1 Op. 50/i, form

Melodic materials in this first mazurka include the initial presentation of a descending Podhalean scale. The Podhalean scale is like a Lydian scale with a lowered 7th ( e.g., E F $\sharp$  G $\sharp$  A $\sharp$  B C $\sharp$  D E ), and is indigenous to the region of Poland known as the Podhale. Example 3.2 shows how the scale is employed in the first four measures of Op. 50/i.

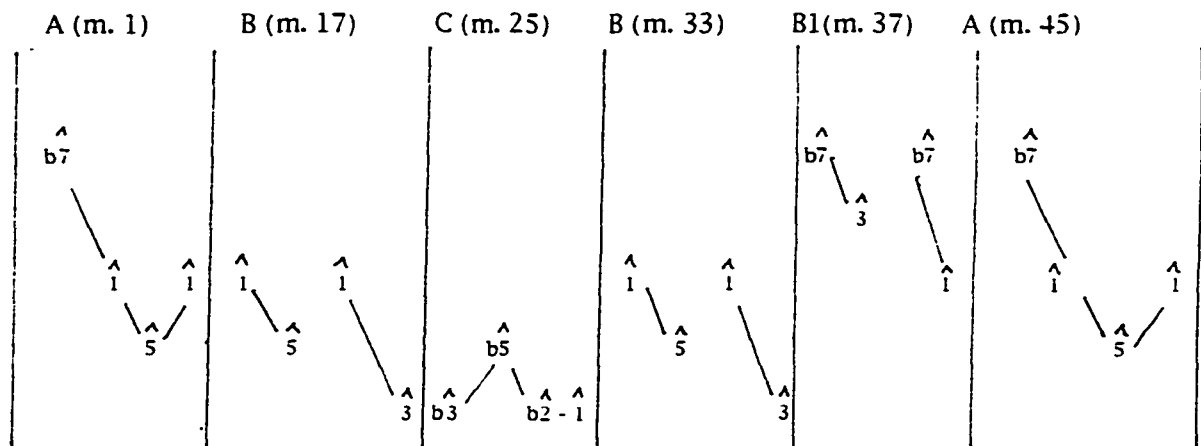
In the first phrase of the melody, both D-natural and D-sharp are used. By using both the D-natural, which is an integral part of the modal scale, and the D-sharp, which in this context implies E major, Szymanowski withholds a firm commitment towards either mode. Under these circumstances, the change of mode from section A to section B doesn't sound as abrupt as it would otherwise, and the pitch E rather than the Podhalean scale or the major mode, is aurally perceived as the focal point.



Ex. 3.2, Op. 50/i, mm. 1-4 (Podhalean scale).

The initial melodic statement in section A is four measures long. This melody is repeated every four measures, for a total of four statements. The melody is more ornamented with each repetition, and retains what Samson

refers to as a 'falling shape' throughout the piece. The descending melodic line is typical of Polish folk music.<sup>65</sup> The melodic outline of Op. 50/i can be expressed as follows:



Graph 2 Op. 50/i, melodic outline [E natural = 1]

Beat 2 carries the metric stress of each measure throughout the piece. Although this is a typical feature of the mazurka, Szymanowski does not use a typical technique to bring this to attention. For example, he does not provide accent marks for emphasis or reinforce this beat in the bass line; rather, he shapes the rhythm of the melodic line, using durational accents to emphasize beat two throughout the piece. That the second beat is prominent becomes obvious immediately in measure one, where the melody rests on a quarter note on beat two, accompanied by an embellishment. This rhythmic inflection continues through the first two sections of the piece, providing the listener with an undulating rhythmic feature. The mazurka rhythm is present, but in a subtle way. This rhythmic figure in the melodic line in sections A, B, and C is shown in the following examples.

<sup>65</sup> Samson, *Szymanowski*, 66-180.

*Sostenuto. Molto rubato*

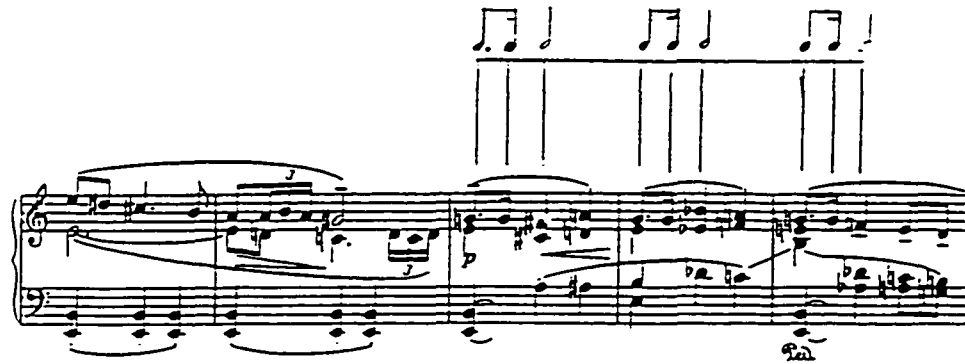
Karol Szymanowski, Op. 50

*p*

Ex. 3.3a, Op. 50/i mm. 1-4, section A

*Sostenuto. Molto rubato*

Ex. 3.3b, Op. 50/i mm. 19-22, section B



Ex. 3.3c, Op. 50/i mm. 23-27, section C (beginning in m. 25)

The tonal structure has been presented in an easily recognizable way by Szymanowski. The emphasis on the pitch E as a tonal center is so strong and continuous, that to focus on that issue in performance would be unimaginative. For performance purposes, it may be more to the point to look for specific places in the piece where the open fifth should be underplayed, or for instances in which Szymanowski uses either the fifth or the single pitch E to special effect. For example, in section A, the open fifth is initially placed on beat one of the first full measure of the piece. Although the first statement of the open fifth is on the first downbeat, beat two is actually stressed as the metric fulcrum throughout the piece, as seen above in Examples 3.3 a-c.

To stress the downbeat of measure 1 would distract from and postpone the onset of the true rhythmic pattern. Therefore, the downbeat here should not be emphasized or accented.

*Sostenuto. Molto rubato*

BEAT 1

BEAT 2

*pp*

Ex. 3.4, Op. 50/i mm. 1-9

At the junction between sections A and B (mm. 16-17), the pitch E in the melodic line is sustained, beginning as the third of a C major chord (see measure 16). In measure 17 the E is reharmonized as the root of an E chord. This is an instance where Szymanowski draws the ear purposefully towards the E as tonic. If the entrance of the drone in the bass is not emphasized, attention to the pitch E can be maintained (see Example 3.5).

The melodic material is subject to change of mode—from Podhalean in the A section to minor, and then to major in section B—the pitch E natural retaining a sense of tonic throughout the piece. Although material in the B sections fluctuates between E major and E minor, the major mode is the goal. The melody comes to rest on scale degrees  $\hat{3}$  and  $\hat{5}$  repeatedly, further



outlining the E (major or minor) triad. This emphasis is marked in Example 3.6.

Ex. 3.5, Op. 50/i mm. 14-18

Ex. 3.6, Op. 50/i mm. 14-24

Although the rhythmic shape of the melodic line is similar in sections A and B, there is a tendency to hear alternating measures as strong and weak in section B. Beat two of measure one seems more urgent than beat two of the second measure (which is the harmonic goal of the phrase).

The open fifth (E-B) becomes a drone in section B, placed on each beat of the measure (see Example 3.7). The interplay between the upper two voices becomes the focus in this section, demanding that the drone be played as subtly and evenly as possible.

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 14-17) includes a section marker 'A' at measure 14 and 'B' at measure 15. The tempo changes from 'allargando' to 'Poco più mosso' at measure 15, with the instruction 'Avviii. e non rubato'. The second system (measures 18-21) continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system (measures 22-27) includes a section marker 'B' at measure 22 and 'C' at measure 23. The tempo changes from 'pp poco marc.' to a faster tempo at measure 23. The score features a drone in the bass line and a melodic line in the upper voices.

Ex. 3.7, Op. 50/i mm. 14-27

Section C (mm. 25-32) is comprised of two four-measure phrases. The bass line in each phrase begins with the open fifth (E-B) occurring on the first beat of the measure, followed by chordal movement on beats two and three. Each phrase culminates with a series of descending chords that leads to IV (A major), reminding the listener that section C still belongs harmonically to the E major B sections on either side of it. Attention is drawn to these IV chords by Szymanowski's use of *poco ritard.* and *riten.*, which mark the closure of each of the two phrases in section C. Careful execution of these performance indications should result in drawing attention to the possibility of further harmonic movement in the bass, which does occur in section B<sup>1</sup>. These cadences are marked below in Example 3.8.

The image displays a musical score for two staves, likely piano and bass. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#), indicating E major. The score is divided into two phrases. The first phrase (mm. 23-26) concludes with a cadence marked 'IV' and 'AM'. The second phrase (mm. 27-30) also concludes with a cadence marked 'IV' and 'AM'. Performance markings include 'poco ritard.', 'pp dolcis.', and 'riten.'. A diagram below the first phrase illustrates the bass line: it begins with an open fifth (E-B) on the first beat, followed by chordal movement on beats two and three, and descending chords on beats four and five. The diagram is labeled 'chordal mvt' and 'descending chords'.

Ex. 3.8, Op. 50/i mm. 23-32

Tonal ambiguity is promoted by altered scale degrees in section C (see Example 3.9). Specifically, the lowered fifth (Bb) in measure 26 is curious, as it is actually a representation of the fourth degree of the Lydian scale. This fourth scale degree is spelled as B-flat rather than A-sharp because of the downward movement of the melodic line. The lowered second scale degree (F natural) in measure 27 has the same effect, acting as a gravitational pull towards the tonic, and helps in maintaining the descending line. Both of the altered scale degrees are placed on beat two. Although the open fifth is given on beat one of each measure, the dissonance on beat two is more powerful.

Ex. 3.9, Op. 50/i mm. 23-32

There is chromatic movement to the pitch B in an inner voice in measures 25 through 27, and again in measures 29-31. While the chromatic alterations in the melody are pulling the melodic line down towards E, this movement pulls the bass towards B. This movement towards the fifth scale degree in the bass is in direct conflict with the melodic line (where A moves to B-flat, then back to A).

The image contains two musical excerpts from Chopin's Op. 50, No. 1, measures 23-32. The top excerpt shows measures 25-27. The melodic line (treble clef) moves from A to B-flat to A. The bass line (bass clef) moves from A to A-sharp to B. The bottom excerpt shows measures 29-31. The melodic line moves from A to B-flat to A. The bass line moves from A to B-flat to B. Both excerpts include dynamic markings like 'poco ritard.', 'pp', 'dolcis.', and 'riten.'.

Ex. 3.10, Op. 50/i mm. 23-32

The bass line is characterized by the open fifth (E-B) until relatively late in the piece. For the first 37 measures of a piece that is only 53 measures long, the open fifth is pervasive. In section B<sup>1</sup> (mm. 37-44), a iv-V-i outline in the bass is presented as the piece moves towards conclusion. The B<sup>1</sup>

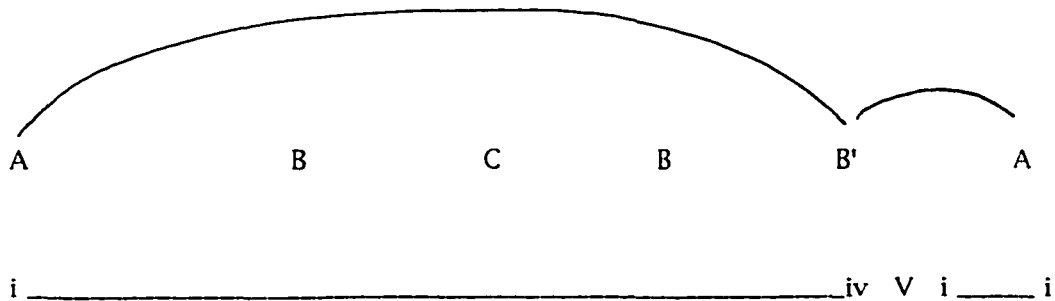
section contains the only functional harmonic progression in the piece (Example 3.11).

An accented lowered seventh scale degree (D-natural) marks the beginning of section B<sup>1</sup>. Although this descending melodic line is constructed of the same notes as the melodic line in section A, the accompanying harmonic movement in the bass implies E major rather than the Podhalean mode.

The musical score for Example 3.11, Op. 50/i, measures 33-48, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 33-48) features a piano (p) section with a tempo marking 'a tempo' and dynamics 'pp', 'p', 'risenuto', and 'mp dolce'. The second system (measures 49-54) features a mezzo-forte (mf) section with dynamics 'mf' and 'unb. pp'. The score includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The harmonic progression is indicated by Roman numerals: V, I, IV, V, I. The first system is labeled B<sup>1</sup>  $\hat{b}7$  and the second system is labeled IV.

Ex. 3.11, Op. 50/i mm. 33-48

The bass line suggests the following harmonic outline:



**Graph 3** Op/ 50/i, bass line

Another example of a place in which the pitch E can be stressed as the tonal center in performance involves the bass movement mentioned above (mm. 37-45). The appearance late in the piece of the iv-V-i harmonic bass movement is rather surprising. The bass movement in B<sup>1</sup> should therefore be emphasized to pull the listener out of the 'trance' created by the pitch E thus far, and to help signal the imminent closure of the piece. This progression is further emphasized by its placement in a lower register, creating a coloristic change. In no other area of the piece does the bass line fall below the initial open fifth (E-B).

Section B<sup>1</sup> includes four phrases, each two measures in length. For the first time in the piece, beat two becomes a division point. Not only does the melody begin on beat two for the first time in the piece (in measure 37), but beat two also marks the bass movement to iv, and again to V in measure 38. This metric shift, coupled with the only bass progression in the piece, is an important rhythmic event. The natural weight of all voices entering on beat

two would make it unnecessary to add additional emphasis. In Example 3.12, the shift in phrase structure is shown in both the melody and bass.

The musical score for Example 3.12, Op. 50/i, mm. 33-42, is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 33-38) shows a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a half note B4. The bass line starts with a half note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, and then a half note B2. The first system concludes with a fermata over the final note. The second system (mm. 39-42) continues the melody and bass line. The melody starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a half note B4. The bass line starts with a half note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, and then a half note B2. The second system ends with a fermata over the final note. The score includes various musical markings such as 'p', 'a tempo', 'riferuto', 'mp dolce', 'pp', 'mf', and 'sub. pp'. It also includes fingering numbers (1, 5, 3, 7, 1) and a Roman numeral 'IV'.

Ex. 3.12, Op. 50/i mm. 33-42



The overall rhythmic plan of the piece deserves special attention. Because section A (marked *Molto rubato*) should sound improvisational, section B (*Avviv. e non rubato*) provides rhythmic stability. The *poco ritard.* and *riten.* markings noted above diffuse the rhythmic energy built up through sections B and C. The metric displacement in B<sup>1</sup> also helps to disrupt the momentum of the piece in preparation for the concluding improvisational A section.

There are several harmonic ideas present that serve to offset the squareness of this tonal framework. The first involves a motive of three successive pitches - CDE. Although the motive is at odds with the modal melodic material, it leads the ear towards the tonal center of E, although in a different way from the drone or the melodic scale figures. In other words, the drone emphasizes an E bass, and the melody is based on a scale with E as tonic. The goal of the motive is also E, although this (CDE) does not necessarily imply in a traditional way that the pitch E is tonic.

The CDE motive appears in several different forms in section A. It is obscured due to its placement in the texture, but initially brought to the attention of the performer through Szymanowski's use of tenuto marks. If all notes in section A with tenuto marks are viewed in succession, the series is as follows:

measures	1-5	5-8	9-12	13-16
	E-CDEF#	E-CDE	E-CDE	E-CDE

Example 3.13 shows these pitches (with tenuto marks) as they are found in the score in section A.

The image displays four staves of musical notation, likely from a piano score, showing the CDE motive with tenuto marks. The notation includes various dynamics (p, pp, pp), tempo markings (Sostenuto, Molto rubato, Poco più mosso, allargando, poco marc.), and articulation marks. The CDE motive is highlighted with brackets and labels C, D, and E across the staves.

Staff 1: *Sostenuto. Molto rubato*. The CDE motive is marked with a bracket and labels C, D, and E. The notation includes a *p* dynamic and a tenuto mark.

Staff 2: The CDE motive is marked with a bracket and labels C, D, and E. The notation includes a *pp* dynamic and a tenuto mark.

Staff 3: The CDE motive is marked with a bracket and labels C, D, and E. The notation includes a *pp* dynamic and a tenuto mark.

Staff 4: *Poco più mosso*, *Allargando*, *poco marc.*. The CDE motive is marked with a bracket and labels C, D, and E. The notation includes a *p* dynamic and a tenuto mark.

Ex. 3.13, Op. 50/i, CDE motive: notes with tenuto marks, section A

The ascending chord sequence in section A, which appears following each melodic statement, provides harmonic reinforcement of the motive. Beginning in measure four, the chord qualities are E minor, D major, C major, and D major. The notes with tenuto marks represent the first version of the CDE motive, and the roots of the chords in the series that begins in measure four represent a second version. This chord series is presented four times in section A. The first presentation is seen in Example 3.14. The chords EDCD are followed each time by both the E-B drone and a first inversion E minor chord, implying a completion of the chord series, which would then be EDCDE

Sostenuto. Molto rubato

Karol Szymanowski, Op. 50

Piano

Em DM CM

DM

Em



pp

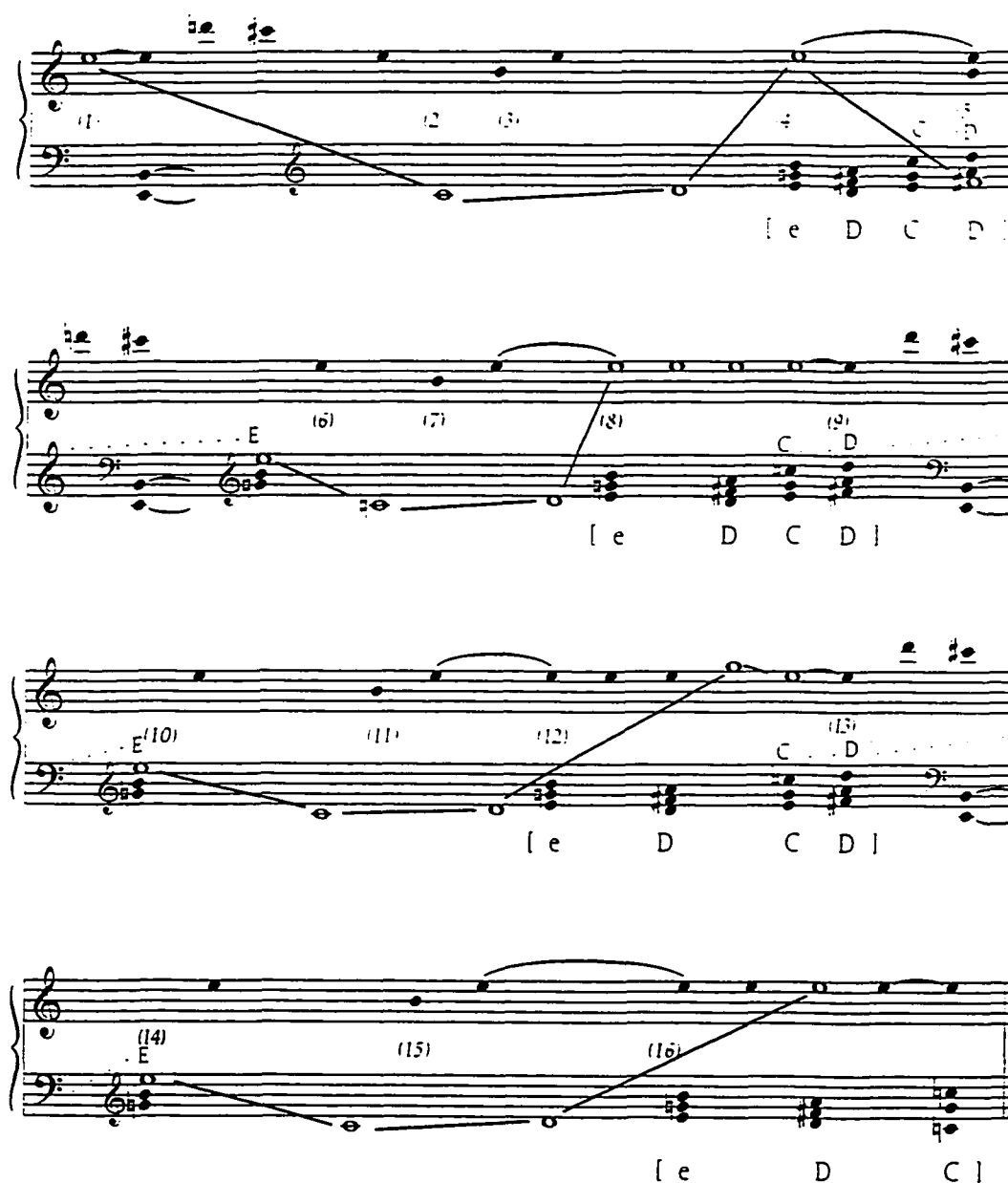
Ex. 3.14, Op. 50/i mm. 1-9

The two chords that precede measure four have not been included as part of this presentation of the motive. These have been excluded for two reasons. First, the chords in measures two and three contain the initial notes of the motive as revealed through the tenuto marks discussed in the previous section. If the performer chooses to bring out the motive beginning in measure two through voicing the chords appropriately, then all pitches other than C and D would provide color and nothing more. The legato-note version of the motive moves to the melody in measure four. At this point, the chord series in the left hand is no longer involved in the tenuto version, but represents the beginning of the chordal version of the CDE motive.

In addition, example 3.14 shows the E minor chord in measure five as part of the series. Although this E minor chord does not appear to be part of the chordal version of the motive, the succession of chords EDCDE forms a more complete picture, and in fact is a prelude to the motive as it appears in section B.

A third version of the CDE motive found in section A involves imitation. The notes CDE appear first as bass notes of chords, beginning in measure two, then as top notes of chords beginning with the last chord in measure four. This pattern is repeated throughout section A, and shows one more way in which the motive is worked into the texture of this section. Graph 4 provides a view of all three versions of the CDE motive as found in section A.

- (1)  tenuto notes  
 (2) [ ] chord quality  
 (5)  imitation



(1) [ e D C D ]

(2) [ e D C D ]

(3) [ e D C D ]

(4) [ e D C ]

Graph 4 Op. 50/i, CDE motive in section A

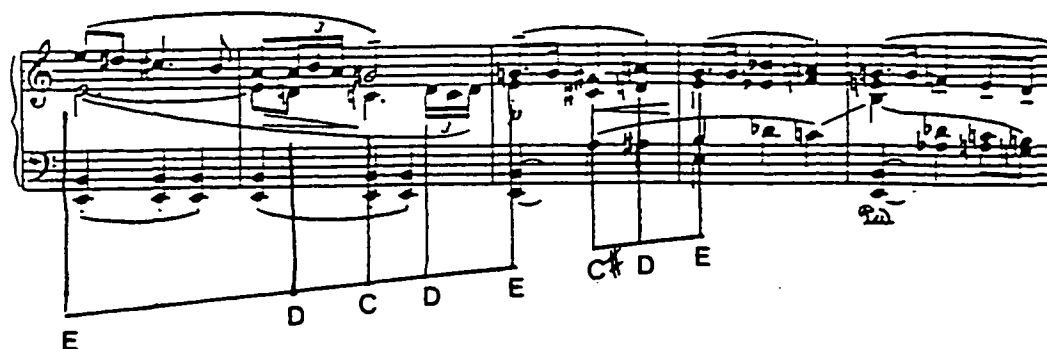
In section B, the CDE motive appears clearly in the inner voice while altered and ornamented retrograde versions appear in the melody. The resulting imitation is shown below in Example 3.15. The altered, retrograde version, in the melody (measure 19) is spelled E D#C#. The following melodic phrase, in measures 21 and 22, contains both the original motive (CDE) in retrograde on stronger beats of these measures, as well as the altered version (E D#C#) in rhythmically weaker places in measure 21. This altered version foreshadows the appearance of the motive in section C.

Ex. 3.15, Op. 50/i mm. 19-22

The effect of the third scale degree (G#) in measure 20, and again in measure 24, is to define the mode of section B as E major. This effect is harmonically obscured as a result of the motivic movement in the inner voice, which reaches C at the same moment the melodic line reaches its goal (G#).

In section B (mm.17-24 and mm. 33-36), the motive is a countermelody to the modal melodic line. Because the texture is so bare, a stark contrast is produced, and attention is sharply drawn to the counterpoint between the melody and the countermelody. This is a natural place to allow the motive to be clearly heard in performance.

In section C, the motive becomes C#D E. Buried in an inner voice, it is clearly heard as an alteration of the motive because it is in the same voice that stated the motive in section B. The motive EDCDE in section B is immediately followed by this C#D E version, as seen in Example 3.16. This presentation of the altered motive appears again, doubled, in measures 29-30.



Ex. 3.16, Op. 50/i mm. 23-27

In section B<sup>1</sup> (mm. 37-44), a reference to the altered motive from section C can be seen, beginning in measure 37. The melody of the B<sup>1</sup> section begins with the movement of D to C#, beginning on beat two of measure 37.

If the motive is followed in the inner voice from the preceding B section, it ends on the pitch E on beat one of measure 37. The result is the

altered motive, appearing this time as E D C#. This statement begins, then, with the first beat of measure 37, where the initial E in the inner voice marks the beginning of the motive. The motive is displaced to the upper voice for continuation. Although there are many ideas at work in this section, including the bass movement (mentioned previously) and the metric displacement of the melody, the continuation of the motive, even in its altered state, provides unity.

Example 3.17, on the following page, shows the second B section, which occurs in abbreviated form (a total of four measures, beginning with measure 33) after section C, and all of section B<sup>1</sup>, from measure 37 to measure 44. Graph 5 (see p. 62) marks the movement of the motive from section B through section B<sup>1</sup>. In the final A section, the motive is again emphasized through the use of tenuto marks and followed by its chordal counterpart, as it is in the beginning section of the piece.

Once the presence and importance of the CDE motive is noted, the performer should consider how often and how much it should be brought out. One consideration would be whether the motive can be emphasized as a diversion from, or a complement to, the strict tonal framework revolving around the pitch E.

The motive in sections B<sup>1</sup> and C is part of a more complicated harmonic texture. It is altered and buried in these sections, becoming part of an overall harmonic picture that includes chromaticism and chords in parallel motion. There is probably more room for creative interpretation in manipulating this motive in the A sections. At the beginning of the piece, attention is drawn towards the first presentation of the melody and the accompanying placement of the drone in the bass. The chord series that includes the CDE motive can be treated as a coloristic feature, a harmonically



interesting addition. Even if the motive is carefully brought out, it is only one of the focal points, and the ear shifts back to the melody with its next entrance. In the A section at the conclusion of the piece, the CDE motive is actually the final harmonic event, and will provide the final focal point for the listener if Szymanowski's legato marks are interpreted literally (see Example 3.17, following page).

Graph 5 (page 62) provides a view of the complete tonal structure of Op. 50/i. The overview provided by this graph shows the directional treatment of the materials that make up the tonal structure of the piece. Szymanowski draws our attention to the pitch E throughout the piece. All voices, singly or combined, either locally or on a larger scale, move towards the tonal center. The performer has a wealth of choices as to when and to what degree to make this clear to the listener.

### 3.4 Op. 50/ii

Op. 50/ii, with its forceful opening theme and intense rhythmic drive, contrasts with the gentle rhythmic undulation of Op. 50/i. The character of Op. 50/ii is generally one of agitation. Instead of having a rhythmic stress on a particular beat of the measure, this piece has alternate stresses (in the melodic line), first on beats one and three, then on beat two of the following measure.

The form of Op 50/ii can be viewed in several different ways. This mazurka is divided into distinct sections, each with individual tonal, textural, and thematic materials. Analysis using these considerations would result in the following formal plan:

mm	1-8	9-28	29-36	37-52	53-60	61-80	81-88	89-106
	A	B	A	C	D	B	A	CODA

(B) (B')

*p* *a tempo* *pp* *ritenuto* *poco sostenuto* *mp dolce* *enh. pp* *diminuendo* *riten.* *p* *Tempo I* *c#* *d*

Ex. 3.17, Op. 50/i mm. 33-48

The musical score is divided into four systems, each with a piano (p) and a violin (v) part. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The systems are labeled A, B, (C), and (B').

- System A (measures 1-16):** The piano part begins with a key signature change to one sharp (F#). The violin part enters with a melody. Measure numbers (1), (5), and (14) are indicated.
- System B (measures 17-26):** The piano part continues with a key signature change to one sharp (F#). The violin part continues its melody. Measure numbers (17) and (25) are indicated.
- System (C) (measures 27-37):** The piano part continues with a key signature change to one sharp (F#). The violin part continues its melody. Measure numbers (27), (33), and (37) are indicated.
- System (B') (measures 38-50):** The piano part continues with a key signature change to one sharp (F#). The violin part continues its melody. Measure numbers (43), (45), and (50) are indicated.

Graph 5 Op 50/i, overview of tonal structure

The following brief overview will provide a better understanding of this analysis, showing the individual characteristics of each section.

Section A is characterized by a thematic statement in the Mixolydian mode. Supported by an open fifth in the bass, the tonal center A is established.

**A Mixolydian**

*Allegremento. Poco vivace. (Rubassnie)\*)*

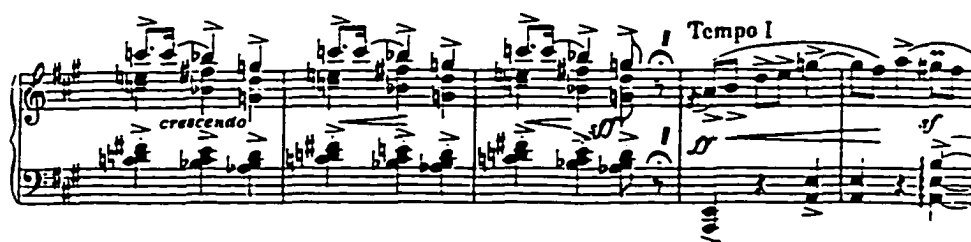
Ex. 3.18, Op. 50/ii mm. 1-4

Section B (mm. 9-28) has a melodic line that strongly implies C major. Although the bass accompaniment (a rhythmically repeated minor second) obscures the tonality, the section ends by stressing the relationship between the pitches C and G (Example 3.19). It is interesting to note Szymanowski's focus on the pitches CDE, beginning in measure nine.

m8 m9 C D E  
 a tempo (poco più)  
 poco riten.  
 pp staccato  
 armon. Ped.

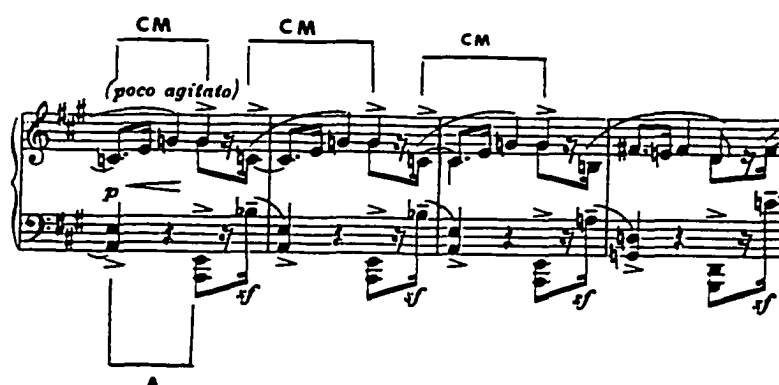
cre - - - - - scen - - - - - do poco

Ex. 3.19, Op. 50/ii mm. 6-30 (cont. on next page)



Ex. 3.19, Op. 50/ii mm. 6-30, section B

The second A section is followed by section C (mm. 37-52), which begins by combining the A Mixolydian and C major tonalities presented thus far, creating a bitonal texture. This does not seem particularly unusual to the ear at this point, each tonality having been presented alone and at length. A C major triad is outlined in the melodic line, accompanied by the open fifth A-E in the bass (Example 3.20).



Ex. 3.20, Op. 50/ii mm. 37-40

Greater tonal instability is produced in the following measures. An F# major triad (measure 41), outlined in the melodic line, is accompanied alternately in the bass by an open fifth (C-G) and a tritone (E-A#).

The musical score for Example 3.21, Op. 50/ii, measures 37-44, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 37-44, and the second system covers measures 45-48. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The tempo is marked '(poco agitato)'. The dynamics are piano (p) and fortissimo (sf). The melody is in the right hand, and the bass line is in the left hand. A bracket labeled 'C' spans measures 37-40. A bracket labeled 'CM' spans measures 41-44. A bracket labeled 'F#M' spans measures 41-44, with 'm 41' written below it. The bass line has a bracket labeled 'A' under measures 37-40 and a bracket labeled 'E-A#' under measures 41-44. The melody has a bracket labeled 'C' under measures 41-44. The lyrics 'cre - scen - du' are written under the melody in measures 41-44.

Ex. 3.21, Op. 50/ii mm. 37-44

This idea is extended in measures 45-48 (see Example 3.22). There, the melodic line outlines a C major triad, followed by a Lydian-flavored descent. The bass line outlines the open fifth Ab-Eb, followed by parallel tritones

under the descending melodic line; the tritone C-F# mirrors the melodic line above. The entire section ends on an unaccompanied F# in the melody (Example 3.22).

Ex. 3.22, Op. 50/ii mm. 42-51

Section D (beginning in measure 52) is the only lyrical part of the piece, and is only eight measures in length. Providing a surprising change of mood, the melody is supported by simple and direct dominant-tonic bass



movement in the keys of D major and Db major respectively. The melodic line carries the idea of the tritone forward from the previous section. Here, it occurs at a focal point in the melodic line (m. 55 and m. 59), and is given special emphasis (Example 3.23).

The musical score for Example 3.23, Op. 50/ii, mm. 53-61, is presented in two systems. The first system, marked "Poco meno. Tranquillo", shows a melodic line in the right hand with a tritone interval (B - E<sup>#</sup>) highlighted. The left hand has a bass line with a tritone interval (B<sup>b</sup> - E) highlighted. The key signature changes from D major to Db major. The second system, marked "Sub. Tempo I.", shows a more chromatic melodic line. The left hand has a bass line with a tritone interval (B<sup>b</sup> - E) highlighted. The key signature changes from Db major to D major. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*p dolce*, *p dolciss.*, *con*, *pp*), articulation (accents), and tempo markings.

Ex. 3.23, Op. 50/ii mm. 53-61

In preparation for the final A section, Szymanowski moves from section D directly into a more chromatic version of section B. Two factors that make the melodic line at the beginning of this second B section tonally

ambiguous are the stresses on both Eb and E (which obscure the relationship of the pitch E to the tonal center of A) and the tritone B-F (which frames the first half of the melodic statement). Both of these are noted in Example 3.24.

Ex. 3.24, Op. 50/ii mm. 58-66

The melody of the first B section returns with its emphasis on the notes CDE. The original melody is doubled, the accompaniment thicker than before, but the intent is to move more strongly towards C as a tonal center (Example 3.25).

Ex. 3.25, Op. 50/ii mm. 63-72

Although beginning within a more obscure tonal framework, this second B section ends as did the first B section, stressing the relationship between the pitches C and G.

The last presentation of section A is forceful, with the melody and accompanying voices doubled, creating a final sweep into the now-familiar opening theme. The last four notes of the theme (B-C-A-G natural, m. 88) are

sequenced one step lower in measure 89 (A-B-G natural-F=), marking the beginning of the coda (Example 3.26).

The musical score shows two systems of music. The first system contains measures 80, 81, and 82. Above measure 80 is the label 'A'. A vertical line is placed between measures 80 and 81, with 'm 80' to the left and 'm 81' to the right. The vocal line has lyrics 'cre - - - - - scen - - - - - do' under measures 80-82. The second system contains measures 83 through 88. Above measures 83-88, there are labels 'B', 'C', 'A', and 'G' with arrows pointing to specific notes. The tempo marking 'poco riten.' appears at the end of the passage.

Ex. 3.26, Op. 50/ii mm. 78-88

The coda stresses both the original mode, with its lowered seventh (G), and dominant preparation for conclusion of the piece. This is represented by the first presentation of the theme in the bass on the pitch E (measure 93).

AB G  $\frac{4}{4}$  F#  $\frac{4}{4}$  G  $\frac{4}{4}$  G  $\frac{4}{4}$

*a tempo*

*mp dolce*

*poco riten.*

*Am:V*

(theme in E)

*sosten.*

*poco riten.*

*p dolce espress.*

*avviv. (scherz.)*

*Am:V*

Ex. 3.27, Op. 50/ii mm. 89-99

Op. 50/ii ends contrapuntally. The theme is passed between the left and right hands, appearing in the tonic when in the upper voice and in the dominant when in the lower. Also, it becomes fragmented, slower, and quieter, until the piece ends with a sudden *sff* sonority, which occurs at a doubling of the A-E fifth with an added B (Example 3.28).

Ex. 3.28, Op. 50/ii mm. 94-106

Tempo, texture, and rhythm have a great effect on the formal plan. Some sections, when combined, form a rhythmic continuum that seems to supersede the parameters set in the initial overview of the form. Three times during the piece, this forward rhythmic motion is arrested by a fermata. Aurally, then, the piece seems to be divided into four large sections, the first three of which end with fermatas. This aural interpretation is supported by Szymanowski's use of crescendos and/or accelerando/riten. markings as each section moves towards its conclusion.

Graph 6, below, represents a condensation of the form from the seven sections presented in the overview (on line 1) to four larger sections (on lines 2 and 3). The first two large sections, beginning in measure one and measure 29 respectively, include the opening thematic statement followed by contrasting thematic material (see line 3). Originally designated section B and section C, (see line 1) this contrasting material is included in the first two sections of the piece, and is indicated by lower case letters on line 3. This interpretation of the form (line 3) more closely matches what is heard aurally. In addition, the measures leading up to each fermata represent the whirling, accelerated dance steps common to the *kujawiak*.

mm	1....9.....28	29....37....52	53.....61.....80	81...88	89.....106
1.	A__B <sup>1</sup> __	A__C__	D__B <sup>2</sup> __	A	CODA
2.	A__	A <sup>1</sup> __	B__	A	CODA
3.	A....a <sup>1</sup> .....	A.....b.....	B.....a <sup>2</sup> ....	A.....	CODA

**Graph 6** Op. 50/ii, synopsis of form

The form of Op. 50/ii is determined by the tonalities asserted in each section of the piece and their relationship to the overall tonal center built around the pitch A. As is the case in each of the Op. 50/I mazurkas, Szymanowski presents a tonal struggle between the main tonal idea and materials that would challenge that idea. In contrast to Op. 50/i, in which the

pitch E is retained as the tonal center throughout all sections of the piece, Op. 50/ii moves through a succession of tonal centers. Graph 7 provides a basic overview of the tonal centers established in each section of the piece.

m. #	1-28	29-52	53-80	81-88	89-106
form:	A-----a <sup>1</sup>	A----- b	B-----a <sup>2</sup>	A	coda
tonal centers	a-----C	a---C---F#	D---Db---C	a	a

Graph 7 Op. 50/ii, tonal centers

As the piece progresses, there is movement away from the pitch A toward tonalities both a minor third above (C) and a minor third below (F#). The resulting pattern can be expressed over the course of the piece in the following way:

a-----C-----F#-----C-----a

As observed in the analysis of Op. 50/i, Szymanowski constructed relationships to a single pitch (the tonal center, E). In this second mazurka, a similar technique is used. Although the overall tonal center is A, it has been shown that several tonal areas are asserted as the piece progresses. The tonal centers in each section of Op. 50/ii are linked through Szymanowski's use of the pitch G. In each section of the piece, Szymanowski uses the pitch G in a significant way, emphasizing the relationship between this pitch and



the tonal center of that particular section. The performer should consider Szymanowski's special placement and treatment of this pitch, deciding how best to express the relationship of the pitch G to the tonal center in each section. The presence of the pitch G as a significant harmonic component within the tonality of every section of the piece allows for movement of the tonal center away from the pitch A and back again.

For example, in the opening measures of the piece it is the lowered seventh (G) that identifies the mode as A Mixolydian. This fact is reinforced by Szymanowski in the first measure of the opening theme. Significantly, both the A and the G in the first measure are accented.

Ex. 3.29, Op. 50/ii mm. 1-4

Secondly, the pitch G is the single most important pitch other than the tonic in the key of C major. Beginning in measure nine, C is the tonal center, and the pitch G is emphasized repeatedly, first as a member of the accompaniment figure in the bass, where it moves to Gb then back to G. The pitch G then takes on a more pressing harmonic significance as its relationship to the pitch C is stressed (Example 3.30).

*a tempo (poco più)*  
*poco riten.*  
*pp staccato*  
*araba l'ed.*  
 G 4

G 1

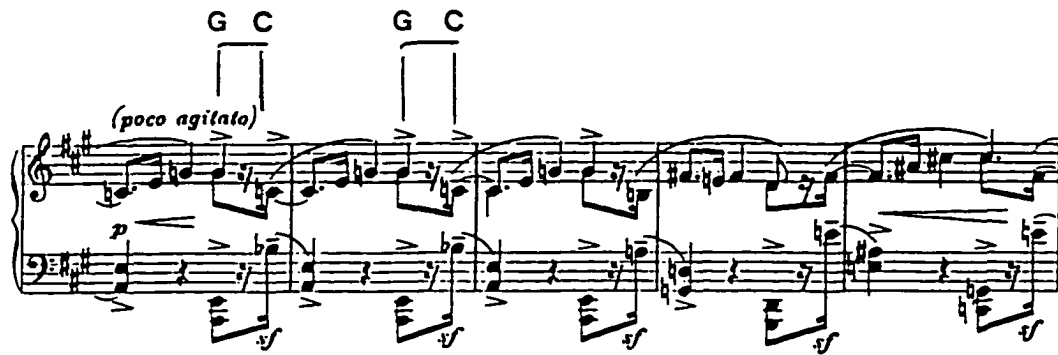
G 9

cre - scen - do poco poco  
 V

*crescendo*

Ex. 3.30, Op. 50/ii mm. 6-28

Beginning in section  $a^2$  (m. 37), the pitch G is the fifth of the C major triad in the melody. Szymanowski accents both the G and the C, as he did in the melodic line at the beginning of the piece (Example 3.31).



Ex. 3.31, Op. 50/ii mm. 37-41

This section of the piece, as noted previously, is bitonal. The melodic line clearly moves from C major to  $F^\sharp$  major and finally to a single  $F^\sharp$  at the fermata in measure 51. This is harmonized in part by the open fifths A-E, C-G, and Ab-Eb. The bitonal texture of section  $a^2$  becomes increasingly more dissonant. At the beginning of the second phrase in measure 41, a tritone is introduced in the harmonic accompaniment. This sonority could be analyzed vertically as a dominant seventh ( $F^\sharp$ -A $\sharp$ -C $\sharp$ -E) and, in fact, could be seen to resolve in the bass in measure 44 (Ex. 3.32).

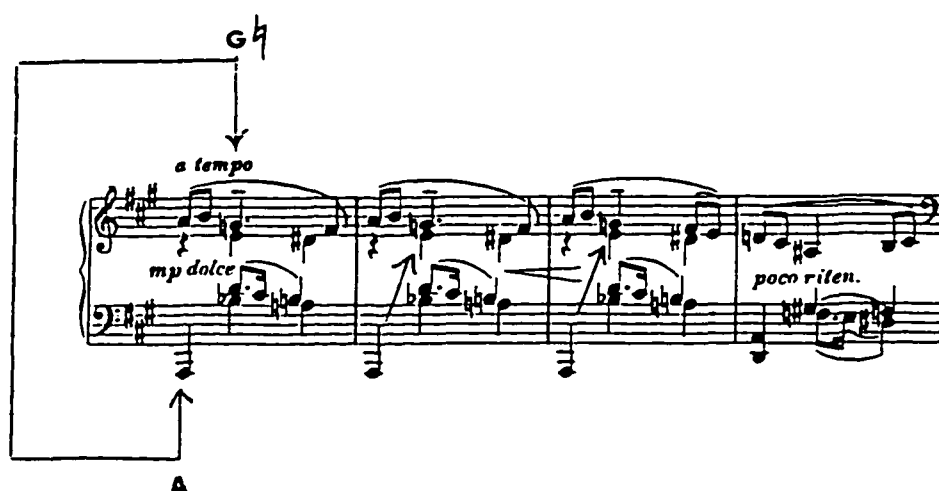


piece. In the melodic line, there are tritones marked by stresses, reminiscent of the preceding section. In the accompaniment, the movement from G to Gb and back to G provides a harmonic lead into the second a<sup>1</sup> section (Example 3.33).

The musical score for Example 3.33, Op. 50/ii, measures 52-61, is presented in two systems. The first system, marked "Poco meno. Tranquillo", features a piano part with dynamics *p dolce* and *con fto*. The second system, marked "Sub. Tempo I. (Vivace)", includes the marking *riten.*. Below the staves, a horizontal line with an arrow indicates a harmonic progression: G<sup>4</sup>, G<sup>b</sup>, G<sup>b</sup>, B<sup>b</sup><sub>1</sub>, G<sup>4</sup>. Vertical lines connect these notes to specific measures in the score, showing the movement from G to G<sup>b</sup> and back to G.

Ex. 3.33, Op. 50/ii mm. 52-61

As noted previously, the coda begins with a fragment that mirrors the final notes of the original theme. This fragment includes a G natural on the accented beat of the phrase. In addition, it immediately follows an A in the bass. This is a gesture repeated from the opening measure of the piece, where the proximity and harmonic importance of these two pitches and their relationship to one another was stressed in the melodic line (Example 3.34).



Ex. 3.34, Op. 50/ii mm. 89-92

The emphasis on beat two at the beginning of the coda interrupts the established two-measure rhythmic pattern (stressing beats one and three of the first measure, then beat two of the second). The piece does not push rhythmically towards a conclusion. Instead, Szymanowski works towards derailing any accumulated rhythmic forward motion. He does this first by sequencing the last measure of the theme, with its gesture towards G on beat two, then by using the theme contrapuntally, overlapping the entrances in the last measures of the piece. This final treatment of the theme obscures the established rhythm. The piece ends without commitment to a rhythmic pattern. The dynamic level of the coda does not rise above *mp*, and Szymanowski uses *poco riten.* or *riten.* markings three times as the piece approaches its conclusion. All of these factors allow the final *sff* chord to act not so much as a concluding sonority, but rather as a punctuation between Op. 50/ii and Op. 50/iii.

### 3.5 Op. 50/iii

In several ways, Op. 50/iii is the most straightforward of the four mazurkas in Op. 50/I. A delicate character is maintained throughout, the dynamic level never rising above *mp*. With a tonality of C# major, Op. 50/iii is the first of the four mazurkas built around a triad rather than a single pitch. This mazurka is more an expression of an emotional state than a dance. Fragility is the quality here, and care should be taken that changes in rhythmic patterns or tonality do not disrupt the general character of the piece. Szymanowski indicates this in his careful attention to gradation at a quiet dynamic level throughout the piece. The C# major triad is used sparingly and as a delicate special effect. Placed between the agitated Op. 50/ii and the rhythmic Op. 50/iv finale, the effect of this mazurka is analogous to a slow movement of a sonata.

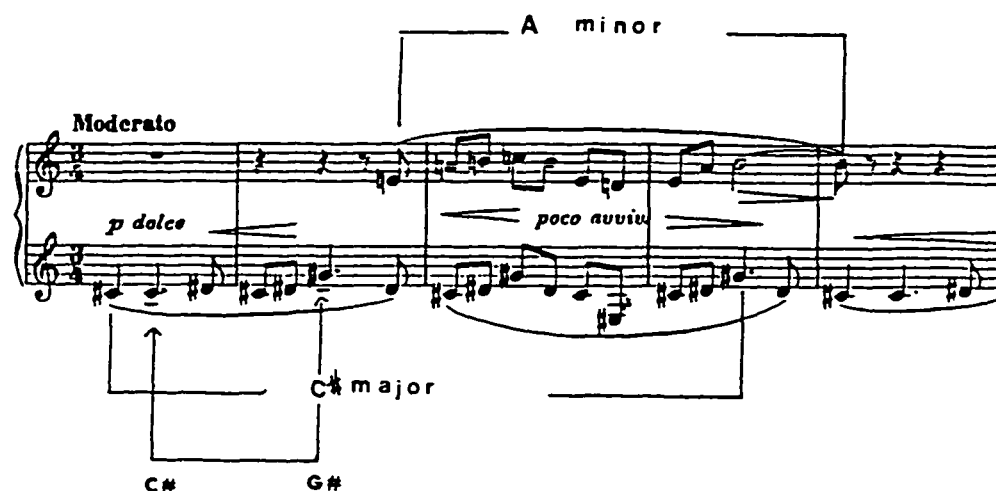
The form of Op. 50/iii is easily ascertained, and can be expressed as follows:

measure#	1-9	10-23	24-29	30-52	53-59	60-69	70-77
	A	B	A	C	A	B	CODA

The piece begins with Szymanowski's use of what Dallin calls 'dual modality'.<sup>66</sup> The left hand enters with a theme in C# major, and the right hand enters in measure two, with a countermelody (similar in character) in the key of A minor. As in Op. 50/ii, Szymanowski stresses the parameters of the opening theme (Example 3.35).

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<sup>66</sup> Dallin, in Techniques of Twentieth-Century Composition (129), states that dual modality is common only between the major and minor modes.



Ex. 3.35, Op. 50/iii section A, mm. 1-5

Szymanowski's use of dual modality in the first section of Op. 50/iii is similar in texture to "Major and Minor" from Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* (Example 3.36). This Bartók example is one of five given by Dallin, and closely matches the opening of this mazurka.<sup>67</sup> Bartók uses this technique throughout the piece, the two parts reversed in the central section. This texture is present only in the A sections of Op. 50/iii.

There are several ways in which Szymanowski intentionally obscures the mode of the first theme. Although the opening theme is in C# major, the mode is not established until measure three when the melodic line plunges down to E#. In order to weaken this significant pitch, Szymanowski places it in a low register on the second half of beat three, where it is rhythmically powerless. In addition, it is preceded and followed by the vertical sonority of C# to E. The listener, then, hears a fleeting C# major triad, but only as a horizontal melodic event. At the same time, C# minor is implied by vertical

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 131.



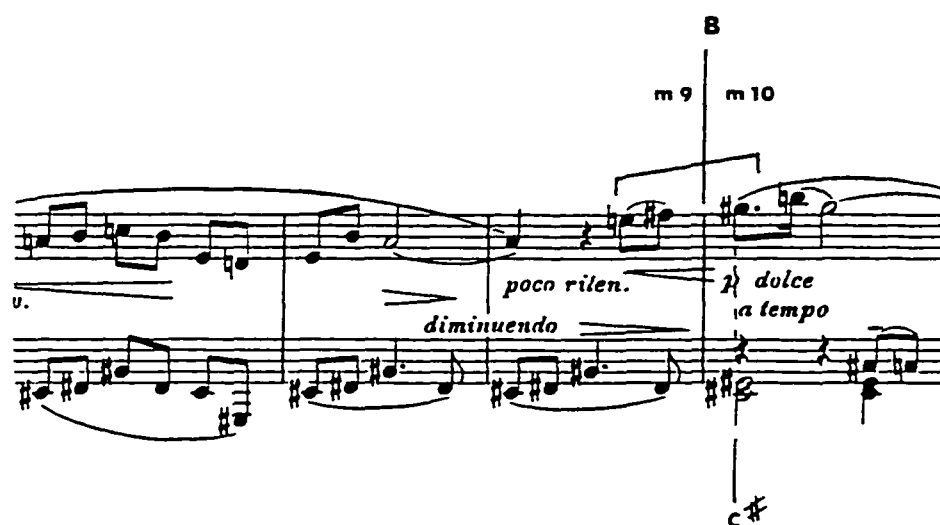
sonorities produced by the counterpoint. These factors that work to obscure modality in section A are seen below in Example 3.37.

Ex. 3.36 Bartók, "Major and Minor"

Ex. 3.37, Op. 50/iii mm. 1-5


In Op. 50/i, the mode surrounding the pitch E continued to change throughout the piece. As mentioned, the effect was to center attention on a single pitch as a tonal center, and to make the issue of mode less relevant in the overall tonal picture. Szymanowski's purpose in section A of Op. 50/iii is to withhold clear identification of mode, but only temporarily.

Section B begins in measure 10 with a C# major triad. At this juncture, it becomes clear that section A can be perceived as an upbeat to section B. The C# major triad in measure 10 is an uncomplicated, straightforward gesture, and could serve as the opening sonority of the piece (Example 3.38).



Ex. 3.38, Op. 50/iii mm. 7-10

The change in the rhythmic pattern of the melodic line from section A to section B is a significant factor in the transition between the two sections. The uninterrupted flow of the two melodic lines in section A, when played evenly and with closely matched dynamic levels, suggests a pulse that stresses beat two of the measure. This gives way to the more chordal texture of section B, where the rhythm is more distinctly defined. Beats one and

three are stressed in the harmony, and the rhythmic structure of the melodic line comes to rest on beat two of each measure. The melody, beginning in measure 10, contains a rhythmic figure (  ) that is prevalent throughout all sections that contrast with section A. The shift from the contour of the melodic line in section A to a rhythmic pattern governed by the figure noted above is gradual, as seen on the following page in Example 3.39.

Section B can be divided into four parts (which, for purposes of this discussion, are called: a b a b). The 'a' sections (mm. 10-12 and mm. 17-19) provide a lyric expression of the C# major tonality, while the 'b' sections introduce a more rhythmic expression, the C# and G# in the inner voices acting as a drone. Although the character of the two sections is different, Szymanowski downplays the potential for contrast by keeping the dynamic levels similar and placing *riten.* markings at the end of each (Example 3.40).

The second occurrence of section A (mm. 24-29) is identical to the first in substance, but its beginning overlaps with the end of the section B. (Example 3.41)

Bitonality is present in the central (C) section of the piece. Szymanowski's melody is in F major, the accompanying chords in B major. Dallin's example of this technique, from Bartók's String Quartet No. 2 (Example 3.42), is a more straightforward representation, as the melody and accompanying chords are clearly separated. <sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

*Moderato*

*p dolce*

*poco avviv.*

*poco riten.*

*diminuendo*

*p dolce a tempo*

*p avvivando*

Ex. 3.39, Op. 50/iii mm. 1-15

B m.10

poco avviv.

diminuendo

poco riten.

p. dolce a tempo

(a) m. 10-12

(b) m. 13-16

G#

C#

(a) m. 18-20

poco meno (come sopra)

poco riten.

poco rit.

G#

(b) m. 21-24

a tempo (avviv.)

poco più mosso

riten.

C#

Ex. 3.40, Op. 50/iii mm. 6-24

*a tempo (avviv.)*  
*poco più mosso*  
*rilen.*  
*mp*  
*non ritard.*  
*p alluvando*

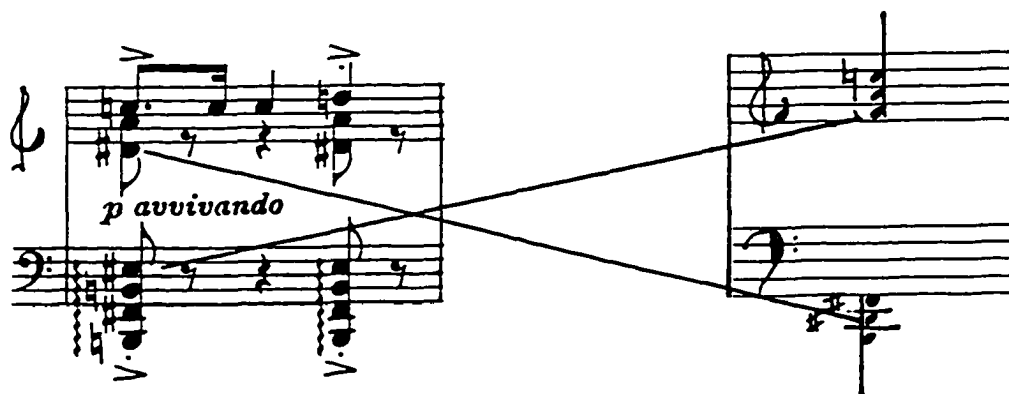
m 23 m 24 A  
m 29 m 30 C

Ex. 3.41, Op. 50/iii mm. 20-30

$\text{♩} = 132$   
*p*  
*pp*

Ex. 3.42 Bartók, String Quartet No. 2

At the beginning of section C (Op. 50/iii, Example 3.43), the harmony contains the pitch F, or tonic, of the melody, spelled enharmonically as E#.



Ex. 3.43, Op. 50/iii m. 30

Section C is also clearly divided into sub-sections, each with a different tonal emphasis. With no preparation, the tonality abruptly shifts from the C# major of section B through a series of single or combined tonalities. According to Dallin, 'shifting tonality' is "a mannerism of certain Soviet composers which has sufficient currency to justify its consideration" as a compositional technique in this century. It differs from modulation in that the tonal shift is unprepared and usually moves to a remote tonal region.<sup>69</sup> Dallin also states that a shift in tonality implies one tonal center being displaced by another. The tonal arena of section C is complex, with myriad keys represented in both in the melody and the harmony. The tonal shifts in section C are frequent, no new tonality lasting long enough to realistically

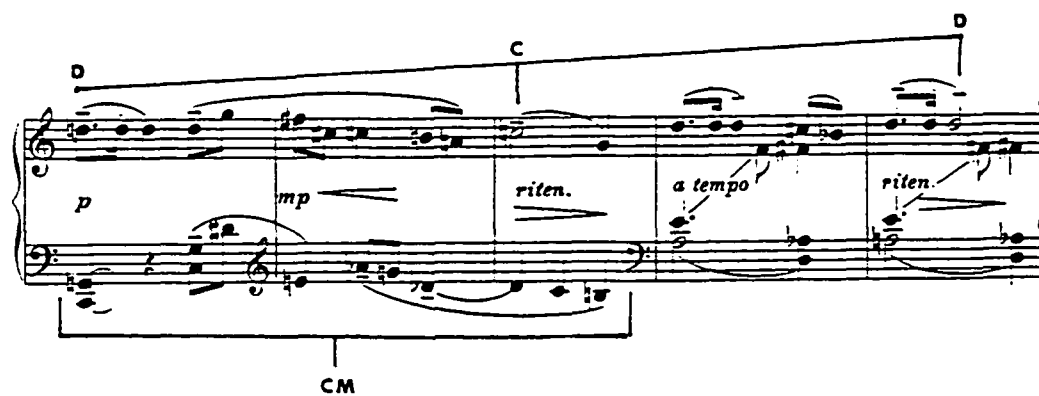
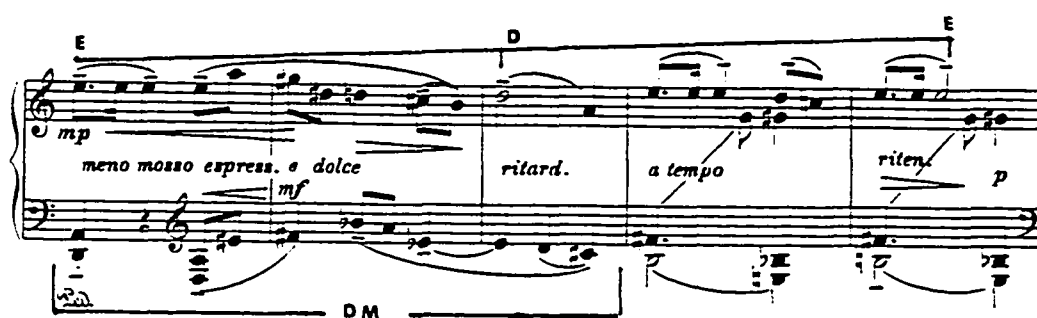
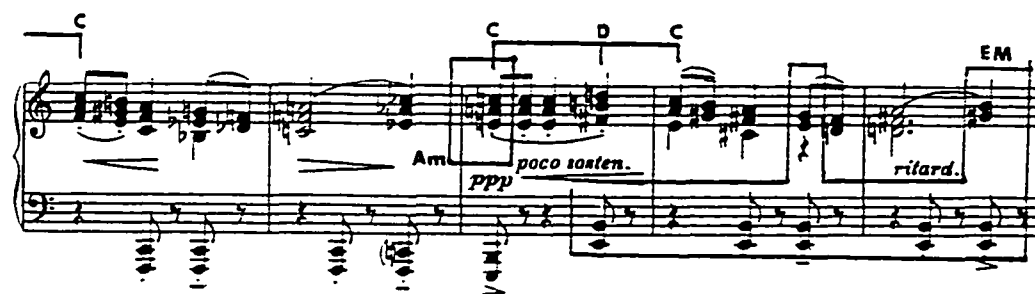
<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 126.

be identified as a new tonal center. Tonal stability through this section is maintained in part through the melodic line, where a three-note motive (C-D-C), outlining the first phrase, is repeated, sequenced, or inverted in every phrase. This melodic movement carries the ear through the section, minimizing the impact of shifting tonal areas. Another stabilizing factor that keeps section C aurally connected to other sections of the piece is Szymanowski's use of the two rhythmic cells noted previously in sections A and B. In example 3.44, all of section C is presented. This example shows the three major factors discussed in the paragraph above: shifts in tonality; use of the two rhythmic cells; and the melodic motive carried through section C.

The musical score for Example 3.44, Op. 50/iii (cont. on next page), is presented in two systems. The first system begins with the instruction *non ritard.* and *p alluvando*. It features a melodic line with a three-note motive (C-D-C) and a bass line with a rhythmic cell. The second system begins with *pp più tranquillo*, *riten.*, and *ppp a tempo, leggiero*. It continues the melodic and rhythmic motifs. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 3.44, Op. 50/iii (cont. on next page)





Ex. 3.44, Op. 50/iii mm. 29-51

Szymanowski prepares the final entrance of the opening theme with a melodic descent that begins in measure 45. The descent in A minor from  $\hat{5}$  to  $\hat{1}$  in the right hand is shown in Example 3.45. Preparation for the final entrance of the principal C# major theme in the left hand is more subtle. The tonal implications of the fifths Eb-Bb (measure 43) and Db-Ab (measure 48) are dispelled when the principal theme grows from an enharmonic spelling in measure 52. The outline of the original C# major theme, expressed by scale degrees  $\hat{1}$  and  $\hat{5}$ , is implied by these fifths just mentioned (Eb-Bb and Db-Ab). The chromatic movement to G# ( $\hat{5}$ ) in an inner voice (measures 45-46) and to F# ( $\hat{4}$ ) (measures 50-51) supports the entrance of the theme in measure 52. These are purely melodic events, but they allow for an interpretation of section C that will keep the listener connected to the tonal center of C#. Szymanowski has pointed the performer towards a contrapuntal interpretation of section C. With careful attention to linear movement, the performer can keep the listener aurally connected to the tonal center and make a seamless entry into the final statement of A.

In summation, the opening thematic material of the piece is presented three times. First, the C# major theme begins with no accompaniment, creating an unobstructed aural imprint; second, the entrance is slightly obscured but easily perceived (aurally), accompanied by the two pitches initially stressed by Szymanowski as the outer boundaries of the theme; and finally, the entrance is masked by an enharmonic spelling, rising from a maze of seemingly unrelated tonal areas.

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 42-45) has a tempo marking of *meno mosso espress. e dolce* and a dynamic of *mf*. The second system (measures 46-49) includes tempo markings of *ritard.*, *a tempo*, and *riten.*. The third system (measures 50-55) includes tempo markings of *p*, *riten.*, *a tempo*, and *riten.*. The score also features various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 3.45, Op. 50/iii mm. 42-55

The final statement of the theme is not so much an entrance as a continuation of linear events, as seen in example 3.45. An aural illusion has been created by Szymanowski; the theme has been there all along, surfacing gradually until, in measure 55, nothing is left in the texture but the clearly

recognizable melodic lines from the beginning of the piece. To create this effect, it is important that the enharmonically spelled theme in measures 52-54 not stand out too clearly. Szymanowski suggests this by stressing notes in both melodic lines (Example 3.46). Once the performer notes the theme in its enharmonic guise, the temptation would be to make it immediately clear to the listener, but a greater effect is achieved by suppressing the theme's identity until it is fully revealed in measure 55.

The musical score shows measures 52 through 55. Measures 52-54 are grouped by a box labeled "stressed notes". In these measures, the right hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes, and the left hand plays a bass line with eighth notes. The notes in the left hand are marked with *pp* and *pp* (2nd). A dashed box labeled "m 55" indicates the start of a new section. The text "theme - enharmonic spelling" is written below the first staff.

Ex. 3.46, Op. 50/iii mm. 52-55

An abbreviated repetition of section B begins in measure 60. Like the first B section, the second one begins with a C# major triad. Throughout the piece, Szymanowski has used this triadic outline very judiciously. The first and only other time a C# major triad has been heard without any other pitches present is on beat one of measure 10. This is one reason its return in

measure 60 is so effective. Szymanowski's *riten.* markings prior to each B section alert the performer to the significance of this sonority. The effect of lingering, in preparation for an important moment, should be fully exploited at the approach of each B section.

The coda, which interrupts the second B section in measure 70, begins as a rhythmic mirror of the melodic fragment found in measures 62 and 69, outlining a C# major triad beginning in measure 70. (Example 3.47)

m. 62



m. 69-70



Ex. 3.47, Op. 50/iii

Rather than referring to thematic material from section A, Szymanowski reiterates the C# major triad throughout the coda. The last two measures have the same effect as the beginning measures of both B sections, stating a C# major triad and nothing else. This, then, is revealed as the single most important tonal event of the piece. The ethereal quality of the piece must be maintained throughout if this tonal event is to be effective.

Because of its dreamlike character, Op. 50/iii is less like a dance than the other mazurkas in the set. Even Op. 50/i, which begins with an improvisational section in tempo rubato, becomes more dance-like with the rhythmic patterns of its inner sections. Briefly, at the beginning of section

C (measure 30), this third mazurka sounds as if a strong rhythmic pattern will be established. But the stresses occur on every other beat, resulting in a duple pattern within the triple meter of the piece, and therefore do not reflect a typical mazurka rhythm. In addition, the dynamic level is *piano* in measure 30 (the beginning of section C), and decreases throughout the section. It becomes apparent that the plaintive upper-neighbor sigh in the melody takes precedence over rhythmic emphasis.

The coda comprises the last eight measures of the piece. The dynamic markings (*pp* followed by decrescendos), sparse texture, and lack of a definitive rhythmic pattern give the ending an ethereal quality. The overall effect achieved in this mazurka is a cleansing of both the rhythmic palate, as the piece has no driving rhythmic emphasis, and of the tonal palate, with the dissipation of the final C= major triad.

### 3.6 Op. 50/iv

The last mazurka of Op. 50/I is characteristic of a finale, with strong tonal and rhythmic opening gestures. More lengthy than the other three pieces, Op. 50/iv also has a thicker texture and more complex tonal relationships.

The extended rondo form of this mazurka is punctuated by blocks of static harmony that serve as resting points between one formal section and another, or between two different tonal areas. The form of Op. 50/iv is shown below.

m#	1-16	17-28	29-34	35-68	69-84	85-96	97-107	108-115
section	A	B	A <sup>1</sup>	C	A <sup>2</sup>	B	A <sup>3</sup>	coda

This mazurka has two distinct characters, one represented by the *marcato* theme in the A sections, accompanied by strong rhythmic accents and sforzandos, and a dynamic level ranging *mf* to *ff*. The B section has a contrasting lyrical theme and a dynamic range that contrasts with that in section A. The shift between these two moods is sudden, and the difference between them is great. By the end of section A<sup>1</sup>, the lowest dynamic level of the piece thus far has been reached (*ppp* in m. 34). Throughout section C, the gradual shift of mood back to that of section A is not only achieved through dynamics, but also through an increase in gestures found at the beginning of the piece.

Szymanowski shows great attention to articulation in this mazurka, using accents and stress marks frequently. As in the other three pieces, he underlines certain pitch relationships through the use of legato marks or accents, but in this mazurka he also uses such marks for rhythmic articulation and to achieve more control over pitch inflection in general.

Op. 50/iv represents a culmination of the Op. 50 set, incorporating at least one significant feature from each of the previous pieces. These ideas are woven together in the last mazurka, and their interdependence forms the tonal structure of the piece. The specific technical features from Op. 50/i-iii used as the basis of tonal structure in the last mazurka may be listed as follows:

- (1) the tonal center is based on a triad (Op. 50/iii)
- (2) the Podhalean scale is a significant harmonic feature (50/i)
- (3) bitonality and dual modality are used throughout (50/iii)
- (4) there is emphasis on a pitch that has a significant relationship to two tonal centers (50/ii)

There are several other features from the first three mazurkas represented in Op. 50/iv, including obscured entrances of the opening theme and the use of an open fifth as a drone.

Although the Bb major triad forms the tonal center of the piece, there are actually two modes (or more specifically, two modal finals) <sup>70</sup> at work simultaneously in this mazurka. <sup>71</sup>

The two modal finals present in Op. 50/iv are Bb and Gb. The Gb mode in use is Podhalean, although this does not become aurally apparent until relatively late in the piece. The opening and closing sonority of the piece is a Bb major triad, but the theme is presented several times in Bb Lydian rather than Bb major. The emphasis is on the single pitch Bb rather than the mode. In this way, the treatment of the tonal center is similar to that in Op. 50/i. In addition, the tonal balance created by Szymanowski in this piece involves the juxtaposition of two pitches a major third apart (Gb and Bb). Although both are tonics of their respective modes, the major third itself is a basic harmonic building block in the piece. Bitonal textures involving other tonalities a major third apart are a fundamental aspect of the piece as a whole. <sup>72</sup>

Whenever the two modal finals are present simultaneously, they should be treated with equal importance, at equal dynamic levels. Szymanowski carefully guides us through this mazurka, never shifting abruptly from one tonal center to another (until the coda), but always

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<sup>70</sup> Dallin defines the modal final as the 'tonic' in modal terminology (21).

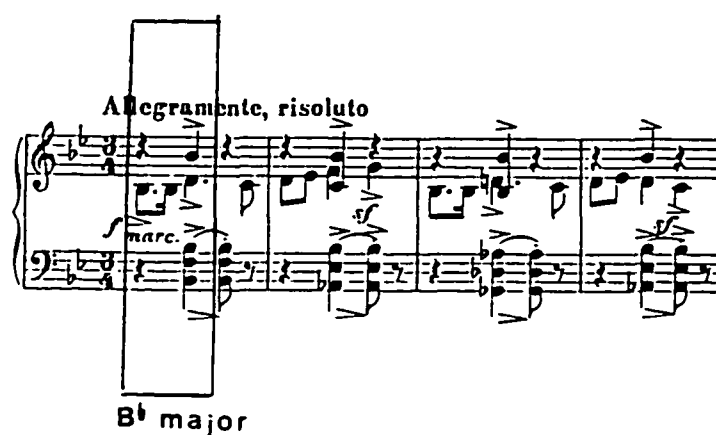
<sup>71</sup> Wilson (*The Music of Béla Bartók*, 9), citing Janos Karpati's definition of polytonality, states that when two modal finals are used, they are typically separated by one of three intervals: the semitone, the tritone, or the major third.

<sup>72</sup> Janos Karpati, "Alternative Structures in Bartók's *Contrasts*," *Studia Musicologica* 23 (1981): 201-207. Although two modes can be expressed as separate tonalities, it is Karpati's opinion that they tend to be of unequal (overall) structural significance.

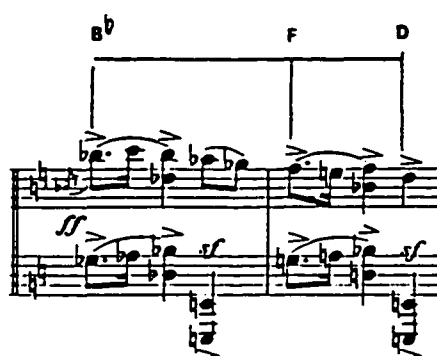


preparing for change. Performance objectives should include careful attention to horizontal movement, so that there is always focus on the prevailing movement towards a tonal objective.

The piece begins in B $\flat$  major. A tonic triad is presented in measure one and frequently recurs both vertically and horizontally throughout the piece. The harmonic force of the B $\flat$  major triad becomes progressively weaker, as seen below in Examples 3.48a, 3.48b, and 3.48c.



Ex. 3.48a, Op. 50/iv mm. 1-4



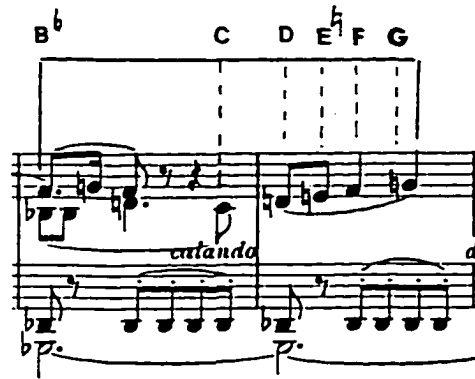
Ex. 3.48b, Op. 50/iv mm. 9-10

Ex. 3.48c, Op. 50/iv mm. 32-42

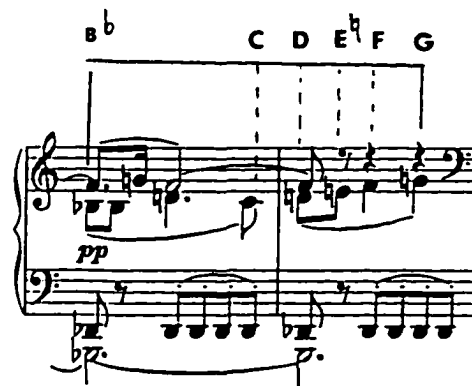
The only authentic cadence in Bb major occurs in the last two measures of the piece (Example 3.49).

Ex. 3.49, Op. 50/iv mm. 114-115

The opening B $\flat$  theme is presented four times in the course of the piece (represented by the sections marked 'A'). In its second and fourth presentations (A<sup>1</sup> and A<sup>3</sup>), the fourth scale degree is raised, the mode changing from major to Lydian (Examples 3.50a and 3.50b).



Ex. 3.50a, Op. 50/iv mm. 29-30



Ex. 3.50b, Op. 50/iv mm. 97-98

At first glance, there seems to be a change of mode in measure nine, from Bb major to Bb Lydian, a result of the raised fourth scale degree (E) both in the bass and in the melodic line (measures 9 and 10). A closer look at these two measures, however, reveals Szymanowski's use of a lowered seventh (Ab) in measure nine, which would at least momentarily suggest a Bb Podhalean scale as well. Although measure nine could be interpreted as Gb Podhalean, neither measure offers a complete scale of any of the above types, and the sonority does not last long enough to give more than a suggestion of either the Lydian or Podhalean modes. The effect is more of a harmonic bridge between the initial Bb major sonority and the A major melodic material that follows (Example 3.51).

Ex. 3.51, Op. 50/iv mm. 7-16

The significance of measures nine and ten is not the identification of a specific mode; instead, it is the dismantling of the strong Bb major tonality presented in the first measures of the piece. The tendency towards Bb Lydian is resolved when the theme appears in sections A<sup>1</sup> and A<sup>3</sup>, as seen above in

Example 3.51. The Gb Podhalean mode appears only in the coda, where all elements of a Gb Podhalean scale (spelled Gb-Ab-Bb-C-Db-Eb-Fb-Gb) are present in a compact two-measure statement (Example 3.52).

Ex. 3.52, Op. 50/iv mm. 99-100

There are several ways in which the pitch Gb is asserted as a tonal center. In addition to the presence of the Gb Podhalean mode in the coda, the descending bass movement during the course of the piece comes to rest on the pitch F#, which is respelled as Gb in measure 27. Beginning in measure nine, with the pitch E, the bass descends by thirds. The continuation of Gb as the bass sonority creates an aural perception of the pitch Gb as a harmonic focus, even through the thick texture and in the presence of other tonalities in the melodic line.

This bass movement occurs within mm. 8-27 and mm. 76-95. Graph 8 (following page) condenses the bass movement from measures 7-28. Because the treatment is identical in both cases, only the first descending line is shown in Example 3.53 (page 106).

m. 1-28  
50/iv

[ Theme, B<sup>b</sup> M ]

(1) (3) (5) (7)

B<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> G<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> G<sup>b</sup> E

(8) (15) (21) (27)

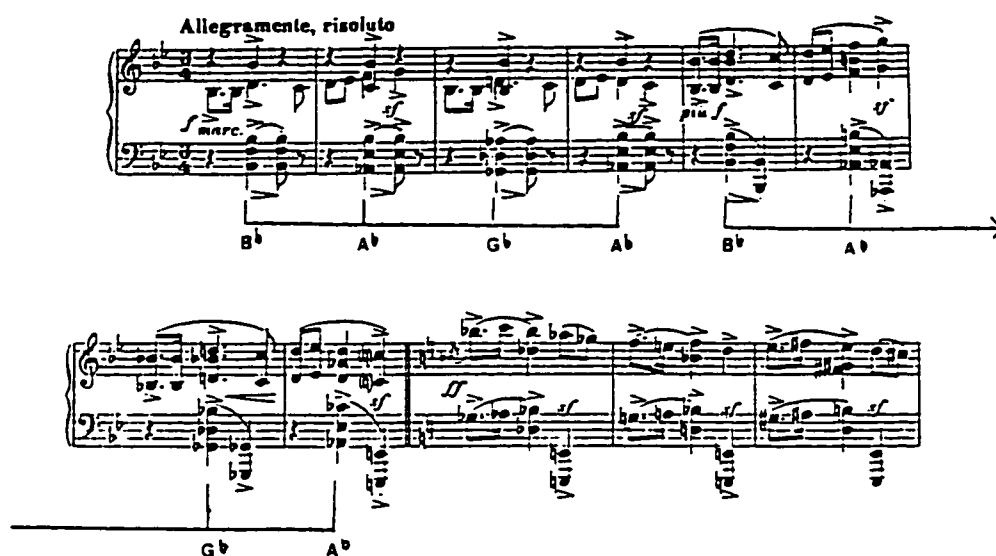
[ E —————> C —————> A —————> F# —————> (Gb) ]

**Graph 8** Op. 50/iv, descending bass line mm. 1-28

Musical score for Ex. 3.53, Op. 50/iv, mm. 7-31. The score is written for piano and consists of five systems of music. The first system shows a complex texture with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The second system includes a boxed section labeled 'E' and another labeled 'C' with the marking 'poco p'. The third system is marked 'mp giocoso' and includes a boxed section labeled 'A'. The fourth system includes markings 'dimin.' and 'poco rit.'. The fifth system includes markings 'crescendu' and 'diminuendo', and has two boxed sections labeled 'Fx' and 'Gb'.

Ex. 3.53, Op. 50/iv mm. 7-31

A third way in which the pitch Gb is asserted is through its relationship with the pitch Bb. This relationship is apparent in the first eight measures of the piece, where the bass line moves away from Bb, down by step to Gb and back (Example 3.54), outlining a tonal axis of a major third.



Ex. 3.54, Op. 50/iv mm. 1-11

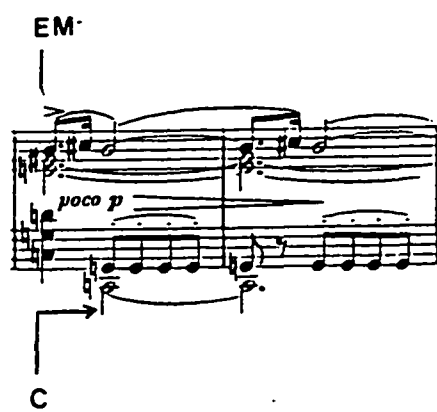
The stepwise movement between Bb and Gb (via Ab) appears again in the coda. As the tonality shifts back and forth between Bb and Gb, the bass line provides the impetus for directly connecting the two modal finals (Example 3.55).



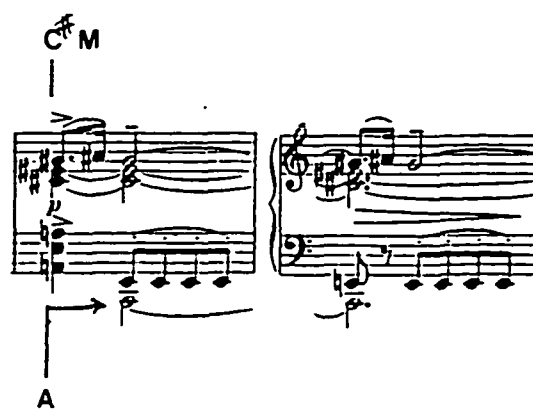
The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 97-100) shows a piano (pp) introduction with a melodic line in the right hand and a descending bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 101-104) continues the descending bass line, which descends by thirds, creating static harmonic areas. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *sf*, *marcato*, *sub. f e più mosso*, *marc. senza ped.*, *p*, *meno mosso dolce*, and *poco riten.* The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Ex. 3.55, Op. 50/iv mm. 97-108

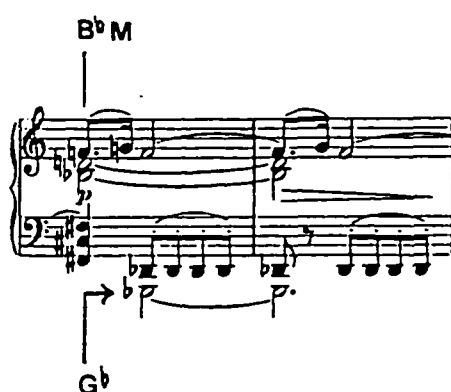
The bitonal axis of the third is further represented in the bass line beginning in measure nine. The bass line itself descends by thirds, and with each descent there is an area of static harmony. At these points of rest, the texture is bitonal, and the tonalities present are a third apart. These static areas, in the order in which they occur, are shown below in example 3.56.



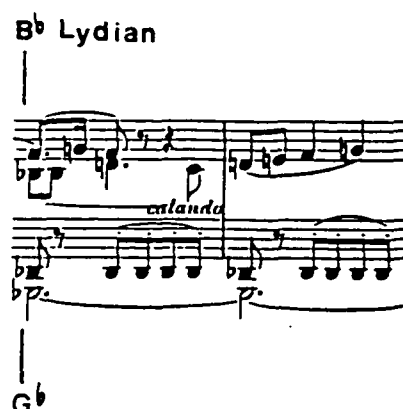
(3.56a) mm. 12-13



(3.56b) mm. 21-22



(3.56c) mm. 27-28



(3.56d) mm. 29-30

## Ex. 3.56, Op. 50/iv

The four excerpts in Example 3.56 occur in the first three sections of the piece (ABA). In section C, a similar texture appears. The static areas in section C are not polytonal, but dominant-seventh sonorities. The first occurs in measures 37-38 and 41-42 (Bb-D-F-Ab); the next is down a minor third in measure 46 (G-B-D-F). The tritone B-F natural has already been

outlined in the melodic line (mm. 43-46) and the G7 chord serves as V7 in C major (Example 3.57).

The musical score for Example 3.57, Op. 50/iv, measures 37-48, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 37-42) shows a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A box highlights measures 37-42. The second system (measures 43-48) continues the melodic line and bass line. A box highlights measures 43-46. Chord symbols are provided: F, C<sup>b</sup> (B), F, B<sup>b</sup>, and G7. Performance markings include *p*, *poco ritm.*, *a tempo (nuviv.)*, *cresc.*, *mp dolce sosten.*, *a tempo*, and *p dolciss.*

Ex. 3.57, Op. 50/iv mm. 37-48

The second dominant-seventh chord is built on G<sup>#</sup> (measures 53-54 and measures 57-58) and resolves to C<sup>#</sup> major in measure 63. The C<sup>#</sup> major tonality is foreshadowed in the melodic line in measures 59-62 (Example 3.58).

m 53  
 poco rit. a tempo  
 p  
 G#7  
 mp riten.  
 C# C# m 63  
 a tempo (alluv.) poco sosten.  
 cresc. poco f  
 C#M

Ex. 3.58, Op. 50/iv mm. 49-63

After section C, the first series of static sections, as shown above in examples 3.56 a-d, are repeated through the final three sections (ABA). In the coda, the tonality alternates between Gb Podhalean, Bb Lydian and Bb major. The final polytonal texture, in mm. 112-114, combines Bb major and G major.

The last A section and the coda present the two moods and two modal finals alternating in close succession. The impression at the close of the piece is that, although the two finals are working together, each exists on its own level. The Bb major cadence at the ends seems to define the tonality of the piece only because it is the last sonority heard, and it forces itself on the listener almost in the manner of a last laugh (Example 3.59, following page).

As in the other Op. 50/I mazurkas, one tonal center emerges uncontested in the last measures of the piece, but it has been challenged by, and structurally linked to, at least one other pitch (Gb) that relates to it in a significant way.

In the concluding measures of Op. 50/iv, important tonal ideas from all four mazurkas are represented either simultaneously or in close succession, including: withholding the identity of the prevailing tonal center, use of the Podhalean mode, an open fifth in the bass, juxtaposition of two different moods (*marcato* and *meno mosso dolce*), and a bitonal texture.

**CODA** →

*energico*  
*pp*  
*sub. f e più mosso marc. senza Ped.*  
*sf marcato sf*  
*p meno mosso dolce*

**B<sup>b</sup> Lydian**

*energico*  
*marcato sf*  
*sub. f e più mosso*  
*sf*  
*poco riten.*  
*meno mosso dolce*  
*pp*

**B<sup>b</sup> M**

**G<sub>1</sub> M**  
*poco sost.*  
*rallent.*  
*ppp sub. ff*

Ex. 3.59, Op. 50/iv mm. 97-115

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The individual characters of the Op. 50/I mazurkas combine to form a pattern of alternating improvisational and dance-like moods. The set could have been conceived as a four-movement work, and it can be interpreted in much the same way. Although not guided by an overall tonal plan, unity is achieved in other ways. For example, tempo markings result in a slow-fast-slow-fast plan; this is supported by a general accompanying dynamic format of *p-f-p-f*.

The character of each piece is governed by tempo, dynamics, the alternation of improvisational and rhythmically strict sections, and occasional use of gestures reminiscent of the dance. In performance, then, the overall character of each piece must be carefully maintained and conveyed distinctly to the listener.

Each of the mazurkas has a traditional formal plan with contrasting sections. Contrast is achieved not only through texture and sometimes tempo, but also in the relationship of pitches to the tonal center, resulting in modal shifts and changes in the level of dissonance from one section to another. The performer must be able to express contrasts within an individual piece while maintaining its overall character. Temporary changes of mood within a single piece should not affect the listener's perception of the set as a succession of four distinct movements.

Shared elements between the mazurkas of Op. 50/I include a tonal center that can be expressed by a single pitch or group of pitches. The tonal

center of each piece is evident from the opening measures, but the mode is subject to change, emphasizing the precedence of the single pitch over the modal context. Each mazurka, then, must be interpreted from the standpoint of its tonal center, and it is the performer's job to show how Szymanowski maintains this tonal idea in each piece, even as it is challenged.

Use of the complete Podhalean scale is recurrent. However, frequent alteration of the seventh scale degree and the direct contrast of the Lydian and major modes within proximity of each other (e.g. Op. 50/ii, mm. 47-51) are reminiscent of the quality of the Podhalean mode wherever they occur. The Podhalean flavor is the single most defining harmonic element of the set as a whole, and is a strong identifying feature of the music of Szymanowski's last compositional period.<sup>73</sup>

Szymanowski's use of tenuto marks and accents to emphasize important tonal events, or to provide emphasis for short motives, is pervasive. This feature alone provides a possible avenue for further study; moreover, a detailed study of Szymanowski's use of articulation and dynamics would present important supportive information.

Shifts in tonal emphasis are often accompanied by more frequent and carefully controlled dynamic indications, elements that should be considered in the interpretation of the individual pieces. In addition, dynamics are a significant factor at junctures between one piece and the next, and consideration should be given to how these can be used to promote unity.

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<sup>73</sup> Other studies, such as McNamee's "Bitonality, Mode and Interval in the Mazurkas, Op. 50 of Karol Szymanowski" should be examined for additional information about the composer's harmonic language—specifically, his manipulation of the intervals present in the Podhalean scale and the resulting tonal relationships.



It was Szymanowski's intention to write music that would be unequivocally Polish, and at the same time musically progressive. He has achieved this in the Op. 50/1 Mazurkas by making these two ideas interdependent. Melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements taken from Polish folk music as well as twentieth-century compositional trends are fused, forming an interesting tonal picture.

Finally, consideration should be given to programming this or any other set of mazurkas contained in Op. 50. They are finely-crafted works of high quality, representing an important contribution to twentieth-century piano literature.

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# APPENDIX I

## CATALOGUE OF PIANO WORKS

PCP Polish Composers Press  
 PWM Polskie Wydawn. Muzyczne  
 UE Universal Edition

w/o opus	<u>Sonata in G Minor</u> (1897)	MS lost
	<u>Sonata in F sharp Minor</u> (1898)	MS lost
	<u>Prelude and Fugue</u> (1905, 1909)	PWM
	"Signale fur die musikalische Welt"	PWM
	<u>Four Polish Dances</u> (1926)	Oxford University Press PWM
Op. 1	<u>Nine Preludes</u> (1898-1900)	PCP UE PWM
Op. 3	<u>Variations in B-flat Minor</u> (1901)	Piarski Edition PWM
Op. 4	<u>Four Etudes</u> (1900-1902)	PCP UE PWM
Op. 8	<u>Sonata No. 1 in C Minor</u> (1904)	Piarski Edition PWM
Op. 10	<u>Variations on a Polish Theme</u> (1903)	PCP UE PWM
Op. 14	<u>Fantasy in F Minor</u> (1905)	Piarski Edition
Op. 21	<u>Sonata No. 2 in A Minor</u> (1910)	UE

Op. 29	<u>Metopes</u> (1915) "Isle of the Sirens" "Calypso" "Nausicaa"	UE
Op. 33	<u>Twelve Studies</u> (1916-1918)	UE PWM (No. 5)
Op. 34	<u>Masques</u> (1915-1916) "Scheherazade" "Tantris le bouffon" "Serenade de Don Juan"	UE
Op. 36	<u>Sonata No. 3</u> (1916-1919)	UE
Op. 50	<u>Twenty Mazurkas</u> (1922-1924)	UE PWM
Op. 62	<u>Two Mazurkas</u> (1934)	PWM

APPENDIX II  
SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY  
OF CURRENTLY AVAILABLE RECORDINGS

- Op. 1 Nine Preludes**                      Preludes Nos. 1,2,4,7.  
Marian Filar. COLOSSEUM (USA) CLPS 1003.
- Preludes Nos. 2 and 7.  
I. Podolski. CLAREMONT 1204.
- Prelude No. 4.  
Jerzy Sulikowski. E.M.I. JG441.
- Op. 3 Variations**                              Witold Malcuzyński. COLUMBIA LX 1050.
- Op. 4 Etudes**                                      Etude No. 3 in B-flat Minor  
Witold Malcuzyński. COLUMBIA 33 CX 1344.  
Colin Horsley. HMV. C3942.  
Theo van der Pas. PHILIPS. A 1042.  
Zbigniew Drzewiecki. MUZA. 1194.  
Leopold Muenzer. COLUMBIA. DM 1775.  
Marian Filar. COLOSSEUM. CLPS 1003.  
Carol Rosenberger. DELOS D/CD 1002. 1986.
- Op. 29 Metopes**                                Robert Colet (USA) LPA 1030.
- Op. 33 Twelve Studies**                        Jakob Gimpel. COLUMBIA. (USA) 70745-46.  
Carol Rosenberger. DELOS. D/CD 102. 1986.
- Op. 34 Masques**                                Carol Rosenberger. DELOS. D/CD 102. 1986.
- Op. 36 Sonata No. 3**                            Robert Colet (USA) LPA 1030.

**Op. 50 Twenty Mazurkas**Nos. 1 and 2

Witold Malcuzyński. E.M.I. JG 340b.

No. 1

Artur Rubinstein. HMV. DB 6347.

Nos. 12 and 17

Sviatslav Richter. MUZA XL 0037.

Nos. 1,2,3 and 4

Mieczysław Horoszewski. O.W.I. 135691.

Nos. 1 and 2

J. Gimpel. COLUMBIA. 70746.

Nos. 1,2 and 3

Witold Malcuzyński. MUZA N 0079.

Nos. 1,3,5,6,9,10,11,13,14,18

Barbara Hesse-Bukowska. MUZA XL 0126.

**Op. 62 Two Mazurkas**

recorded by Karol Szymanowski (1933)

COLUMBIA. DM 1785.

**Mazurkas Op. 50 And Op. 62 complete**

Carol Rosenberger

DELOS. D/CD 1002. 1986.

## VITA

Thaïs Egydia Perkins was born in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, and began her piano studies with her mother, Celia Krebs. Later, Ms. Perkins worked with Dr. Dana Ragsdale at the University of Southern Mississippi and with Dr. Joan Purswell at Loyola University in New Orleans, where she graduated cum laude at the age of nineteen with a bachelor of music degree in piano performance. Before beginning graduate school, she studied for several years with Father Sean Duggan, O.S.B., of St. Joseph's Abbey in Covington, Louisiana. As a student of Dr. David Evenson, Ms. Perkins received her master of music degree in piano performance from Southeastern Louisiana University (1989), graduating magna cum laude. While working on the doctoral degree at Louisiana State University, Ms. Perkins studied with Associate Professor Michael Gurt, Professor Daniel Sher, and Alumni Professor Jack Guerry.

Ms. Perkins was the founder of the Music Tree Preparatory School in Covington, Louisiana, acting as its director from 1979 to 1989. She was director of the LSU Music Academy from 1992-1994. Ms. Perkins is currently an adjunct professor of piano at Southeastern Louisiana University, where she serves as director of the SLU Community Music School and teaches applied piano, class piano, and piano ensemble.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

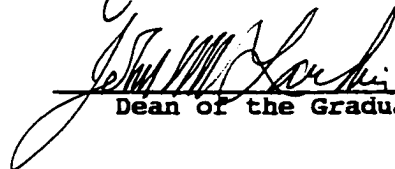
**Candidate:** Thais Egydia Perkins

**Major Field:** Music

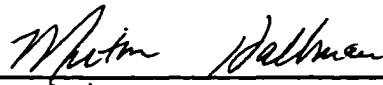
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Karol Szymanowski

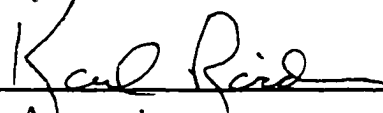
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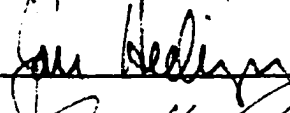
  
Major Professor and Chairman

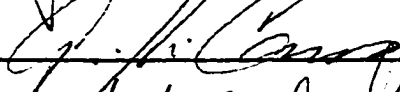
  
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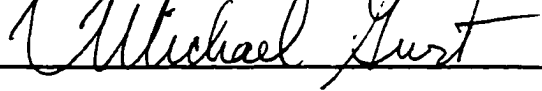
**EXAMINING COMMITTEE:**











  
Co-Chair

**Date of Examination:**

June 13, 1996