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**Stefan Behr's**

***20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano:***

**Interpretative and Performance Aspects of a Vocal  
Cycle by a Forgotten Composer**

**DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

Commentary on the Artistic Work:

Stefan Behr – *20 Songs for Children* for Voice and Piano

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BYDGOSZCZ 2026

# SPIS TREŚCI

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# INTRODUCTION

Vocal music constitutes one of the most significant domains of musical creativity, in which the relationship between word and sound plays a particularly important role. For centuries, this relationship has remained one of the fundamental concerns of musical aesthetics and vocal performance theory. Within the European tradition, it has been the subject of reflection by both composers and music theorists, who have emphasised the importance of the interplay between the semantic layer of the text and the musical structure. Michał Bristiger, one of the most distinguished Polish musicologists specialising in the relationship between music and language, argues that *a proper understanding of vocal-instrumental music requires the adoption of two complementary perspectives: the musical and the linguistic*<sup>1</sup>. According to this view, the analysis of a vocal work necessitates the simultaneous consideration of both its sonic organisation and its verbal meaning. This assumption serves as the point of departure for the present study, which is based on the conviction that the combination of literary text and music enables the communication of emotions and meanings in a direct and evocative manner, while simultaneously opening broad interpretative possibilities for performers.

A particularly important area of the vocal repertoire is music composed for children. Works of this kind fulfil both artistic and educational functions, often constituting a young listener's first encounter with classical music and playing a significant role in the development of aesthetic sensitivity and musical imagination. The tradition of this repertoire dates back to the nineteenth century, when the first collections of songs and musical miniatures intended for children appeared, among them works by Zygmunt Noskowski. Strongly rooted in the aesthetics of their time, these compositions were characterised by formal simplicity and a pronounced didactic orientation. From a contemporary perspective, however, part of this repertoire may be regarded as stylistically outdated and less suited to the needs of present-day pedagogical practice.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Bristiger, *The Relations Between Music and Language. Issues in Musical Analysis* [Związki muzyki ze słowem. Z zagadnień analizy muzycznej], PWM (series: *Biblioteka Res Facta*, no. 4), Kraków 1986, p. 15.

Against this background, the twentieth-century repertoire represents an important stage in the development of music for children, marked by a significant expansion of musical language and a greater diversity of compositional techniques. Witold Lutosławski himself, the composer of more than forty *Songs for Children*, classified such works as *functional music*<sup>2</sup>; this classification did not, however, imply that he considered them artistically inferior. As Danuta Gwizdalanka and Krzysztof Meyer have observed, no other Polish composer produced *so many works for children that achieved comparable popularity while maintaining such an impressively high artistic standard*<sup>3</sup>. Composers writing for children therefore face a particular challenge: on the one hand, they must preserve formal simplicity and structural clarity; on the other, they are expected to create music that is sonically engaging and expressive. In practice, this often leads to the use of devices such as musical illustration, humour, onomatopoeic elements, and distinctive rhythmic patterns, which facilitate perception while simultaneously stimulating the listener's imagination.

Within twentieth-century Polish music, repertoire intended for children occupies an important place. Among the composers who addressed this field are Karol Szymanowski, Witold Lutosławski, Grażyna Bacewicz, and Tadeusz Szeliński. Their works for young performers and listeners reveal a variety of compositional strategies that combine educational value with a high level of artistic achievement. At the same time, this repertoire remains relatively underexplored in musicological literature, particularly with regard to performance-oriented analysis.

One of the composers who devoted part of his creative activity to music for children was Stefan Behr (1919–1974), a Polish pianist and composer active during the second half of the twentieth century. Although he received awards in composition competitions and collaborated with various musical institutions during his career, his oeuvre remains little known today and is only rarely performed. The available biographical studies provide merely a fragmentary account of his activities, while many of his compositions still survive only in manuscript form or remain preserved in the archives of musical institutions.

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<sup>2</sup> E. Frołowicz, "Witold Lutosławski's Children's Songs – a Marginalized Area of His Output," *Muzyka. Historia. Teoria. Edukacja*, Kazimierz Wielki University Press in Bydgoszcz, 2014, no. 4, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> D. Gwizdalanka, K. Meyer, *Lutosławski: The Path to Maturity*, PWM, Kraków 2003, p. 163.

The subject of the present dissertation is the collection *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*, comprising two originally separate cycles:

- *Nine Children's Songs for Voice and Piano (Dziewięć piosenek dziecięcych na głos i fortepian)*, and
- *Eleven Songs for Children for Voice and Piano (Jedenaście piosenek dla dzieci na głos i fortepian)*.

In the title of this dissertation and throughout the subsequent chapters, the term *cycle* is employed in a practical sense, referring to the functioning of these twenty songs as a unified repertoire collection, while acknowledging their dual compositional provenance. In this form, Behr's songs were published by the Music Publishing House of the Authors' Agency (*Wydawnictwo Muzyczne Agencji Autorskiej*) in 1980 and remain available in the collections of Polish music libraries. The songs were composed to texts by renowned Polish poets, including Jan Brzechwa, Julian Tuwim, Wanda Chotomska, and Józef Czechowicz, whose works belong to the canon of Polish children's literature. The composer's selection of these particular poems demonstrates a conscious effort to combine literary excellence with a musically compelling setting.

The inspiration for undertaking research on this repertoire arose from my own artistic practice. During one of my concerts for children, I had the opportunity to perform a song from the collection under discussion, an experience that became the direct impetus for a deeper interest in the composer's oeuvre. First-hand engagement with Behr's music revealed the diversity of interpretative and performance-related means employed in his compositions. Many of the songs display particularly intriguing musical solutions, ranging from illustrative and imitative devices to unexpected harmonic juxtapositions and complex rhythmic structures. Such techniques may be understood within the musical tradition that Peter Kivy describes as the creation of analogies between musical structure and specific extra-musical phenomena<sup>4</sup>. Despite their artistic value, Behr's songs have not yet been the subject of extensive scholarly investigation or numerous performance interpretations, which provides an additional justification for the present study.

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<sup>4</sup> P. Kivy, *Sound and Semblance: Reflections on Musical Representation*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1984, pp. 39–42.

## **Aim of the Study**

**The aim of the present commentary is to analyse Stefan Behr's *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano* from an interpretative and performance-oriented perspective, with particular emphasis on the relationship between the literary text and the musical structure.** The study addresses the following research questions:

- What characteristics of Behr's musical language are distinctive of the collection under examination?
- In what ways does the musical structure of the individual songs shape the performer's interpretative choices?
- What performance-related challenges arise from the specific nature of the vocal and piano textures employed in this repertoire?

**A further objective of this study is to promote awareness of Stefan Behr's oeuvre and to highlight the significance of children's repertoire within twentieth-century Polish vocal literature. From a broader perspective, the research contributes to scholarly reflection on the role of music in artistic education and on the importance of vocal repertoire in the development of the musical sensitivity of younger generations.**

## **Research Methodology**

The research undertaken in the present study is interdisciplinary in nature, combining elements of musicological analysis with reflection on performance practice. The examination of vocal repertoire, particularly in the context of music intended for children, requires consideration of both the musical structure of a work and its functioning within interpretative practice. Four complementary research methods have been employed.

### **a) Musical Analysis**

The musical analysis encompasses an examination of the structure of the individual songs, taking into account such parameters as texture, tonality, rhythm, harmony, and the relationship between the vocal and piano parts. Particular attention is given to the illustrative and imitative devices employed by the composer.

## **b) Stylistic Analysis**

The stylistic analysis aims to identify the characteristic features of Stefan Behr's compositional language, including his treatment of tonality, use of dissonant sonorities, and application of successive polymetre. The composer himself emphasised the importance of such elements as sonic *strangeness*, ostinato patterns, and precision of detail, which he regarded as essential components of his individual musical language<sup>5</sup>. The purpose of this analytical perspective is to reveal the composer's distinctive artistic idiom and to situate it within the broader context of Polish vocal music of the second half of the twentieth century.

## **c) Analysis of the Relationship between Text and Music**

The analysis of the relationship between text and music is conducted within the framework of studies devoted to the interaction between music and language. This approach draws upon aesthetic reflections that view a musical work as a structure whose full meaning is realised only through the processes of performance and reception<sup>6</sup>. Within this perspective, attention is focused on the ways in which Behr interprets poetic texts through musical means, including changes of metre, rhythmic figures, illustrative instrumental motifs, and variations in texture. Rhythm also played a significant role in the composer's conception of musical expression; Behr regarded it as one of the most underestimated elements of European music<sup>7</sup>.

## **d) Performance Perspective**

The performance perspective is grounded in the author's own artistic experience. The analysis of the individual songs takes into account interpretative challenges arising during the preparation of the repertoire for performance, including issues of articulation, phrasing, breath management, and collaboration between singer and pianist. Performance is understood here as the stage at which the structure notated in the score is transformed into an actual sonic event and subjected to concrete interpretative decisions. This perspective is

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<sup>5</sup> S. Behr, "My Sympathies and Antipathies," *Res Facta. Texts on Contemporary Music*, no. 5, Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1971, p. 135.

<sup>6</sup> Z. Lissa, *New Essays in Musical Aesthetics* [*Nowe szkice z estetyki muzycznej*], PWM, Kraków 1967, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

closely aligned with reflections on twentieth-century music, in which particular importance is attached to sound itself and to the organisation of musical material<sup>8</sup>.

An integral component of the doctoral project is its artistic element, consisting of the preparation and recording of the collection *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*. This process involved score analysis, the development of an interpretative concept, and collaboration with the pianist during rehearsals and recording sessions. The inclusion of an artistic component makes it possible to approach the repertoire under consideration not only from a theoretical standpoint but also from a practical one, an aspect of particular significance in a doctoral dissertation in the field of musical arts.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation consists of three chapters preceded by the present Introduction. Chapter I is devoted to Stefan Behr, focusing on his biography, artistic activity, the historical context of his work, and the place occupied by the collection of songs within his overall compositional output. Chapter II constitutes the principal analytical section of the study and examines the musical language of *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*, including detailed analyses of selected songs representing different types of relationships between text and music. Chapter III is devoted to performance practice and discusses concert experiences associated with the presentation of this repertoire, interpretative issues arising from stage performance, and reflections on the reception of these works by audiences. An integral part of the doctoral project is the artistic component in the form of a recording of the complete collection.

The application of the research methods outlined above allows for a multifaceted examination of the repertoire under consideration. The combination of musicological analysis and performance-based reflection makes it possible not only to provide a detailed account of the structure of Behr's compositions, but also to reveal their interpretative potential and to restore the work of this neglected composer to its rightful place within Polish musical culture.

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<sup>8</sup> S. Jarociński, "Main Aesthetic Tendencies in 20th-Century Music," *Muzyka*, no. 1, Warsaw: State Institute of Art, 1956, pp. 6–8.

The issues addressed in this dissertation are both scholarly and practical in nature. On the one hand, the study seeks to fill a gap in research concerning Stefan Behr's oeuvre and vocal repertoire intended for children; on the other, it is the result of direct performance experience, which makes it possible to approach the analysed works as living artistic entities, continually open to interpretation and reinterpretation. In this sense, the dissertation not only documents a particular stage in research on the composer's output, but also represents an attempt to reintroduce his music into contemporary musical practice. It may therefore contribute to ongoing discussions concerning the role of the performer in shaping the final artistic expression of a musical work, as well as the place of children's repertoire within musicology and concert practice.

In conclusion, the present dissertation combines theoretical reflection with performance practice, presenting Stefan Behr's oeuvre as a valuable yet hitherto marginalised area of Polish vocal music. The study is both documentary and interpretative in character, and its principal aim is to restore the repertoire under examination to contemporary musical practice.

The research undertaken here does not exhaust the wide range of issues associated with Stefan Behr's compositional output. It may, however, serve as a point of departure for further studies of his oeuvre and of the place occupied by children's repertoire within Polish musical culture of the second half of the twentieth century. It is hoped that both the dissertation and the accompanying artistic project will contribute to renewed interest in the composer's work and to the broader presence of his music in pedagogical, concert, and recording activities.

# CHAPTER I

## Stefan Behr – Life, Career, and the Context of His Creative Work

### 1.1. Biography of the Composer

Stefan Behr was born on 10 April 1919 in Warsaw, the city that remained the principal centre of his artistic and professional activity throughout his life. He died on 24 October 1974, also in Warsaw<sup>9</sup>. His life and creative output unfolded during a particularly complex period in the history of Polish musical culture: the composer's youth was marked by the traumatic experience of the Second World War, while the principal phase of his creative activity coincided with the first decades of post-war musical life in Poland. The generation to which Behr belonged entered artistic life at a time when cultural institutions were being rebuilt after wartime destruction. During the years immediately following 1945, Warsaw's musical community was organised almost from the ground up, and the professional activity of composers was closely connected with institutions such as Polish Radio, dramatic theatres, philharmonic organisations, and music schools. In this context, Behr's professional path reflects the characteristic model of the musician-practitioner of the period, combining performance, teaching, and composition.

Stefan Behr received his musical education at the State Higher School of Music (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Muzyczna, PWSM) in Warsaw. He studied piano under Professor Jerzy Lefeld (1898–1980), an eminent pianist, chamber musician, pedagogue, and composer, who was among the most important representatives of Warsaw's musical milieu in the first half of the twentieth century. Lefeld had been associated with the institution since 1917 and, following the war, taught piano there until 1971. His students included, among

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<sup>9</sup> Biographical data (date of birth 10 April 1919, date of death 24 October 1974) are confirmed by archival materials held by the author of this dissertation – Biography of Stefan Behr prepared by the composer's wife.

others, Witold Lutosławski, Stefan Kisielewski, Witold Małcużyński, and Jerzy Maksymiuk<sup>10</sup>. Behr completed his piano studies with distinction in 1949, demonstrating the high level of his performance training.

After graduating in piano, Behr continued his education at the same institution, undertaking composition studies under the supervision of Professor Tadeusz Szeligowski (1896–1963). Szeligowski – an eminent composer, lawyer, and organiser of musical life – was one of the most influential composition teachers in post-war Poland. From 1951 he served as Professor of Composition at the PWSM in Warsaw, and from 1957 as Head of the Department, while simultaneously teaching at the State Higher School of Music in Poznań. His students included Augustyn Bloch, Henryk Czyż, Włodzimierz Kotoński, Zbigniew Krauze, and Witold Rudziński. Behr studied composition with Szeligowski in Warsaw and completed his studies with distinction in 1959.

An important aspect of his biography is the fact that, alongside his musical studies, he also pursued studies in the humanities. He studied Polish, English, and German philology. Such a broad range of humanistic interests indicates the composer's considerable intellectual culture and helps to explain his particular interest in the relationship between music and literary text. His knowledge of literature and foreign languages enabled him to engage freely with European literary culture and to approach the setting of texts in vocal music with a high degree of awareness and sensitivity.

Stefan Behr's earliest professional experience was primarily connected with his activity as a pianist. Between 1946 and 1948, he worked for Polish Radio in Warsaw as a pianist in the ensemble led by Jan Cajmer<sup>11</sup>. Cajmer – a pianist, conductor, and arranger who had received his higher musical education in Vienna – directed the Polish Radio Dance Orchestra in Warsaw from 1946 onwards. The ensemble became one of the most popular musical formations of early post-war Polish broadcasting. In post-war Poland, radio played a particularly important role in the dissemination of music, serving as one of the principal centres of musical life and as a source of employment for numerous performers and

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<sup>10</sup> J. Popis, "Jerzy Lefeld," in *Encyclopedia of Music PWM*, vol. 5 (KLŁ, biographical section), ed. E. Dziębowska, Kraków 1997. The information is also confirmed by the biography in POLMIC (polmic.pl, accessed 12 March 2026) and PWM biography (pwm.com.pl, accessed 12 March 2026).

<sup>11</sup> Information on Behr's work at Polish Radio (1946–1948) in the ensemble of Jan Cajmer confirmed by archival materials held by the author.

composers. Work in broadcasting provided young musicians with opportunities to engage with a wide variety of repertoire and to gain experience in a professional performance environment. Within this setting, Behr encountered not only classical music but also repertoire of a popular and entertainment-oriented character.

This experience undoubtedly contributed to his later interest in the song genre and in music intended for young audiences.

Between 1951 and 1953, Behr worked as an accompanist at the National Theatre in Warsaw<sup>12</sup>. At that time, under the artistic direction of Bohdan Korzeniewski, and previously Władysław Krasnowiecki, the institution was one of the leading centres of dramatic theatre in the Polish People's Republic. Theatre work required considerable flexibility as well as the ability to collaborate closely with actors and directors. The theatrical accompanist had to respond constantly to the changing realities of the stage, including the pace of spoken delivery, the dynamics of dramatic action, and the demands of staging. This experience had a significant influence on Behr's later interest in vocal music and on his marked sensitivity to literary texts. His ability to follow and respond to the dramatic qualities of language became one of the foundations of his compositional style.

From 1954 onwards, Stefan Behr was associated with the National Philharmonic in Warsaw<sup>13</sup>, where he worked as an accompanist for its Chamber Concert Division (*Estrada Kameralna*). The activities of this institutional branch focused on the organisation of chamber concerts of an educational and outreach character, serving as an important link between the artistic community and the wider public. Through his work there, the composer remained in constant contact with performance practice and with a broad range of vocal and chamber repertoire. The profession of accompanist simultaneously cultivated specific musical skills, including sight-reading, stylistic versatility, and sensitivity towards fellow performers – qualities that can be recognised in the clarity and practicality of the piano writing found in his own compositions.

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<sup>12</sup> Information on Behr's work at the National Theatre in Warsaw (1951–1953) confirmed by archival materials held by the author.

<sup>13</sup> Information on Behr's work at the National Philharmonic since 1954 confirmed by archival materials held by the author. The name *National Philharmonic* was officially adopted on 21 February 1955; previously the institution was known as the *Warsaw Philharmonic*.

Another important aspect of Behr's professional activity was his work in the media. He was the first organiser of the music editorial department within the children's division of Polish Television (Telewizja Polska)<sup>14</sup>. During the post-war period, television was only beginning to develop its programming formats; regular broadcasts commenced in 1953, and programming expanded gradually over the following years. Behr's activity in this field was pioneering in nature, requiring not only artistic and pedagogical competence but also the ability to adapt musical language and programme formats to the perceptual capacities of young audiences. This aspect of his work demonstrates that he regarded music for children as a fully legitimate field of artistic creation and cultural dissemination, one that demanded specialised skills and thoughtful engagement.

Towards the end of his life, Stefan Behr became involved in higher education. Between 1973 and 1974, he taught at the State Higher School of Music in Warsaw<sup>15</sup>. Although his period of academic teaching was relatively brief, it nevertheless attests to the recognition of his artistic competence by the academic community. The pedagogical dimension of Behr's activity, however, is evident not only in his work within higher education. His compositions, particularly his *Songs for Children*, possess a clearly educational character. He sought to create works accessible to young performers while simultaneously maintaining a high artistic standard.

An examination of Stefan Behr's biography reveals that his artistic activity was closely connected with performance practice and with the institutional musical life of post-war Warsaw. The composer functioned simultaneously as a pianist, accompanist, programme organiser, and creator of music. The combination of these roles had a direct influence on the nature of his compositional output. His performance experience encouraged clarity of texture and a practical approach to interpretative issues, while his humanistic interests fostered a particular sensitivity to literary texts. In this sense, Stefan Behr's oeuvre may be regarded as the product not only of compositional expertise but also of broad cultural and intellectual interests.

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<sup>14</sup> Information on Behr's activity at Polish Television confirmed by archival materials held by the author.

<sup>15</sup> Information on Behr's work at the State Higher School of Music in Warsaw (PWSM) in 1973–1974 confirmed by archival materials held by the author.

## 1.2. Historical Context and the Composer's Situation

The activity of Stefan Behr falls within a particularly complex period in the history of Polish culture. After the end of the Second World War, musical life in Poland underwent a gradual process of reconstruction; however, the functioning of artists was to a significant extent dependent on political realities and the institutional system of the state.

The first post-war years brought an intensive reorganisation of musical institutions. New music schools, orchestras, theatres, and radio editorial offices were established. For composers, this meant, on the one hand, a clear expansion of resources for the dissemination of music, but on the other, an increasingly strong ideological pressure. From the late 1940s onwards, this situation took on a particularly restrictive character in the form of the doctrine of socialist realism.

In 1949, at the Congress of Composers in Łagów, the Polish musical community was subjected to the imposition of socialist realist aesthetics, which postulated the creation of music that was simple, accessible to a mass audience, optimistic in expression, and rooted in national folklore. Composers who did not comply with these requirements risked being excluded from opportunities to present their works and becoming subject to ideological criticism.

Within this context, Stefan Behr's activity should be understood. Available accounts suggest that the composer did not always easily adapt to the realities of musical life at the time. Family recollections mention difficulties connected with the development of his artistic career and the limited opportunities for presenting his work<sup>16</sup>. The composer's attitude – characterised by a high degree of intellectual independence and a refusal to compromise stylistically – may not have facilitated his functioning within the prevailing system. It should be borne in mind that many composers active in Poland in the second half of the twentieth century had to adapt their activity to the political and organisational conditions of cultural life, while those who resisted were often marginalised from public life.

The composer's daughter's recollections also indicate that Behr maintained contacts with circles associated with the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*) during the Second World

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<sup>16</sup> Family relations cited based on materials held by the author.

War<sup>17</sup>. This information constitutes an important element of his biography and testifies to his active participation in the historical events of the period. Difficult wartime experiences – combined with the ideological constraints of the post-war reality – shaped the aspect of Behr's artistic personality that inclined him towards artistic independence and a certain distance from official cultural directives.

### **1.3. Intellectual Portrait and Artistic Attitude of Stefan Behr**

An analysis of the surviving archival materials reveals features of Stefan Behr's creative personality that significantly shaped the character of his artistic activity. In private documents, correspondence, and notes relating to his work, one can observe the composer's high intellectual culture and wide-ranging humanistic interests. Behr's language is precise, stylistically rich, and clearly indicative of extensive erudition. His statements include reflections on aesthetic issues, problems of musical structure, and ways of organising musical material. This testifies to a strong awareness of compositional craft, as the composer did not treat composition solely as a technical practice, but as an activity requiring in-depth theoretical reflection<sup>18</sup>.

An important testimony to his intellectual attitude is the preserved correspondence with Professor Tadeusz Szeligowski<sup>19</sup>. In these letters, the composer refers to the evaluation of musical works and to qualities he regarded as particularly significant in artistic creation. Terms such as subtlety, delicacy, and precision of detail appear in the correspondence, pointing to the author's exceptional sensitivity to the quality of compositional craft and musical culture. The manner of expression itself demonstrates stylistic ease and an ability to engage in critical reflection that is both factual and subtly ironic. In one fragment, a reference to a sense of humour also appears, showing that the composer was able to combine serious aesthetic reflection with a certain distance towards artistic life.

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<sup>17</sup> Information confirmed in interrogation records of Stefan Behr concerning assistance to Home Army soldiers (AK) – archival documents from the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) held by the author.

<sup>18</sup> S. Behr, "My Sympathies and Antipathies," *Res Facta. Texts on Contemporary Music*, no. 5, Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1971, pp. 134–135.

<sup>19</sup> Correspondence between S. Behr and T. Szeligowski is known to the author of this dissertation. Due to the absence of official archival records in public institutions, quotations from this correspondence are cited as materials held by the author.

This correspondence constitutes a valuable source for reconstructing the composer's way of thinking about music and about the functioning of the artistic milieu. It also demonstrates that Behr actively participated in discussions concerning contemporary musical culture and held clearly formulated aesthetic views.

A similar picture emerges from analytical materials concerning his oeuvre. Behr emphasised the importance of simplicity of compositional means and clarity of musical structure, treating these as conditions of musical communicativeness. At the same time, he drew attention to the possibility of achieving interesting sonic effects through relatively simple compositional techniques. In her commentary on the 2023 memorial concert dedicated to the composer, Barbara Mielcarek-Krzyżanowska described his aesthetics as characterised by *a sincere "infantilism" (not its parody)*<sup>20</sup>, a formulation which should be understood not as a simplification of musical language, but as a conscious reference to an aesthetic of simplicity and directness of expression. In this sense, Behr's output may be seen as an attempt to reconcile a high level of compositional craft with musical communicativeness.

The composer also emphasised the significance of the element of play in the creative process. In reflections on his compositional practice, there appears a conviction that composing may be understood as a form of creative play with musical material, involving the juxtaposition of different sonorities, the transformation of tonal structures, and experimentation with harmonic relationships. This approach is visible, among other aspects, in his treatment of tonality. Behr remained broadly within the framework of the tonal system, yet frequently enriched it with dissonant sonorities and unconventional chordal combinations.

A particularly important aspect of the composer's thinking concerned the relationship between music and literary text. Behr emphasised the necessity of following the semantic layer of the text and the need to subordinate musical construction to the meaning of the word. This approach is evident in his vocal works, in which the musical layer enters into a direct dialogue with the literary text. His particular interest in imagination and humour, especially

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<sup>20</sup> B. Mielcarek-Krzyżanowska, programme note, in: *Programme of the Concert in Memory of Stefan Behr*, Concert Hall of the State Music School Complex No. 1 in Warsaw, 23 April 2023.

visible in his children's songs, demonstrates that he treated this repertoire as a fully legitimate field of artistic exploration rather than merely a functional genre.

#### **1.4. ` Artistic Independence and Musical Language**

The combination of biographical materials, archival documents, and correspondence reveals that Stefan Behr's activity was shaped not only by artistic factors but also by the historical and social context in which he functioned as a composer. His output is characterised by a clear stylistic independence and a search for an individual musical language.

An analysis of the surviving scores makes it possible to identify several distinctive features of Behr's compositional idiom. His works demonstrate, above all, a tendency towards transparent texture and a clear organisation of musical material. The composer employed relatively economical means, yet used them in a conscious and consistent manner, constructing coherent formal structures.

One of the essential elements of his musical language is the systematic organisation of sound material through recurring motifs and rhythmic figures. In many works, ostinato structures appear alongside short motifs subjected to rhythmic and harmonic transformation. This technique of repetition is not a secondary feature but a deliberate tool for shaping the musical narrative and mood. It enables the composer to establish a clear logic of musical development and to gradually unfold thematic material. This is particularly evident in the song *Kotek*, discussed in detail in Chapter II of the present study.

In terms of harmony, Behr's output remains broadly within the framework of tonality; however, the composer frequently enriches it with dissonant sonorities and unconventional chordal combinations. His works include chordal structures of a cluster-like character, quartal harmonies, and parallel shifts of harmonic blocks. These procedures do not result in a complete departure from the tonal system but rather in its expansion and enrichment with new sonoristic possibilities. In this context, certain analogies may be drawn with Impressionist aesthetics, particularly in the treatment of harmony as a colouristic quality. Stefan Jarociński, describing transformations in twentieth-century musical language, observes that: *Impressionists turned music towards nature. They used a flexible harmonic language with a rich palette of colours, a language ideally suited to their aesthetic*

*needs*<sup>21</sup>. This reference does not imply a direct affiliation of Behr's music with Impressionism, but rather allows for the identification of a similar mode of thinking about sonority as a carrier of colour, atmosphere, and sonic imagery. It is characteristic that Behr generally avoids key signatures, relying instead on a tonal sense of the whole achieved through carefully chosen chromatic inflections rather than the traditional visualisation of tonality through key signatures.

Another important element of the composer's musical language is textural diversity. In many of his compositions, one can observe a clear separation of sonic planes and a deliberate use of contrast between the melodic line and the accompaniment. The instrumental texture often assumes an illustrative or dramaturgical function, which is particularly evident in vocal works, where the piano becomes an active participant in the musical narrative rather than a neutral background for the vocal part.

Behr's works also demonstrate a strong interest in rhythm and metre. His compositions include metric changes, irregular rhythmic structures, and combinations of different types of pulsation. Successive polymetre – particularly evident in *Kaczka dziwaczka* – becomes one of the principal means of constructing grotesque expression. Metric procedures introduce an element of movement and dynamism while simultaneously intensifying musical expressivity.

At the same time, it should be emphasised that despite the use of modern compositional techniques, Behr's music retains a high degree of communicativeness. The composer avoids excessive structural complexity, focusing instead on the clear presentation of musical material and the construction of a distinct character for each work. This combination of technical awareness and expressive accessibility constitutes one of the most distinctive features of his individual style.

## **1.5. Vocal Output of Stefan Behr**

In Stefan Behr's compositional oeuvre, vocal music occupies an important position. Archival catalogues of works indicate that the composer wrote both solo songs with piano

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<sup>21</sup> S. Jarociński, "Main Aesthetic Tendencies in 20th-Century Music," *Muzyka*, no. 3, Warsaw: State Institute of Art, 1956, p. 7.

accompaniment, choral works, and vocal-instrumental compositions. Although relatively modest in quantitative terms, this output testifies to a consistent interest in the human voice as a primary vehicle of musical expression.

Behr's vocal works reflect his particular concern with the relationship between literary text and music. In many compositions, the musical layer functions as a direct interpretation of poetic content, with compositional means consistently subordinated to the meaning of the word. The composer frequently drew on texts by authors regarded as classics of Polish children's literature, such as Julian Tuwim and Jan Brzechwa, as well as on poems by other writers addressing a young audience.

A significant role in this context is played by the shaping of the vocal line. The melodic contours are often declamatory in nature and closely connected with the rhythm of the literary text. The composer seeks to preserve the natural flow of verbal accents, ensuring clarity and communicative immediacy of the word. He avoids extended melismas and elaborate ornamental figures that could obscure textual intelligibility, favouring instead a syllabic-declamatory model of melodic writing.

The piano part in Behr's vocal works is not limited to an accompanying function. In many cases, the instrument becomes an equal partner to the vocal line, contributing to the dramatic structure of the composition. The piano frequently introduces illustrative elements, dynamic contrasts, and characteristic rhythmic figures that reinforce the meaning of the text. This functional distinction – voice as the bearer of text and piano as the creator of imagery – constitutes one of the most important organisational principles of his vocal music and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter II in the analytical sections.

Children's works play an important role in the composer's output. Archival sources indicate that Behr created two separate cycles of children's songs: *Nine Children's Songs for Voice and Piano* and *Eleven Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*. These collections were posthumously combined by the publisher into a single volume comprising twenty songs, published by the Music Publishing House of the Authors' Agency in Warsaw in 1980<sup>22</sup>. It should be emphasised that, in compositional terms, they do not constitute a single

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<sup>22</sup> S. Behr, *Children's Songs. 20 Songs for Voice and Piano*, Music Publishing House of the Authors' Agency, Warsaw 1980.

original cycle, but rather a compilation of two independent sets of works created at different times. In the present dissertation, the term *cycle* is used in a practical sense, corresponding to the way in which the edition and repertoire function, while at the same time acknowledging that it refers to a compilation of two separate groups of works.

## **1.6. Music for Children in Behr's Output against the Background of Twentieth-Century Polish Children's Music**

Works intended for children occupy a distinctive place in Stefan Behr's output. An analysis of the surviving scores indicates that the composer treated this repertoire not as a form of simplified didactic writing, but as a fully legitimate field of artistic activity. This position situates him within the circle of Polish composers who regarded children's music not as a limitation, but as a specific artistic challenge.

In twentieth-century Polish music, the tradition of the children's song with high artistic ambitions is represented by outstanding figures. A particularly significant place is occupied by the oeuvre of Witold Lutosławski – a composer who wrote more than forty *Songs for Children*, classifying them himself as *functional works*, which did not, however, diminish their artistic value. As Danuta Gwizdalanka and Krzysztof Meyer note, no other Polish composer created *so many works for children that enjoyed such widespread popularity while simultaneously representing such an impressively high artistic level*<sup>23</sup>. Lutosławski, writing his cycle also during the period of socialist realism, expressed in his children's songs his early explorations of sonic freedom: tonal harmonic imaginings, chromatic counterpoint, and original textural configurations.

Behr adopted a similar artistic strategy. In his children's songs, one can observe a considerable diversity of compositional solutions. Individual pieces differ in musical character, rhythmic structure, textural organisation, and the treatment of the piano part. The composer frequently employs elements of musical illustration, allowing for direct reference to the content of the literary text. At the same time, these songs are never merely didactic examples – each possesses its own individual character, resulting from a specific reading of the poetic text.

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<sup>23</sup> D. Gwizdalanka, K. Meyer, *Lutosławski: The Path to Maturity*, PWM, Kraków 2003, p. 163.

In many works, characteristic rhythmic figures, onomatopoeic effects, and dynamic contrasts appear. As a result, each song takes the form of a small musical scene in which music interprets and develops the meaning of the poetic text. The combination of these elements makes Behr's children's songs an interesting example of the fusion of high compositional craft with musical communicativeness – a manifestation of the same attitude that can be identified throughout his vocal output.

An important comparative context here is the output of Tadeusz Szeligowski. Behr's teacher also composed music for children and youth, for which he was posthumously awarded the Prime Minister's Prize in 1963. The stylistic proximity of certain elements in Behr's work to Szeligowski's idiom – particularly in terms of formal communicativeness and textural clarity – may testify to the lasting influence of the teacher on the artistic attitude of the student.

### **1.7. The Collection *20 Songs for Children* – Genesis, Publication, and Context**

The direct subject of the present dissertation is the collection *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*, published by the Music Publishing House of the Authors' Agency (*Wydawnictwo Muzyczne Agencji Autorskiej*) in Warsaw in 1980, six years after the composer's death. This edition comprises two earlier, separate collections: *Nine Children's Songs for Voice and Piano* and *Eleven Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*. In compositional and historical terms, these constitute two independent sets of works created at different times, which were combined in a single volume by the publisher with the aim of popularising the composer's children's repertoire.

The songs were composed to texts by Jan Brzechwa, Julian Tuwim, Wanda Chotomska, Józef Czechowicz, Irena Kwintowa, Antoni Marianowicz, and Janusz Minkiewicz – authors belonging to the canon of Polish children's literature. The selection of these texts demonstrates the composer's conscious intention to combine high literary quality with a valuable musical setting. Behr particularly frequently turned to Brzechwa and Tuwim, two of the most recognisable figures of Polish children's poetry, whose works were also considered by Lutosławski and Szeligowski as worthy of musical setting.

In conclusion, Stefan Behr's biography reveals a composer with broad performing, humanistic, and organisational competences. His activity within musical institutions, theatre, radio, and television shaped a versatile artistic profile, which is reflected in the analysed collection of songs. Behr's output appears as the result of both a high level of musical and humanistic culture and a profound sensitivity to text and to the needs of a young audience.

# CHAPTER II

## Musical Language in the Collection *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*

### 2.1. Introductory Remarks

The collection of songs by Stefan Behr, currently functioning under the title *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*, constitutes an interesting example of vocal music intended for a young audience, in which the composer combines musical communicativeness with a clearly articulated awareness of compositional craft. In the analysed collection – understood in a practical sense, in accordance with the current edition – the works are not of a purely didactic nature, but form fully-fledged vocal-instrumental miniatures in which a variety of compositional means are employed for the interpretation of the literary text.

A particular feature of the collection is the close relationship between the verbal and musical layers. In most of the songs, a clear subordination of rhythmic and melodic organisation to the prosody of the literary text can be observed. The vocal line often takes on a declamatory character, while the piano part fulfils not only a harmonic function but also an illustrative and dramaturgical one. As a result, Behr's songs assume the form of miniature musical scenes in which music interprets and develops the meaning of the poetic text.

Particular attention should be drawn to the selection of literary texts: the collection includes poems by Jan Brzechwa, Julian Tuwim, Wanda Chotomska, Józef Czechowicz, Irena Kwintowa, Antoni Marianowicz, and Janusz Minkiewicz. The analysis of the songs reveals a considerable diversity of compositional solutions. The most important shared stylistic features include:

- a clear relationship between melodic rhythm and text prosody,
- the use of recurring motivic and rhythmic structures,
- a varied – often illustrative – role of the piano part,

- the presence of dissonant sonorities and extended tonality,
- an episodic formal organisation resulting from the structure of the literary text.

Due to this diversity, the analysis of the collection has been conducted using a typological approach, involving the identification of groups of songs with similar musical and literary characteristics. In the subsequent part of the chapter, the following will be discussed: the structure of the collection and the problem of its cyclicity, the relationship between text and music, the method of musical analysis, and finally the individual stylistic groups of songs together with detailed analyses of selected works.

## **2.2. Structure of the Collection and the Question of Cyclicity (9 + 11 Songs)**

The collection currently known under the title *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano* occupies, as already noted, a distinctive position within Stefan Behr's vocal oeuvre. Archival documents and musical sources indicate that the collection, published by the Music Publishing House of the Authors' Agency in Warsaw in 1980 – six years after the composer's death – was formed through the combination of two earlier cycles: *Nine Children's Songs for Voice and Piano* and *Eleven Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*. Originally, these were two separate sets of works that were not conceived by the composer as a unified cyclic form. It was only at the stage of publication that they were brought together into a single volume comprising twenty songs.

This fact is of significant importance for the interpretation of the entire collection. In the traditional understanding of the musical cycle, the existence of specific formal or dramaturgical relationships between individual movements is assumed. In the case of the songs under consideration, it is difficult to identify unequivocal such relationships encompassing all twenty works. In many instances, they function as independent musical miniatures whose structure is primarily determined by the organisation of the literary text and which may be performed independently of one another.

At the same time, certain shared stylistic features can be observed between the individual songs, concerning the manner of shaping the relationship between text and music, as well as characteristic textural solutions in the piano part. These elements allow for the

identification of a certain stylistic coherence within the collection, resulting from Behr's individual compositional language. From the perspective of the present study, of particular importance is the analysis of internal stylistic differentiation, which forms the subject of the subsequent subchapters.

### **2.3. The Relationship between Literary Text and Music**

The relationship between literary text and its musical setting is one of the key issues in the analysis of vocal repertoire. In Michał Bristiger's approach, a vocal-instrumental work should be considered simultaneously as a musical structure and as an utterance linked to language, since it is only the juxtaposition of these two orders that allows its full meaning to be grasped. This perspective is particularly relevant in relation to Stefan Behr's children's songs, in which the sense of the poetic text is directly translated into rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and textural solutions. Music here does not merely support the verbal message, but often supplements its character: it highlights humour, movement, grotesque elements, lyricism, or the situational aspects presented in the poem.

In musicological literature, it is emphasised that one of the most important elements of this relationship is musical prosody, understood as the manner in which linguistic accents are reflected in the melodic and rhythmic structure of a work. The correspondence between textual accentuation and the musical flow allows for the naturalness of vocal expression to be preserved. In children's repertoire, this aspect becomes particularly significant, as the clarity of the word is one of the fundamental conditions for the young listener's perception of the work.

An important role is also played by musical illustration, understood as the use of specific compositional means to create musical analogies to situations, phenomena, or emotions described in the text. Peter Kivy refers to this phenomenon as musical representation, arguing that music may evoke particular images or meanings through the appropriate shaping of sonic structures<sup>24</sup>. In Behr's songs, the relationship between text and

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<sup>24</sup> P. Kivy, *Sound and Semblance: Reflections on Musical Representation*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1984, pp. 39–42.

music is realised through several characteristic models: the illustrative, narrative, grotesque, dance-like, and lyrical – each of which will be discussed in the subsequent subchapters.

## 2.4. Method of Musical Material Analysis

The analysis of individual songs takes into account the following musical parameters: metric-rhythmic organisation, the structure and ambitus of the vocal part, the character of the melodic writing and its relationship with textual prosody, texture and the role of the piano part, as well as the harmonic layer and its dramaturgical function. Particular attention is devoted to the relationship between the vocal part and the piano accompaniment, since in many of Behr's songs the instrumental part does not merely fulfil a harmonic function, but constitutes an essential element of the musical narrative and co-creates the meaning of the work.

Due to the considerable stylistic diversity of the analysed compositions, a typological method has been adopted, based on the identification of groups of songs sharing similar musical and literary characteristics. The distinguished types of songs do not constitute rigid categories, but rather functional models that may overlap. Individual works often combine features belonging to more than one stylistic group, which results from the multi-layered relationship between text and music. In order to organise the research material, a principle of classification based on the dominant feature has been adopted, namely the feature that most strongly organises the musical course of the work and determines its character and mode of perception. This means that the assignment of a given song to a particular group does not exclude the presence of other stylistic qualities, but rather indicates their hierarchy within the analysed material.

Their characteristics may be summarised as follows:

- **illustrative songs** – dominance of motifs depicting the text, a highly developed and active piano layer, frequent changes of metre and textural character;
- **narrative songs** – clear linearity of musical discourse, segmented formal organisation, subordination of music to the rhythm and syntax of the text;
- **grotesque songs** – deliberate disruption of metric and rhythmic stability, dissonance, and the use of contrast as a means of creating comic effect;

- **dance-like songs** – regular pulsation, repetition of rhythmic patterns, and a motoric instrumental texture;
- **lyrical songs** – economy of expressive means, limited ambitus, predominance of stepwise motion, and a focus on timbre and atmosphere.

This typology makes it possible to capture the diversity of the cycle and to identify the dominant compositional strategies of Stefan Behr, while maintaining an awareness of the fluid boundaries between individual categories.

#### 2.4.1. Songs of an Illustrative Character

One of the more clearly defined stylistic tendencies present in the collection is the use of illustrative means in shaping the relationship between the literary text and the musical layer. Among the songs in which the illustrative function plays a particularly significant role are: *Chmurka się uniża* to words by Józef Czechowicz, *Deszczyk*, *Ptak*, and *Cuda i dziwy* to words by Julian Tuwim, as well as *Jestem sobie wietrzyk* to words by Irena Kwintowa.

| Title of the Work            | Text Author      | Character of Illustration                                                        |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Chmurka się uniża</i>     | Józef Czechowicz | depiction of a descending cloud through a descending melodic and harmonic motion |
| <i>Deszczyk</i>              | Julian Tuwim     | imitation of raindrops in the piano part                                         |
| <i>Jestem sobie wietrzyk</i> | Irena Kwintowa   | depiction of movement and lightness through motoric rhythmic figuration          |
| <i>Ptak</i>                  | Julian Tuwim     | representation of movement and sonic space                                       |
| <i>Cuda i dziwy</i>          | Julian Tuwim     | musical interpretation of the fantastic events contained in the text             |

The most important feature of the songs listed above is the close relationship between the musical layer and the imagery of the literary text, manifested in an attempt to render

sonically the phenomena, characters, or situations described in the poem. This illustrative quality is not limited to simple onomatopoeic effects, but rather takes the form of a multi-layered shaping of musical material, encompassing texture, rhythm, articulation, dynamics, and harmonic colour. In Behr's output, illustration should be understood as a conscious compositional strategy, situated within the broader tradition of musical representation, understood as the creation of analogies between sonic structure and extra-musical phenomena. In repertoire intended for children, this strategy acquires particular significance, as it supports perceptual processes and facilitates the listener's identification of musical content with the literary text. As the analysis of the material demonstrates, the composer consistently employs illustrative means as a primary factor organising the musical flow, which has direct consequences for performance practice. The most important illustrative devices used by Behr include motoric figuration, characteristic rhythmic patterns, dynamic contrasts, registral shifts, and specific harmonic solutions.

### The Role of the Piano Part

The most characteristic element of the illustrative songs is the elaborated role of the piano part. In *Deszczyk*, the piano figuration is based on repeated quaver values performed *sempre staccato leggiero*. This alternating rhythmic pattern, of a bariolage-like character, creates a vivid acoustic impression of falling raindrops<sup>25</sup> (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** S. Behr, *Deszczyk*, bars 1–3, alternating bariolage eighth notes in the piano part imitating the sound of falling raindrops. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children. 20 Songs for Voice and Piano*, Wydawnictwo Muzyczne Agencji Autorskiej, Warsaw 1980, p. 40.

<sup>25</sup> *Bariolage* (Fr. *bariolage*) – a performance technique originating in instrumental practice (especially string instruments), involving alternating notes in different registers or timbral colors to achieve a coloristic effect; cf. J. Chomiński, *Compositional Technique of the 20th Century*, Kraków: PWM, 1965, pp. 124–126; see also: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, entry: “Bariolage.”

## Melodic Motion as an Illustrative Device

A model example is *Chmurka się uniża*, in which the descending progression in the piano part – written in bars 2–5 – creates a clear musical equivalent of the titular movement of the cloud (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2.. S. Behr, *Chmurka się uniża*, bars 2–5 – descending harmonic progression as a musical equivalent of the cloud’s movement described in the title. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.9.

## Motoric Figuration and the Illustration of Movement

In *Jestem sobie wietrzyk*, the illustrative character is realised through motoric rhythmic figures. The rapid piano figuration, marked *Andantino, poco scherzando*, creates the impression of an unsettled, playful wind as described in the text (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. S. Behr, *Jestem sobie wietrzyk*, excerpt from the piano part – motoric rhythmic figuration illustrating movement and lightness. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.29.

## Harmony and Sonic Colouration

In *Kotek*, four- and five-note semitonal clusters appear in the piano part. These evoke a kitten moving across the keyboard: this is not literal sound imitation, but rather a

representation of movement achieved through the type of sonority, register, and staccato articulation (Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4.** S. Behr, *Kotek*, bars 1–2 – four-note semitone clusters in the piano part. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.46.

### Characteristics of the Vocal Part

In the songs under analysis, the vocal line is of a declamatory–melodic character. The rhythm of the melody remains closely bound to textual accentuation; the ambitus is moderate, suitable for a children’s voice or a light soprano. Stepwise motion and movement in thirds predominate. The vocal line is relatively simple in melodic terms, whereas greater differentiation is found in the piano part. This division of functions is a distinctive feature of Behr’s style.

### The Significance of Illustrativeness in Behr’s Compositional Language

Imagery constitutes one of the most important elements of Stefan Behr’s musical language in his children’s repertoire. It is realised through a variety of means – ranging from rhythmic figuration and directional melodic progressions to harmonic solutions and cluster-based colouration. At the same time, these songs preserve a clear formal structure and the communicative clarity characteristic of children’s music.

### Detailed Analysis: *Cuda i dziwy* (text by Julian Tuwim)

*Cuda i dziwy* to text by Julian Tuwim is one of the most representative examples of Stefan Behr’s illustrative compositional idiom. The illustrativeness here does not consist in simple sound imitation, but in the deliberate shaping of the piano texture, register, melodic direction, and harmonic colour, which together create a musical equivalent of the fantastic

world depicted in the poem. Tuwim's text is numerically and episodically structured: successive lines form a series of fantastical images, which naturally encourages a segmented musical treatment of the material.

The piece is set in triple metre (3/4) and consists of three main sections: a four-bar piano introduction (bars 1–4), a vocal–piano section (bars 5–30), and a brief postlude (bars 31–34).



**Fig. 5.** S. Behr, *Cuda i dziwy*, bars 1–4 – piano introduction, *pp* dynamic, ascending figure. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.36.

The four-bar introduction is marked *pp* and is based on a short ascending figure in the piano part. The piano does not establish a stable accompanimental pattern; instead, it constructs an atmosphere of strangeness and suspension, preparing the listener for the fantastic character of the text. The vocal entry occurs in bar 5.

The melody is syllabic and declamatory in character, remaining closely subordinated to the prosody of the text (Fig. 6). The vocal ambitus spans from C<sup>#1</sup> to D<sup>#2</sup>, corresponding to a major ninth; however, the most frequently employed register is the middle range (G<sup>1</sup>–C<sup>2</sup>), which supports textual clarity and pitch stability.

Stepwise motion (minor and major seconds) predominates in the melodic unfolding, ensuring fluency and naturalness of declamation. Thirds appear as a means of variation, while larger leaps occur only sporadically and do not serve a structural function; rather, they fulfil an expressive role, emphasising selected textual moments. The stepwise character of the melody is consistent with the song's illustrative function: the vocal line conveys the text in a transparent manner, leaving space for a more elaborated instrumental layer.



**Fig. 6.** S. Behr, *Cuda i dziwy*, bars 5–8 – entry of the vocal part, declamatory character of the melody. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.36.

The most important carrier of illustrativeness remains the piano part. The piano constructs an atmosphere of strangeness through dense chordal sonorities, often of a secondal or quasi-cluster character (Fig. 7). These structures do not fulfil a developmental or tension-driven function; rather, they serve a colouristic role, creating a sonic background corresponding to the fantastic images of the text. Such an approach to harmony is reminiscent of tendencies in twentieth-century music, in which – as Stefan Jarociński observed – *the functional relationship between melody and harmony was dissolved, granting chords a degree of autonomy*<sup>26</sup>. Changes in chordal spacing and registral shifts correspond to successive poetic images, resulting in a dynamically changing sound space. The piano does not illustrate specific events in a mimetic manner; instead, it constructs a general aura of strangeness and unreality.

<sup>26</sup> S. Jarociński, “Main Aesthetic Tendencies in 20th-Century Music,” *Muzyka*, no. 3, Warsaw: State Institute of Art, 1956, p. 7.



**Fig. 7.** S. Behr, *Cuda i dziwy*, bars 9–12 – dense, quasi-cluster piano sonorities. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.36.

In bar 22, the composer introduces the indication *wolniej* (slower) together with *Ped. co bar* (pedal every bar). The reduction in tempo isolates the concluding episode, while the continuous use of the pedal in each bar leads to a marked saturation of sonority and a blurring of harmonic contours. In this way, a more resonant, “illuminated” texture emerges, forming the expressive climax of the piece (Fig. 8)..



**Fig. 8.** S. Behr, *Cuda i dziwy*, bars 21–24 – section marked *Slower*, *Ped/* each bar; expressive climax. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.37.

The harmonic layer is characterised by an extended tonal language. Despite the presence of secondal and quasi-cluster structures, an overall sense of tonality is preserved; however, its clarity is deliberately “blurred” through the densification of sonorities. Harmony does not generate a functional narrative, but rather contributes to the work’s colouristic dimension.

The postlude (bars 31–33) recalls the gesture of the introduction, framing the form and restoring the initial mood (Fig. 9).



**Fig. 9.** S. Behr, *Cuda i dziwy*, bars 30–33 – piano postlude, return to the mood of the introduction.

Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.37.

From a performance perspective, the key issue is maintaining a balance between textual clarity and the richness of the instrumental layer. The vocal part should be delivered in a natural and transparent manner, without excessive expressivity, whereas the piano requires a conscious shaping of timbre and dynamics in order to bring out the illustrative character of the texture.

As a result, *Cuda i dziwy* constitutes a model example of Stefan Behr’s illustrative idiom, in which the voice conveys the verbal layer, while the piano constructs an autonomous sonic image corresponding to the fantastic world of the text.

Songs of an illustrative character occupy an important place within Behr’s compositional language, forming one of the fundamental ways of shaping the relationship between text and music. In these works, illustrativeness is not superficial but arises from a deep integration of semantic and sonic layers. The analysis of this group suggests that the composer consistently treats music as a means of interpreting text, employing a wide range of compositional techniques to construct a sonic image.

The piano part plays a particularly significant role here, assuming both narrative and illustrative functions and co-creating the meaning of the work. From a performance standpoint, illustrative songs require a conscious control of expressive means and the ability to precisely realise the relationship between text and music. In this sense, they constitute not

only an analytically interesting corpus but also an important field of interpretative experience, revealing the specificity of children's repertoire in Stefan Behr's output.

### 2.4.2. Songs of a Narrative Character

The second clearly defined stylistic category comprises songs of a narrative character. In these works, the primary element organising the musical course is the progression of the story contained in the literary text. This group includes *Abecadło* and *Idzie Grześ* (texts by Julian Tuwim), *Tydzień* (text by Irena Kwintowa), and *Rozmowa z osłem* (text by Wanda Chotomska).

| Title                  | Text author     | Character of narration                                                   |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Abecadło</i>        | Julian Tuwim    | Didactic narration based on successive "adventures" of alphabet letters  |
| <i>Idzie Grześ</i>     | Julian Tuwim    | Episodic narration presenting the development of a simple story          |
| <i>Tydzień</i>         | Irena Kwintowa  | Sequential presentation of the days of the week                          |
| <i>Rozmowa z osłem</i> | Wanda Chotomska | Dialogic narration based on an exchange of utterances between characters |

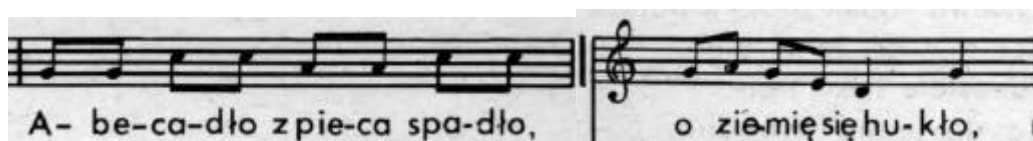
In contrast to illustrative songs, in which sonic imagery plays a dominant role, in narrative works the music is subordinated to the linear unfolding of the text and its semantic structure. In this context, narrativity does not merely denote the presence of a storyline, but rather a specific mode of organising musical material in which successive formal sections correspond to consecutive segments of the text. The music does not linger on individual images but develops in time, following the logic of verbal discourse. Consequently, the composer's primary task becomes maintaining the clarity of communication and subordinating the musical structure to the rhythm and syntax of language.

An analysis of the narrative songs makes it possible to identify a set of shared features that define their stylistic specificity and distinguish them from other groups within the cycle. A fundamental role in this category is played by the declamatory–syllabic character of the vocal line (Fig. 10). The melodic line remains closely subordinated to textual prosody, and its contour reflects the natural accentuation of language. The melody is most often syllabic, with a limited use of larger intervallic leaps, which supports textual intelligibility and communicative clarity.

Closely related to this declamatory vocal writing is the segmental and episodic nature of form. Individual musical phrases correspond to successive textual units – sentences, lines, or their segments – resulting in a clear division into short sections of varying character. Formal continuity does not arise here from traditional thematic development but from the succession of narrative events, which organise the musical flow in a linear manner.

In this context, the role of the piano part becomes particularly significant. Its function is supportive in relation to the textual layer and remains subordinated to the logic of narration. Unlike in illustrative songs, the instrument does not construct autonomous sonic images but reinforces speech rhythm, emphasises accents, and introduces subtle differentiation between sections.

Rhythmic organisation, in turn, is closely linked to the unfolding of the text. Variability of rhythmic values and flexible treatment of pulse result directly from the need to adapt the musical structure to linguistic syntax. As a result, metre loses its primary organising function and becomes subordinated to the flow of verbal narration.



**Fig. 10.** S. Behr, *Abecadło*, bars 3–4 – declamatory-syllabic character of the vocal part. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.34.

## Musical Phrase Organisation and Textual Versification

The composer consistently subordinates the construction of the musical phrase to the structure of the poetic lines. In *Idzie Grześ*, each successive part of the narrative is assigned a clearly delineated musical section with a cadential closure (Fig. 11).



**Fig. 11.** S. Behr, *Idzie Grześ*, bars 9–12 – cadential closure of the musical phrase corresponding to the end of the verse. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.43.

## Segmentation of Musical Form

In *Tydzień*, successive musical sections correspond to the successive days of the week (Fig. 12). The repetition of rhythmic and harmonic patterns organises the musical material and emphasises the logical character of the narration.



**Fig. 12.** S. Behr, *Tydzień*, bars 1–4 – repetitive rhythmic accompaniment pattern organizing sections of the narrative. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.27.

## The Element of Musical Dialogue

A special case is the song *Rozmowa z osłem*, in which the text takes the form of a dialogue. The composer highlights this character through dynamic contrasts and changes of register. The piano assumes the role of a commentator on the dialogue, responding to the utterances of the characters (Fig. 13).



**Fig. 13.** S. Behr, *Rozmowa z osłem*, bars 48–61 – register and dynamic contrast emphasizing the dialogic character. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.3.

Narrative songs reveal the composer's ability to subordinate musical structure to the logic of the literary text. Music is treated here primarily as a means of interpreting the word, while maintaining transparent texture and a moderate vocal ambitus.

#### **Detailed Analysis: *Abecadło* (text by Julian Tuwim)**

*Abecadło* by Julian Tuwim constitutes a model example of a narrative song in Stefan Behr's output. The structure of the text, based on a sequence of short episodes assigned to successive letters of the alphabet, implies a segmented and sectional musical form. Each textual fragment is given its own musical equivalent, resulting in a linear structure unfolding without a clear thematic hierarchy.

The basic temporal framework is provided by common time metre, which is maintained throughout most of the piece; however, its function is not dominant over the narrative flow. Successive sections are differentiated primarily through agogic and character

indications such as *energetically*, *more gently*, *livelier*, *joyfully*, or *slower*. This variability does not fragment the form but rather constitutes a direct consequence of the textual structure.



**Fig. 14.** S. Behr, *Abecadło*, bars 3–6 – entry of the vocal part, first narrative phrase.. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.34.

The vocal part is of a declamatory–syllabic character and remains closely subordinated to the prosody of the text. The melodic ambitus spans essentially from D<sup>1</sup> to E<sup>2</sup> (a major ninth), which indicates a moderate vocal range, suited to the performing capabilities of children or young singers.

In the melodic unfolding, stepwise motion (minor and major seconds) clearly predominates, ensuring fluency and naturalness of delivery while supporting an accurate realisation of linguistic accentuation. Thirds appear as a means of local melodic variation, whereas larger leaps – primarily fourths and, more rarely, fifths – occur only sporadically and fulfil an accentual function, highlighting selected narrative moments. Their presence does not disrupt the overall stepwise organisation of the vocal line but rather provides punctuated reinforcement of textual expression.

The melodic line is distinctly segmental: individual phrases correspond to successive textual units and are separated by short pauses or clear cadential points. The absence of an

extended cantabile line and the restricted ambitus both contribute to textual intelligibility, which remains the primary organising element of the musical course.

The rhythm of the vocal part is based mainly on quaver and crotchet values, and its organisation remains closely tied to linguistic accentuation. A tendency towards flexible treatment of pulse is evident; phrase lengths and accent placement arise directly from the structure of the text rather than from symmetrical musical design.



**Fig. 15.** S. Behr, *Abecadło*, bars 7–10 – declamatory character of the melody and rhythm subordinated to the prosody of the text. Source: *ibid.*, p. 34.

The piano part fulfils a co-organising role in the narrative flow and is not limited to that of a harmonic accompaniment. In many sections, it is the piano that initiates changes in musical character, introducing new textural and dynamic qualities.

The instrumental texture undergoes frequent transformations, ranging from simple chordal structures to more active rhythmic figurations. In passages marked *livelier* and *joyfully*, a clear increase in rhythmic motility can be observed – the movement within the piano texture becomes more active, and the musical flow gains energy, corresponding to an acceleration of the literary narrative.



**Fig. 16.** S. Behr, *Abecadło*, bars 15–17 – more active rhythmic motion in the *livelier, joyfully* section. Source: *ibid.*, p. 35.

Conversely, in sections marked *slower* and *gently*, a clear calming of the texture occurs. The piano then employs more static sonorities, and the tempo is reduced, which leads to a temporary suspension of the narrative and introduces a contrast to the more dynamic passages..



**Fig. 17.** S. Behr, *Abecadło*, bars 19–22 – calming of the texture in the *slower, gently* section. Source: *ibid.*, p. 35.

The harmonic layer remains essentially within a tonal framework, although it is not foregrounded as an autonomous expressive means. Harmony plays a subordinated role in relation to the textual structure and the narrative flow, and harmonic changes occur in synchrony with the division of verbal phrases.

The sonorities are most often based on pure diatonic triads, occasionally expanded by no more than a single non-chord tone, which supports textural clarity and communicative immediacy. The conclusion of the piece is cadential in character and is further emphasised

through the use of *ritardando*, which highlights the final segment of the narrative and enhances its humorous effect.



**Fig. 18.** Behr, *Abecadło*, bars 26–30 – ritardando and cadential closure of the form. Source: *ibid.*, p. 35.

From a performance perspective, it is crucial to maintain textual clarity and to accurately reflect its accentuation. The interpretation requires a flexible approach to tempo as well as the ability to differentiate the character of individual sections. Particularly important is close collaboration with the pianist, as the piano part functions as an active partner in the narrative process.

As a result, *Abecadło* reveals the fundamental features of Behr's narrative compositional idiom: segmental formal organisation, subordination of melody to textual prosody, variability of character, and close interaction between the vocal and piano parts. The piece thus constitutes a clear example of music in which the sonic structure is directly linked to the unfolding and meaning of the literary text.

Narrative songs form an important element of the stylistic diversity of Behr's cycle, demonstrating a different model of the relationship between text and music than that found in illustrative works. Their primary characteristic is the subordination of musical structure to the flow of verbal narration, resulting in a clear dominance of the textual layer over the sonic one.

The analysis shows that the composer consistently employs means that support textual intelligibility: syllabic melodic writing, segmental formal organisation, and a close alignment of musical phrasing with textual versification. The piano part plays a supportive

and structuring role in the narrative flow, avoiding the level of autonomy typical of illustrative songs.

From a performance perspective, particular importance is attached to articulation precision and natural textual delivery, both of which determine communicative clarity. Interpretation requires subordinating vocal means to the logic of verbal expression and skillfully differentiating between successive narrative sections.

Ultimately, narrative songs reveal one of the fundamental features of Behr's musical language – the pursuit of a close integration of music and text, and the subordination of musical organisation to the semantic function of the verbal layer.

### 2.4.3. Songs of a Humorous–Grotesque Character

Humorous–grotesque songs constitute one of the most distinctive stylistic groups in the analysed collection. Their specificity lies in a particular way of shaping the relationship between text and music, in which the musical layer not only illustrates the content but also actively co-creates the comic and grotesque effect. This group includes: *Kaczka dziwaczka* and *Koziołeczek* to texts by Jan Brzechwa, *Figielek* to a text by Julian Tuwim, and *Atrament* to a text by Jan Brzechwa.

| Title                   | Text author  | Nature of grotesque                                                                   |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Kaczka dziwaczka</i> | Jan Brzechwa | grotesque characterisation of the protagonist through rhythmic and metric variability |
| <i>Koziołeczek</i>      | Jan Brzechwa | humorous depiction of the character through energetic rhythmic motion                 |
| <i>Figielek</i>         | Julian Tuwim | musical interpretation of the character's mischievous nature                          |
| <i>Atrament</i>         | Jan Brzechwa | situational comedy emphasised by a dynamic piano texture                              |

Grotesqueness in this approach is not limited solely to distortion or exaggeration, but results from the deliberate destabilisation of musical, metric, rhythmic, and textural structures. The composer achieves a humorous effect through surprise, contrast, and the disruption of the listener's expectations, which leads to tension of an ironic or comic nature.

The analysis of this group allows for the identification of several basic compositional devices through which Behr constructs humorous and grotesque effects. Of particular importance is the instability of metric and rhythmic organisation, leading to a sense of "wavering" and unpredictability in the musical flow. Changes in metre, sudden shifts of accents, and irregular phrasing constitute a musical image of the grotesque present in the textual layer. Ostinato motion also plays an important role, giving rise to a sense of exaggeration and thereby producing a comic effect. The repetition of short rhythmic figures intensifies the sense of motion while at the same time introducing an element of irony through the excessive emphasis on a single musical device. Another important element consists of dynamic and articulation contrasts, which introduce surprise effects and disrupt the continuity of the musical narrative. Sudden changes in dynamics, register, or articulation function as a musical commentary on the text, reinforcing its humorous character. Finally, the piano part is of particular significance, as it acquires a clearly autonomous role in this group of works. The instrument not only supports the vocal line but also actively participates in shaping grotesque dramaturgy, introducing illustrative, contrastive, and commentary-like elements.

### **Metric variability as a means of constructing comic effect**

One of the most important devices is the variability of metric organisation. In the song *Kaczka dziwaczka*, the alternating use of triple and quadruple metre results in a characteristic instability of the musical pulse – a musical equivalent of the irregular movement of the avian protagonist (Fig. 19).



Fig. 19. S. Behr, *Kaczka dziwaczka*, bars 9–12 – successive polymeter: alternating use of 4/4 and 3/4 meters. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.15.

### Rhythmic motoricity and movement character

In the song *Koziołeczek*, the piano part is based on short, repetitive rhythmic figures, which give the piece a sense of lightness and a clear sense of motion. The performance marking *spacerowo* (“in a walking manner”) precisely indicates the interpretative character of the passage (Fig. 20).



Fig. 20. S. Behr, *Koziołeczek*, bars 1–7 – motoric rhythmic figuration, *p*, walking pace. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.17.

## Dynamic and articulatory contrasts

In the song *Figielek*, short rhythmic motifs in the piano part interact with the dynamic flow of the vocal melody. Sudden changes in musical character create a sense of surprise – a form of ironic commentary on Tuwim's text (Fig. 21).

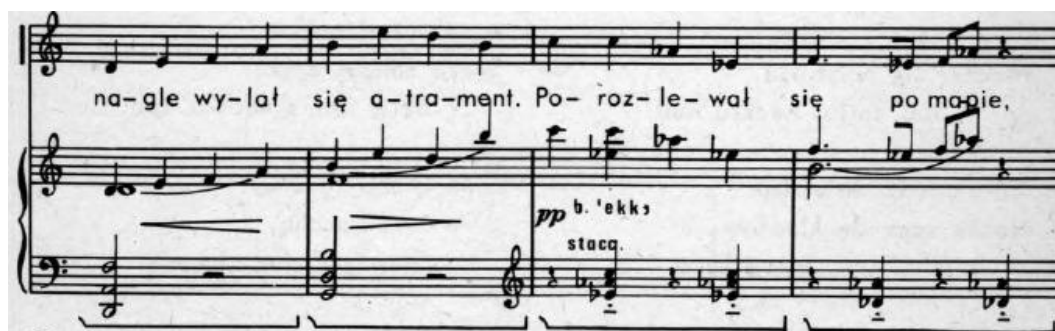
The image shows a musical score for the song "Figielek" by S. Behr, bars 1-5. The score is in 4/4 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a "sim." (sustained) marking. The vocal line begins with "ad lib." and a first ending bracket. The piano part then transitions to a "Umiarkowanie" (moderation) section with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The lyrics are: "1. Raz się ko-mar z ko-ma-rem prze-ko-ma-rzać za-czął, mó-wiąc, że wi-dział ra-ki,".

**Fig. 21.** S. Behr, *Figielek*, bars 1–5 – articulatory contrast in the piano part. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.38.

## Piano texture as a dramaturgical element

In the song *Atrament*, the dynamic piano texture reinforces the expressive content of the text and introduces additional musical tension. The instrumental texture is not limited here to a harmonic function, but actively co-creates the dramaturgy of the piece. More abrupt

rhythmic impulses, stronger accents, and increased activity in the piano part intensify the situational comedy, giving the music an almost theatrical, commentarial character.

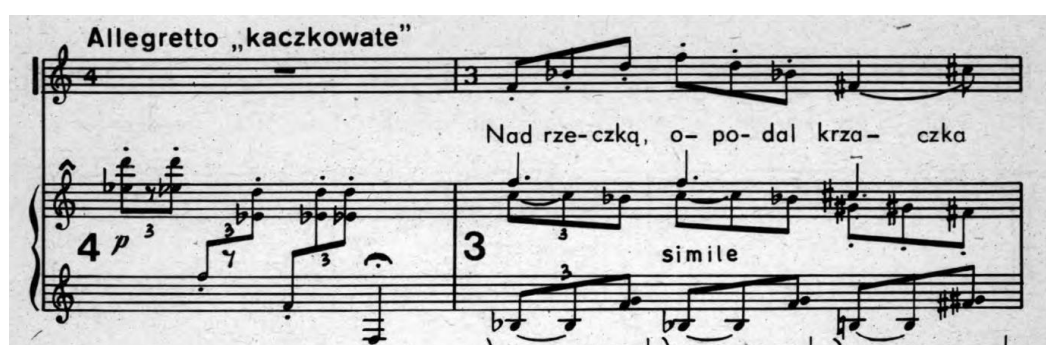


**Fig. 22.** S. Behr, *Atrament*, bars 8–11 – dynamic piano texture as an element of grotesque dramaturgy. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.12.

### Detailed analysis: *Kaczka dziwaczka* to text by Jan Brzechwa

The song *Kaczka dziwaczka* to text by Jan Brzechwa is one of the most vivid examples of the grotesque–humorous compositional idiom of Stefan Behr. The opening marking *Allegretto* “*kaczkowate*” already indicates the interpretative character: lightness, agility, and a deliberately stylised awkwardness of movement, constituting a musical equivalent of the grotesque nature of the protagonist.

Brzechwa’s text has an episodic–narrative structure, which is reflected in a musical form of a strophic–variational character. Subsequent sections preserve a similar rhythmic–melodic model, but are differentiated through changes in texture, dynamics, articulation, and metric organisation, corresponding to the situational variability of the text.



**Fig. 23.** S. Behr, *Kaczka dziwaczka*, bars 1–2 – piano introduction, *Allegretto* “*duck-like*”, parallelly shifting chordal structures; transition from 4/4 to 3/4 upon entry of the vocal part..

Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.14.

The piano introduction already reveals the basic means of the compositional language: parallel-shifted four-note chordal structures with a dense intervallic construction, which introduce a specific, slightly distorted sonoristic character. These structures do not fulfil a traditional functional-harmonic role but instead have a colouristic and expressive function.

After the introduction (in 4/4 metre), there is a transition to 3/4 metre with the entry of the vocal part. The alternating use of triple and duple metre – successive polymetre – produces an effect of instability in the musical pulse, which is a direct equivalent of the “duck-like,” irregular gait of the protagonist.

The vocal part is declamatory-melodic in character, while maintaining a clear rhythmic profile. The melodic ambitus spans from C $\sharp^1$  to D $^2$ , occasionally extending to F $\sharp^2$  (corresponding to a perfect eleventh), but it is generally concentrated in the middle register of the voice.

In the melodic course, stepwise motion predominates, ensuring fluency and natural declamation. Thirds appear as a means of variation, while larger leaps occur only sporadically and serve an accentuating function, highlighting selected moments of the text.

A particularly important element is the characteristic rhythmic model: sequences of short note values (most often staccato eighth notes), combined with sudden rhythmic lengthenings. The short values create an effect of liveliness and agitation, while the lengthenings emphasise textual climaxes, reinforcing the comic effect.



**Fig. 24.** S. Behr, *Kaczka dziwaczka*, bars 5–6 – vocal melody fragment, predominance of stepwise motion. Source: *ibid.*, p. 14.

The piano part has a multi-layered function: rhythmic, illustrative, and dramaturgical. Particularly characteristic are parallel-shifted chordal structures, whose dense intervallic construction (often based on seconds and fourths) leads to the emergence of a specific “rough” sonority.



**Fig. 25.** S. Behr, *Kaczka dziwaczka*, bars 13–16 – fragment of the piano part, parallelly shifting chordal structures. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.15.

The course of the piece also shows variability in the piano texture. In moments of greater tension, there is a densification of harmonic sonorities and an intensification of rhythmic motion, which leads to an increase in musical energy and strengthens the situational dramatic effect.

**Fig. 26.** S. Behr, *Kaczka dziwaczka*, bars 11–12 – thickening of the piano texture in climactic moments. Source: *ibid.*, p. 15.

The harmonic layer is characterised by extended tonality. Despite the presence of dissonant sonorities, an overall sense of tonality is preserved; however, its stability is deliberately undermined through the use of parallel structures and dense chordal configurations. Harmony does not fulfil a directional function but contributes to the grotesque effect through its instability and colouristic shaping.

Performance indications (Tempo I, slightly slower, boldly, faster, ad libitum) also play an important role, emphasising the theatrical character of the piece and indicating the need for a flexible shaping of the musical flow. From a performance perspective, precise

differentiation of metrical sections and clear articulation are crucial. Close collaboration between singer and pianist is particularly important, as the grotesque effect emerges at the intersection of the vocal and instrumental layers.

Interpretation requires not only the execution of the musical score but also a conscious realisation of the work's theatrical potential. As a result, *Kaczka dziwaczka* reveals one of the most characteristic features of Stefan Behr's compositional language: the ability to create comic effect using purely musical means. Grotesqueness arises here through the disruption of the stability of metrical, rhythmic, and harmonic structures, as well as through the close integration of musical and textual layers.

In humorous–grotesque works, Behr uses musical means as the primary vehicle of comic effect. In this group, the relationship between text and music is transformed in a specific way: the sonic layer not only illustrates the content but actively interprets and reshapes it. The analysis shows that the composer achieves grotesque effect through the deliberate destabilisation of musical structures: metrical variability, dynamic contrasts, rhythmic motorics, and a distinctive piano texture. These means create tension between expectation and realisation, which constitutes the fundamental mechanism of musical comedy.

From a performance perspective, particular importance is attached to rhythmic precision, clarity of articulation, and the ability to manage contrast. Interpretation of these pieces requires not only faithful execution of the score but also a conscious extraction of their expressive and theatrical potential.

#### **2.4.4. Songs of a Dance-like and Movement Character**

Within the collection, one can distinguish a group of pieces with a clearly dance-like or movement-oriented character: *Tańcowała igła z nitką* to a text by Jan Brzechwa, *Murzynek Bambo* and *Ptasie plotki* to texts by Julian Tuwim, as well as *Dziesięcioro Murzyniłek* to texts by Antoni Marianowicz and Janusz Minkiewicz.

| Title                          | Author of text                           | Movement character                                             |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Tańcowała igła z nitką</i>  | Jan Brzechwa                             | dance-like rhythmic motorics inspired by spinning motion       |
| <i>Murzynek Bambo</i>          | Julian Tuwim                             | rhythmic pulsation of a quasi-dance character                  |
| <i>Dziesięcioro Murzyniłek</i> | Antoni Marianowicz,<br>Janusz Minkiewicz | rhythmic structure resembling a counting rhyme                 |
| <i>Ptasie plotki</i>           | Julian Tuwim                             | lively rhythmic motorics and a movement-like melodic character |

Songs in this group are united by a clear orientation toward the kinetic aspect of music, manifested in the dominance of regular metrical organisation, the repetitiveness of rhythmic structures, and the motoric character of the instrumental texture. In contrast to illustrative or narrative songs, where the semantic layer of the text plays a primary role, in dance-like and movement-oriented pieces the fundamental organising factor of the musical course becomes pulse and rhythmic energy.

A key feature of this group is metrical stability, which assumes a governing role over other elements of the musical work. Regular pulsation forms the basis of temporal organisation, enabling the construction of a clear sense of movement and a transparent formal structure. The repetition of rhythmic patterns, often of an ostinato-like nature, produces continuity and cohesion in the musical flow, while simultaneously enhancing the perceptual accessibility of the pieces.

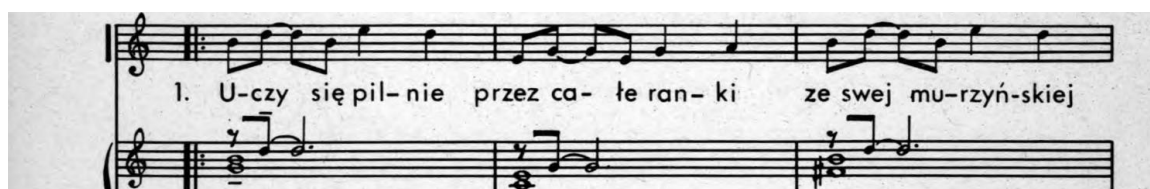
The piano part plays a particularly important role in this group as a carrier of rhythmic motorics. Its texture is most often based on repetitive figurations that stabilise the pulse and define the movement-related character of the piece. In contrast to grotesque or illustrative songs, the piano here does not serve a contrasting or commenting function; instead, its role is to organise the energetic drive of the entire musical process.

The vocal line, although subordinated to the rhythm of the text, shows greater regularity and schematic construction than in narrative songs. The melody has a rhythmic-declamatory character, often based on repetitive melodic formulas that support a uniform sense of motion.

As a result, the music acquires a clear performative dimension, associated with movement, gesture, and potential choreographic realisation.



**Fig. 27.** S. Behr, *Tańcowała igła z nitką*, introductory bars 1–4 – *Tempo of a krakowiak*, regular metrical organization. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.24.



**Fig. 28.** S. Behr, *Murzynek Bambo*, bars 7–9 – motoric pattern of the piano accompaniment. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.48.



Fig. 29. S. Behr, *Dzieścięcio-ro Murzyni-tek*, bars 1–6 – repetitive rhythmic structure corresponding to a counting-rhyme pattern. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.32.



Fig. 30. S. Behr, *Ptasie plotki*, fragment of the vocal melody, bars 1–3 – agile character of the vocal part. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.52.

### Detailed analysis: *Tańcowała igła z nitką* to a text by Jan Brzechwa

*Tańcowała igła z nitką* by Jan Brzechwa is a representative example of dance-like songs in the analysed collection. The indication *Tempo krakowiaka* provides an unambiguous stylistic reference, pointing to the idiom of a Polish folk dance and implying a specific manner of organising pulse, accentuation, and articulation. The dance character does not result solely from the metre, but from the overall shaping of rhythmic and textural material.

The basis of temporal organisation is a regular 2/4 metre, maintained consistently throughout the piece. Metrical stability plays a dominant role over other musical parameters, forming the foundation for constructing a clear sense of movement. The formal course is sectional in nature; despite a high degree of stylistic uniformity, individual sections are differentiated primarily through changes in dynamics and texture rather than through fundamental transformations of thematic material.



**Fig. 31.** S. Behr, *Tańcowala igła z nitką*, bars 1–4 – clear metrical organization and dance pulse.

Source: *ibid.*, p. 24.

The vocal part has a rhythmic–declamatory character, while maintaining a clear melodic contour. The melodic ambitus essentially covers the range from D<sup>1</sup> to E<sup>2</sup>, corresponding to a major ninth interval and representing a moderate, comfortable intervallic span for the performer. In the melodic course, stepwise motion and thirds predominate, with a clear prevalence of progressive motion. Seconds function as the basic building block of the melodic line, ensuring its fluency and conformity with the natural accentuation of the text. Thirds introduce local variation and enhance phrase clarity, while larger leaps (occasional fourths) are punctual in nature and serve to emphasise selected textual accents or climactic moments. A characteristic feature is also a certain regularity of melodic flow; short motifs are repeated or slightly transformed, which supports a uniform sense of motion and enhances the perceptual accessibility of the piece. The rhythm of the vocal part is mainly based on eighth and quarter notes, with a clear subordination of accentuation to the linguistic structure of the text. At the same time, a strong integration of speech rhythm with musical pulse is noticeable, as well as phrase-level coherence between text and melody, which imparts a dance-like quality.



**Fig. 32.** S. Behr, *Tańcowala igła z nitką*, bars 7–10 – rhythmic character of the vocal melody.

Source: *ibid.*, p. 24.

The piano part performs the function of the motoric foundation of the entire piece. Its texture is based on repetitive rhythmic figures of an ostinato character, which stabilise the metrical pulse and determine the dance-like character of the composition. The structure of the accompaniment is two-layered: the pianist's left hand fulfils a harmonic–rhythmic function through a regular succession of sonorities, while the right hand introduces an element of motion through figurative rhythmic elaborations.

An important element is the clear emphasis on the first beat of the bar, corresponding to the rhythmic idiom of the *krakowiak*. The regularity of this accentuation, combined with the repetition of rhythmic figures, leads to the emergence of a clearly defined dance pulse. At the same time, the composer avoids mechanical repetition through subtle textural and dynamic variations that enliven the musical flow.



**Fig. 33.** S. Behr, *Tańcowala igła z nitką*, bars 15–16 – ostinato rhythmic figuration in the accompaniment. Source: *ibid.*, p. 25.



**Fig. 34.** S. Behr, *Tańcowala igła z nitką*, middle section – motoric repetitive figuration of the accompaniment. Source: *ibid.*, p. 25.

The harmonic layer has a functional and stabilising character, based on simple tonal relationships. Its role does not consist in generating harmonic tension, but in supporting the regularity of the musical flow and maintaining a unified dance character. Harmony remains subordinated to rhythm and pulse, which constitute the main carriers of expression. The closing of the piece has a cadential character and emphasises the formal closure in accordance with traditional tonal logic.



**Fig. 35** S. Behr, *Tańcowala igła z nitką*, last bars – cadential closure of the form. Source: *ibid.*, p. 26.

From a performance perspective, particular importance is attached to rhythmic precision and the maintenance of a supple pulse. The piano should sustain a stable, clearly

articulated rhythm, forming the foundation for the vocal part. The vocal line, in turn, requires a combination of rhythmic precision and natural declamation. It is crucial to preserve lightness of articulation and to clearly differentiate accents, which allows the dance-like character of the piece to emerge.

As a result, the song *Tańcowała igła z nitką* reveals an essential aspect of Stefan Behr's compositional language, namely the subordination of musical structure to rhythmic energy and pulse regularity. This work exemplifies a composition in which the kinetic and motoric dimension becomes the primary organising factor of both the musical course and its perception.

Songs of a dance-like and movement-oriented character reveal an important aspect of Stefan Behr's compositional language, namely the subordination of musical structure to rhythmic energy and pulse regularity. In this group, metrical organisation and textural motorics play a dominant role, determining both the musical course and the manner of its perception. Analysis of these works shows that the composer achieves a sense of motion through metrical stability, the repetitiveness of rhythmic structures, and the clearly defined motoric function of the piano part. In contrast to other stylistic groups, the relationship between text and music is here partially subordinated to the kinetic aspect, resulting in works with strong performative potential. From a performance perspective, particular importance is attached to rhythmic precision, pulse flexibility, and lightness of articulation. Interpretation of these pieces requires maintaining a balance between structural regularity and naturalness of expression, as well as close collaboration between the vocal and piano parts in shaping a shared rhythmic flow.

#### **2.4.5. Songs of a Lyrical Character**

Songs of a lyrical character constitute a distinct stylistic group within Stefan Behr's collection, characterised by a clear shift of emphasis from narrative, illustrative, or grotesque elements towards the shaping of atmosphere and subtle musical expression. This category includes the following pieces: *Kotek* and *Warszawa* to texts by Julian Tuwim, and *Psie smutki* to a text by Jan Brzechwa.

| Title              | Author of text | Lyrical character                                              |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Kotek</i>       | Julian Tuwim   | a calm miniature of a reflective character, close to a lullaby |
| <i>Warszawa</i>    | Julian Tuwim   | an atmospheric reflection of descriptive character             |
| <i>Psie smutki</i> | Jan Brzechwa   | a melancholic mood emphasised by a calm melodic flow           |

In contrast to the other groups, in which the primary organizing factor of the musical flow is action, imagery, or comic effect, in lyrical songs the leading role is played by emotional state and its gradual, subtle shaping. Here, music does not illustrate events or construct a narrative; instead, it creates a sound space corresponding to the reflective character of the text.

A defining feature of this group is the reduction of expressive means. The vocal line is carried in a calm and smooth manner, with a clear predominance of stepwise motion and only occasional use of thirds. The ambitus remains narrow, which supports a uniform timbre and an intimate expressive quality. Phrases are longer than in narrative songs, and their shaping does not result from textual segmentation but from natural breathing flow and the gradual build-up of expressive tension.

An important aspect is also the organisation of musical time. The tempo is slow or moderate, and the pulse is often relaxed through a shift from smaller rhythmic values to larger ones (e.g., from semiquavers to quavers), creating a sense of suspension and stasis. An example of this approach is *Warszawa*, where a calm, sparse piano texture and limited dynamics generate an impression of reflective stillness (Fig. 37).



**Fig. 36.** S. Behr, *Warszawa*, bars 6–10 – calm piano texture creating an atmospheric character.  
Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.54.

In contrast to dance-like and movement-oriented songs, there is no clear rhythmic motoric here, and the musical flow is based on subtle changes in dynamics and timbre. The piano part plays a particularly important role in this group as a carrier of sound colour. Its texture is usually sparse, often based on sonorities of a diffuse or mildly dissonant character, which can be observed in *Psie smutki*, where the delicate harmonic colouring contributes to the melancholic character of the music (Fig. 38).



**Fig. 37.** S. Behr, *Psie smutki*, accompaniment fragment, bars 1–4 – subtle harmonic coloration.  
Source: *ibid.*, p. 20.

Harmony does not serve a directional function but a colouristic one, contributing to the atmosphere of the piece through a gentle “blurring” of tonal relations. The repetitiveness of the textural material and the limitation of dynamic changes lead to an effect of stasis, which constitutes one of the key expressive elements of this group of works. As a result, Behr’s lyrical songs reveal a different aspect of his compositional language, based on reduction of material, restraint of means, and a focus on sound quality and subtlety of expression.

### Detailed analysis: *Kotek* to words by Julian Tuwim

The song *Kotek* to words by Julian Tuwim is one of the most characteristic examples of the lyrical compositional idiom of Stefan Behr. In contrast to songs of an illustrative or grotesque character, the composer focuses here on creating an atmosphere of calmness, delicacy, and a specific suspension of musical time. This effect is achieved through economy of means, repetition of material, and subtle handling of timbre and dynamics.

The piece is marked by the indications *rather slow* and *sleepy*, and the dynamic level revolves around *p*, *pp*, and *pp possibile*, giving the whole a character of an intimate, subdued miniature, close in expression to a lullaby, yet lacking its regular pulse.



**Fig. 38.** S. Behr, *Kotek*, bars 1–2 – four-note semitone clusters in the piano part, dynamic level *pp*.

Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children*, op. cit., p.46.

The vocal part has a declamatory-lyrical character and is subordinated to a calm, almost static musical flow. The melody's ambitus remains limited and generally spans from  $d^1$  to  $c^2$ , corresponding to a minor seventh. Such a restricted range supports a uniform timbre and an intimate expressive character.

In the melodic course, stepwise motion predominates, giving the vocal line softness and fluidity. Thirds appear only occasionally as a form of delicate variation, while larger leaps occur very rarely and do not serve a dramatic function. The whole is governed by a logic of minimal pitch deviation, which reinforces the impression of stasis and suspension.

The vocal phrase is short and segmented; however, unlike in narrative songs, its division does not result from the dynamics of storytelling but from natural breathing and a calm flow of speech. There are no clear melodic climaxes, and the limited intervallic tension leads to a vocal line of an almost recitative-lyrical character. The rhythm of the vocal part is

simple and text-driven, but less varied than in narrative songs. Quavers and crotchets dominate, with a deliberate avoidance of rhythmic motoric drive, which supports the calm character of the piece.

The piano part plays a key role in shaping the sonic and expressive layer. Its texture is based on repetitive patterns in an even quaver motion, creating an impression of a delicate, pulsating stasis. Particularly important are sonorities of a cluster-like character: four- and five-note semitonal structures. Despite their dissonance, they do not function as tension-building elements but as colouristic ones. Performed at very soft dynamics, they acquire a gentle, diffuse and “muted” character, forming a subtle background for the vocal line.

The repetitiveness of the textural material is structural in nature; entire sections are subjected to repetition with only minimal pitch or textural changes. This type of organisation produces an effect of suspended musical time and a sense of stasis, one of the key expressive features of the piece.

The harmonic layer remains ambiguous. Despite the absence of key signatures, an overall sense of tonality is preserved, though it is enriched by cluster sonorities that “blur” the clarity of harmonic function. This treatment of harmony can be understood in the context of twentieth-century aesthetic developments. Stefan Jarociński, characterising the harmonic language of Impressionism, wrote: *They completely reinterpreted the function of chords. They broke the functional link between melody and harmony, granting chords full autonomy*<sup>27</sup>.

Although Behr’s music does not belong to Impressionism, in *Kotek* one can observe a similar approach to harmony as primarily a colouristic and sonic element rather than a strictly functional one. Harmony here does not serve a directional role but a colouristic one, contributing to the sonic atmosphere.

From the performance perspective, the piece requires particular control of tone and dynamics. The piano should produce an extremely soft, light sound, avoiding any accents that might disturb the delicate sound structure. Clusters must be executed subtly, without heaviness. The vocal part should remain natural, simple, and restrained in expression.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

Excessive expressivity or exaggerated shaping of phrasing would disrupt the character of the piece, whose strength lies in restraint and subtlety.

As a result, *Kotek* reveals the lyrical aspect of Stefan Behr's compositional language, based on material reduction, limited ambitus, predominance of stepwise motion, and the special role of piano texture as a carrier of timbre. The piece is an example of music in which expression is achieved not through development and tension, but through stasis, repetition, and subtle timbral variation.

Lyrical songs reveal an important aspect of Behr's compositional language, based on the conscious reduction of musical material and the subordination of structure to the creation of atmosphere. In this group, the primary expressive means are timbre, dynamics, and subtle textural variation rather than thematic development or formal contrast.

The analysis shows that the composer achieves lyricism through limited ambitus, predominance of stepwise motion, static musical flow, and the use of colouristic sonorities. The piano part plays a particularly important role, not only accompanying the vocal line but also co-creating the work's sonic space.

From a performance perspective, interpretation requires careful control of dynamics, timbre, and musical time. The key challenge is to balance simplicity with expressive clarity. Unlike in other stylistic groups, the artistic effect here does not result from contrast or intensity, but from restraint and precise shaping of detail.

## **2.5. Significance of the collection in the vocal repertoire for children**

The analysis of Stefan Behr's *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano* reveals considerable stylistic diversity and a clearly defined individuality of compositional language. The identification of five basic types – illustrative, narrative, humorous-grotesque, dance-like, and lyrical songs – shows that the primary organising factor of the musical material is the relationship between text and music. Each of the distinguished groups corresponds to a different model of this relationship, which leads to the use of varied compositional means.

The typology presented has a functional character and makes it possible to identify the main compositional strategies employed by Behr. In illustrative songs, sound depiction

dominates, realised primarily through the piano part; in narrative songs, the musical structure is subordinated to the logic of the text; in grotesque songs, the metric and rhythmic stability is deliberately destabilised; in dance-like songs, the material is organised around a regular pulse; and in lyrical songs, reduction of means and concentration on timbre and mood are central.

An important element of Behr's compositional idiom is the clear differentiation between the vocal and instrumental parts. The vocal line usually maintains a simple, declamatory-melodic construction subordinated to textual prosody, while the piano part functions as an active co-creator of meaning – building sonic space, commenting on the narrative course, or organising musical motion. This relationship constitutes one of the key interpretative elements of the repertoire under discussion.

From the perspective of performance practice, Behr's collection has particular value. The moderate ambitus of the vocal part and the transparency of texture make it accessible to young performers, while the complexity of text–music relationships and the richness of expressive means also make these works an interesting material for professional performers.

In a broader perspective, Stefan Behr's output fits into the tradition of 20th-century Polish children's music represented, among others, by Witold Lutosławski, Grażyna Bacewicz, and Karol Szymanowski, in which the combination of educational function and high artistic quality is of key importance. The analysis indicates that this repertoire should not be treated solely as didactic material, but as a fully-fledged part of vocal literature.

## **2.6. Sources for the analysis of the cycle**

The primary source used in the analysis of the cycle is the score of Stefan Behr's *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*, published by the Music Publishing House of the Authors' Agency in Warsaw in 1980. This material forms the basis for formal, rhythmic, harmonic, and textural analyses.

An important component of the research was also the analysis of literary texts used in the individual songs. The cycle is based on poems by, among others, Jan Brzechwa and Julian Tuwim, characterised by expressive rhythm, vivid imagery, and a richness of stylistic devices. The combination of poetic text analysis with musical analysis makes it possible to

identify the ways in which the composer interprets the meaning of words through musical means.

The study also takes into account the stylistic context of the composer's work and references to the relevant musicological literature concerning the relationship between music and text, which allows the analysed repertoire to be situated within a broader musicological framework.

## **2.7. Summary of Chapter II**

The musical language of Stefan Behr's *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano* is characterised by considerable stylistic diversity and a high level of awareness of the relationship between text and music. The composer combines formal clarity with a richness of illustrative devices, and simplicity with subtle dissonance.

The analysis of individual works shows that the composer consistently strives to create music that is both communicative and artistically refined. The typology developed allows for the identification of dominant compositional strategies and mechanisms of musical organisation. This will serve as a starting point for the interpretative and performance-oriented reflection developed in the next chapter of the thesis.

## CHAPTER III

### Description of the artistic work: recording of Stefan Behr's cycle *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*

#### 3.1. Status of the artistic work

This description of the artistic work in the field of music, within the specialisation of vocal performance, constitutes a component of a doctoral project in which the artistic work is a sound recording of the complete set of *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano* by Stefan Behr<sup>28</sup>, realised in 2026 at the Music School in Malbork. The recording is attached to the dissertation. Work is currently underway on releasing this recording as a CD.

The foundation of this study is the assumption that musicological analysis, which addresses interpretative and performance-related aspects, finds its completion only in artistic practice. This means that theoretical reflection and artistic realisation are complementary and mutually conditioning. The recording therefore constitutes a direct realisation of the conclusions formulated in Chapter II and their verification in sonic form. In this sense, it is not merely an illustration of analytical considerations but their extension in sound form. It allows for the capture of aspects of the work that are inaccessible in purely textual analysis and that only become apparent in the performance process. These include, in particular, timbre, articulation, dynamic proportions, and temporal relationships between elements of the musical structure.

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<sup>28</sup> S. Behr, *Children's Songs. 20 Songs for Voice and Piano*, Music Publishing House of the Authors' Agency, Warsaw 1980.

### 3.2. Description of the work: recording of the complete cycle

The recording includes all pieces from the collection *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano* by Stefan Behr in the order corresponding to the original edition, published by the Music Publishing House of the Authors' Agency in 1980<sup>29</sup>. Preserving the original order was a conscious artistic decision. Despite the fact that the collection does not constitute a classical cycle with strict dramaturgy, presenting it in the published order reflects the way in which the work is made available to performers and listeners. This is explained in detail in subsection 2.2.

The recording was realised for soprano and piano, in accordance with the composer's original intention. The title of the recording is: *Stefan Behr. 20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*.

|                    |                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| soprano            | Karolina Niebrzegowska                                                                                                            |
| piano              | Ewa Sarwińska-Kowalczyk                                                                                                           |
| recording location | Music School in Malbork                                                                                                           |
| year of production | 2026                                                                                                                              |
| source edition     | Stefan Behr, <i>Songs for Children. 20 Songs for Voice and Piano</i> , Music Publishing House of the Authors' Agency, Warsaw 1980 |
| order of pieces    | in accordance with the source edition                                                                                             |
| publication status | attached to the dissertation; publication in progress                                                                             |

The recording is the first complete audio recording of the entire collection in a version for female voice and piano. This fact gives the recording particular significance from the perspective of disseminating and popularising Polish musical heritage. Behr's songs,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

although published in print in 1980, remained outside the circulation of publicly available recordings for over forty-five years.

### 3.3. Shaping interpretation in performance practice

The interpretation of Stefan Behr's *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano* cannot be understood as a uniform performance model; rather, it requires flexible adaptation of interpretative means to the diverse character of individual pieces. The variety of the composer's musical language, discussed in Chapter II, is directly reflected in performance practice, determining the shaping of timbre, phrasing, musical time, and the relationship between the vocal and piano parts.

In this subsection, the musical examples serve a different function than in Chapter II. They are no longer used solely for the analysis of compositional language, but instead indicate passages that, in performance practice, required concrete interpretative decisions. The work on the recording therefore involved not only reading the score, but also determining how to realise those elements of the score that directly affect sound, the balance between voice and piano, tempo, articulation, and the character of individual pieces.

A good example of this type of relationship is the opening of the song *Deszczyk*, in which the piano part employs a *sempre staccato leggero* figuration, imitating the falling of raindrops.



**Fig. 39.** S. Behr, *Deszczyk*, bars 1–3 – piano figuration *sempre staccato leggero* as a starting point for articulatory and dynamic decisions in performance. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children. 20 Songs for Voice and Piano*, Wydawnictwo Muzyczne Agencji Autorskiej, Warsaw 1980, p. 40.

In performance practice, this passage required a very precise determination of dynamic proportions. The piano part must retain its illustrative clarity, as it constructs the

primary sonic image of the piece; however, it must not dominate the vocal entry or impair the intelligibility of the text. Collaboration with the pianist in this section involved finding a tone colour that conveys the lightness and pointillistic quality of falling droplets, while remaining subordinate to the overall vocal–instrumental narrative. The final interpretative decision therefore concerned not only the staccato itself, but also its weight, duration of resonance, and its relationship to the vocal phrase.

A separate category of performance issues is represented by narrative songs, in which the musical notation directly reflects the course of the literary text. A particularly clear example is the song *Abecadlo*, where the composer introduces numerous changes in tempo and character markings corresponding to successive episodes of Julian Tuwim's poem.

The image displays a musical score for the song 'Abecadło' by S. Behr, arranged for voice and piano. The score is divided into three systems, each with a distinct tempo and character marking.

**System 1: energicznie**  
 The first system is marked 'energicznie' (energetically). It features a 4/4 time signature and a forte (*mf*) dynamic. The vocal line begins with the lyrics 'A- be-ca-dło zpie-ca spa-dło,'. The piano accompaniment consists of eighth-note patterns in the right hand and a more active bass line. The system concludes with a 3-measure rest in the piano part.

**System 2: wolniej, żartobliwie**  
 The second system is marked 'wolniej, żartobliwie' (more slowly, playfully). The tempo changes to 3/4, and the dynamic is mezzo-piano (*mp*). The vocal line continues with 'o ziemię się hu-kło, roz-sy-pa-ło się po ką-tach, strasznie się po-tłu- kło:'. The piano accompaniment is characterized by a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a simple bass line.

**System 3: łagodniej**  
 The third system is marked 'łagodniej' (more gently). It maintains the 3/4 time signature but changes the dynamic to pianissimo (*pp*). The vocal line starts with 'B zbi- to so-bie brzu-szki, A zwi-chnę- to nó-żki,'. The piano accompaniment features a very light, sustained accompaniment in the right hand and a simple bass line.

**System 4: żywiej, radośnie**  
 The fourth system is marked 'żywiej, radośnie' (more lively, joyfully). It returns to a 4/4 time signature. The vocal line begins with 'O jak ba-lon-pę- kło, aż się P prze-lę- kło, T da-szek zgubi-to,'. The piano accompaniment is more active, with eighth-note patterns in both hands.

Below the first system, the copyright notice reads: '© Copyright 1980 by AGENCJA AUTORSKA, Warszawa, Poland.' The page number '34' is printed below the second system.

**Fig. 40.** S. Behr, *Abecadło*, fragment – variation of agogic and character markings as an element of musical narrative organization. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children. 20 Songs for Voice and Piano*, Wydawnictwo Muzyczne Agencji Autorskiej, Warsaw 1980, pp. 34–35.

In performance practice, these indications cannot be treated as general interpretative guidelines, but rather as an integral element of the structure of the piece. Each change of tempo and character corresponds to a specific fragment of the narrative, which requires performers to consciously differentiate between successive formal sections. The

interpretative challenge therefore did not lie in choosing a single, unified tempo, but in the ability to move smoothly between contrasting musical states without losing continuity of expression. Collaboration with the pianist in this case involved developing a shared understanding of the work's dramaturgy. Agogic changes had to be realised synchronously, while maintaining flexibility of phrasing and clarity of the text. It was particularly important to avoid a mechanical treatment of tempo markings – each change required justification arising from the textual content and its musical setting. The final interpretative concept assumed treating *Abecadlo* as a sequence of short musical scenes, in which agogic variability fulfils a dramaturgical function. In this view, tempo is not a fixed parameter but a means of shaping the narrative, and its realisation becomes one of the key elements of interpretation.

A particularly demanding category of performance issues is represented by lyrical songs, in which the musical notation does not directly determine the sonic result but leaves a wide space for decisions concerning timbre, dynamics, and musical time. An example of such a situation is the song *Kotek*, in which the primary role is played by the subtle organisation of the piano texture and the limited, calm flow of the vocal part.



**Fig. 41.** S. Behr, *Kotek*, fragment – cluster-based piano texture performed at a very soft dynamic level as the basis for shaping the timbre of the piece. Source: S. Behr, *Songs for Children. 20 Songs for Voice and Piano*, Wydawnictwo Muzyczne Agencji Autorskiej, Warsaw 1980, p. 46.

In contrast to works with a clear rhythmic drive or illustrative character, in *Kotek* the fundamental performance challenge is not the execution of a specific musical gesture, but the maintenance of a coherent sound quality over an extended temporal span. The repetitiveness of the textural structures and the limited dynamic range make even small changes in vocal production or piano articulation clearly audible.

The piano part, based on concentrated sonorities of a cluster-like character, requires particular control of sound. These sonorities, despite their dissonant nature, do not fulfil a function of tension-building but rather a colouristic one; therefore, they should be realised as lightly as possible and without any “sonic weight”. Collaboration with the pianist in this respect focused primarily on achieving a unified, soft tone colour and on controlling the individual sonorities in terms of their duration of resonance.

From the perspective of the vocal part, the key issue was adapting vocal production to the character of the instrumental texture. The vocal line cannot be led in a dominant manner – it must instead be placed within the same sonic space as the piano. This requires particularly careful control of dynamics, breath stability, and continuity of phrasing, without emphasising clear climactic points.

The final interpretative concept assumed treating *Kotek* as a static form in the dramaturgical sense, in which musical development takes place not through contrast, but through subtle differentiation of timbre and sonic tension. In this approach, performance becomes a process of continuous listening and responding to sonority rather than the execution of a clearly defined expressive line.

A key aspect of the interpretation of Behr’s repertoire remains close collaboration between singer and pianist. In Behr’s songs, the piano part does not function as accompaniment in the traditional sense, but rather constitutes an equal component of the musical structure, often taking on a role in organising rhythmic flow, constructing illustrative layers, or co-shaping the dramaturgy of the piece. In performance practice, this implies the need to move away from a hierarchical model of relationship towards a partnership based on mutual listening and shared interpretative decisions.

Particular importance is attached to the shaping of sound balance. In many pieces, the extended piano texture can easily dominate the vocal line; therefore, it is necessary to consciously control dynamics and articulation in such a way as to preserve textual intelligibility while simultaneously highlighting the colouristic qualities of the instrumental part. This balance is not fixed but subject to continuous adjustment depending on the character of the piece and its internal dramaturgy.

Equally important is the manner of shaping musical time. In narrative songs, tempo and phrasing are subordinated to the logic of the literary text, which requires a flexible approach to pulse and close coordination between performers. In contrast, in songs with a clearly rhythmic and dance-like character, the basis of interpretation is the stability of pulse and rhythmic precision, enabling a fluid vocal line.

Attention should also be paid to the performance markings and explanatory notes included at the beginning of the collection, which constitute an important element of the compositional concept and should be treated as an integral part of the score rather than merely auxiliary interpretative commentary. As a result, the interpretation of Behr's songs emerges as a process of jointly shaping the musical course in performance, in which the score serves as a starting point for artistic decisions made during realisation. The particular role of collaboration between singer and pianist means that the final shape of the piece is not merely a realisation of the score, but the result of a conscious performative dialogue in which musical form, text, and sound create a coherent, interdependent whole. Pianist Ewa Sarwińska-Kowalczyk, with extensive experience in chamber music and sensitivity to subtle sonic relationships, significantly influenced the final interpretative shape of the recording.

### **3.4. Concert activity as a research stage of the project**

The recording of the artistic work was preceded by an in-depth study of the performance aspects of Stefan Behr's music in front of different audiences. Concerts are not the artistic work itself, but constitute an integral component of the research process, enabling the verification of interpretative hypotheses in contact with a live audience, the observation of audience response (particularly that of younger listeners), and the adjustment of performance concepts prior to the recording. This is connected with the philosophy of doctoral studies in the musical arts, namely that performance practice, alongside theoretical analysis, constitutes an equally valuable source for expanding musical knowledge.

#### **3.4.1. Concert in memory of Stefan Behr, Warsaw, 23 April 2023**

This concert constituted the first opportunity for interpretative verification and took place on 23 April 2023 in the Concert Hall of the State Music School Complex No. 1 in

Warsaw (21 Rakowiecka Street)<sup>30</sup>. The performance was part of the nationwide festival *The Art of Unwanted Presence* (Institute of National Remembrance, 14 April–14 May 2023). Selected songs from the collection were performed with Karolina Tańska (piano). In the second part of the concert, other works by Behr were performed by pianist Ewa Sarwińska-Kowalczyk, the ProModern vocal sextet, and a chamber ensemble consisting of: Mischa Kozłowski – piano, Ania Karpowicz – flute, Marta Piórkowska – violin, Julia Wawrowska – viola, and Marianna Sikorska – cello.

Participation in a festival devoted to composers excluded or censored by the communist authorities of then-Poland gave the presentation of Behr's music a particular historical context. The composer, who deliberately distanced himself from the avant-garde and wrote miniatures *in defiance of current trends*<sup>31</sup>, fits perfectly into the landscape of artists whose artistic independence resulted in marginalisation.

From the perspective of preparing the recording, the concert provided important observations concerning the dynamic balance between voice and piano in live performance conditions, as well as audience responses to different types of songs. Lyrical songs elicited concentrated silence, while grotesque songs provoked spontaneous humorous reactions. This confirmed that the typological distinction between stylistic groups has a real impact on the reception of individual pieces.

### **3.4.2. *Concert for children in memory of Stefan Behr*, Baltic Opera, Gdańsk, 7 May 2023**

The second stage of interpretative verification of these works was a concert held on 7 May 2023 at the Baltic Opera in Gdańsk (15 Aleja Zwycięstwa, 1:00 p.m.)<sup>32</sup>, also within the framework of the *The Art of Unwanted Presence* Festival, this time as a concert for children. Performers: Karolina Niebrzegowska (soprano), Maria Malinowska (soprano), Iwona Wall (mezzo-soprano), Ewa Sarwińska-Kowalczyk (piano), and the Opera String

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<sup>30</sup> Programme of the *Concert in Memory of Stefan Behr*, Concert Hall of the State Music School Complex No. 1 in Warsaw, ul. Rakowiecka 21, 23 April 2023, 18:00, festival *Sztuka Źle Obecna*, organised by the Institute of National Remembrance.

<sup>31</sup> S. Behr, letter to T. Szeligowski, 26–28 October 1960, manuscript held by the author.

<sup>32</sup> Video recording: *Concert for Children in Memory of Stefan Behr*, online premiere IPN, 1 June 2023, <https://youtu.be/LuHAHR8Jj3E> (accessed 24 March 2026).

Quartet (Barbara Misiewicz, Przemysław Treszczotka, Michał Rożek, Krzysztof Jakub Szwarec). Host: Jerzy Petersburski Jr., direction: Tomasz Czarnecki, stage design: Kalina Anna Konieczny.

The video recording of this concert was published by the Institute of National Remembrance on 1 June 2023 as an online premiere on IPN channels, which gave Behr's music its first wider online reach. The realisation of a concert for a children's audience provided particularly important observations for the process of shaping the interpretative concept of the recording. The reactions of young listeners served as a direct test of textual clarity, rhythmic articulation, and the effectiveness of illustrative devices, which in Chapter II were identified as one of the fundamental elements of Behr's compositional language. Laughter during *The Daring Duck* and *Trick*, concentration during *Kitten*, and movement during the dance-like songs – each of these reactions confirmed or modified the way in which the identified stylistic types (illustrative, grotesque, lyrical, and dance-like) were realised, demonstrating their functioning in actual reception.

An important element of this performance was also the use of arrangements prepared by Przemysław Treszczotka, which expanded the original piano texture into an ensemble dimension and enabled a reinterpretation of the musical material in the context of staged performance. The introduction of three vocal parts allowed for the creation of chamber-like sonorities, in which harmonic and textural relationships (analysed in Chapter II primarily in relation to the voice–piano configuration) were significantly deepened. The differentiation of vocal timbres and their interweaving highlighted both the dialogical elements characteristic of narrative songs and the illustrative layer, which in the original version is primarily carried by the piano.

As a consequence, this realisation revealed the potential for a multi-layered reading of Behr's output, indicating that his musical language – despite its apparent simplicity – allows for different performance strategies and can function both in a chamber setting and in a more expanded sonic space. It was also the first realisation with professional stage direction as well as designed costumes and stage set, which further enhanced the perceptual and theatrical dimension of the repertoire under analysis.

### 3.4.3. *Meet Mr. B.*, Forest Opera, Sopot, 9 June 2024

The next concert serving as interpretative verification took place on 9 June 2024 in the Concert Hall of the Polish Chamber Philharmonic Sopot at the Forest Opera (2:00 p.m.). The production was titled *Poznajcie Pana B. (Meet Mr. B.)* and had the character of a family concert-performance. Soloists: Karolina Niebrzegowska (soprano), Maria Malinowska (soprano), Iwona Wall (mezzo-soprano), Polish Chamber Philharmonic Sopot under the direction of Sylwia Janiak, piano: Ewa Sarwińska-Kowalczyk, presentation: Agnieszka Olszewska.

Work at the piano during both productions featuring Ewa Sarwińska-Kowalczyk (the same pianist who later participated in the recording) enabled a direct verification of the interpretative concept developed jointly, under conditions of full stage production. These experiences therefore had key importance for the preparation of the recording.

| No.  | Date          | Venue                      | Function in the project                                                              |
|------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | 23.04.2023    | ZPSM No. 1,<br>Warsaw      | interpretative verification; adult audience                                          |
| 2    | 7.05.2023     | Baltic Opera,<br>Gdańsk    | verification with a children's audience; direct reactions                            |
| 3    | 9.06.2024     | Forest Opera, Sopot        | verification of the full concept with the recording pianist (E. Sarwińska-Kowalczyk) |
| Work | 19–26.04.2026 | Music School in<br>Malbork | artistic recording – full set of 20 songs                                            |

## 3.5. The significance of the recording in the context of Polish musical heritage

The realization of the recording of the set of 20 *Songs for Children* for voice and piano by Stefan Behr fits into a broader context of efforts aimed at making forgotten Polish vocal repertoire accessible. As indicated in Chapter I, Behr's songs were for decades

available only in the printed score edition from 1980, without any publicly accessible sound recording. There is also a lack of information regarding any performances. In the case of vocal repertoire, the absence of a recording is tantamount to exclusion from living performance practice; the scores remain silent, and each subsequent performer is forced to reconstruct interpretative tradition from the very beginning.

The artistic recording accompanying this dissertation breaks this barrier. At the same time, it constitutes an interpretative proposal formulated on the basis of detailed musicological analysis and long-standing artistic experience, which clearly distinguishes it from hypothetical or amateur realizations. The recording may serve as a reference point for subsequent performers undertaking this repertoire.

It is worth recalling Behr's observation from a letter to Szeligowski, in which the composer motivates his writing of *Songs for Children* as follows: *When I listen to the repertoire with which my daughter is being fed, I feel the need almost to write something for such little ones that does not discourage from music and does not stifle musicality, if it exists, and sensitivity to matters of sound*<sup>33</sup>. The recording realizes this aim: it brings Behr's music closer to listeners who cannot – and never could – take the score in their hands.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

Chapter III constitutes a description of the artistic work – a recording of the complete set of 20 songs for voice and piano by Stefan Behr – as well as a reflection on the process that led to its creation. The interpretative concept of the recording arises from three main sources. The first is the musicological analysis presented in Chapter II, encompassing a detailed examination of Behr's compositional language, the identified stylistic types, the relationship between text and music, and the specificity of the piano texture. The second is concert experience, which enabled the verification of the adopted interpretative assumptions in direct contact with the audience – both adult and child. The third is artistic collaboration with the pianist, thanks to which the interpretative concept was developed in a chamber music dimension, based on a dialogical relationship between voice and piano, shaped during many months of work on the musical material.

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<sup>33</sup> Behr, letter to T. Szeligowski, 26–28 October 1960.

The recording both complements the written part of the dissertation, serving as its sonic realization, and constitutes the first complete documentation of Stefan Behr's collection as well as an interpretative proposal addressed to future performers of this repertoire. In a broader perspective, it forms part of efforts to restore forgotten Polish vocal music to contemporary artistic circulation. Behr's songs, despite their apparent simplicity (or perhaps precisely because of it), reveal their value primarily in the act of performance, in which their musical meaning is fully realized.

# CONCLUSION

Work on *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano* by Stefan Behr was not merely an attempt to organize musical material or classify its stylistic features. Over time, it became a process of discovery – not only of a forgotten body of work, but also of the composer himself, whose output in many respects remains incomplete, fragmented, and insufficiently studied. Each subsequent analysis, each comparison of sources, and each performance attempt revealed not only the artistic value of these works, but also the scale of neglect that caused this repertoire to remain on the margins of performance practice.

A particularly important element of the present research was the comparison of available printed editions with the composer's surviving manuscripts. This comparison revealed individual editorial discrepancies – both in rhythmic and pitch notation, as well as in performance markings. These are incidental in nature and do not undermine the overall value of the source material; however, in some cases they may influence the interpretation of the works, their character, and their musical course. This highlights the importance of critical source work and the need for careful engagement with the musical text, especially in the context of performance preparation.

At the same time, the attempt to restore these works to contemporary performers and audiences involved confronting their textual layer, which – rooted in the realities of a bygone era – is not always neutral from the perspective of today's cultural standards. Terms appearing in the texts, such as outdated nomenclature referring to people of different skin color, or depictions of violent situations (as in the case of *Koziołeczek*), are not socially acceptable today and should not be uncritically reproduced.

Despite this awareness, I decided to preserve the original textual layer in the prepared recordings. This was not an easy decision, but it was necessary from the standpoint of research integrity and fidelity to the source material. Analysis and documentation of historical artistic output require honesty toward its actual form – even when it confronts the contemporary listener with problematic content. This does not imply affirmation of such content; on the contrary, it creates space for reflection on changing social, linguistic, and educational norms.

During the course of the work, biographical threads also emerged that shed new light on the composer's activity. Thanks to information obtained from the composer's daughter, Barbara Cortzen, it was possible to outline a more personal context of his life. One significant aspect is the informal relationship between Stefan Behr and an opera singer. This fact suggests that his vocal output may have been considerably richer than the surviving materials indicate. It is highly likely that works were created for a specific voice and a specific person – works that today remain inaccessible or lost. Despite attempts, it was not possible to locate these scores, which leaves a significant gap in the picture of his oeuvre.

At the same time, the composer's life story – his artistic choices, his stance toward the socio-political reality, and his personal relationships – appears sufficiently interesting and multidimensional to merit a separate study. In my view, a particularly valuable form would be a publication based on a conversation with Barbara Cortzen – in the form of a “talking biography” (interview-book), allowing not only facts to be presented but also memory, emotions, and context that cannot be reconstructed solely from documents.

It is impossible to ignore the broader historical context in which Stefan Behr worked. His premature death in 1974 interrupted his creative development at a moment which – as the history of many other composers shows – may have only been a prelude to his most significant achievements. Poland at that time remained a country with limited possibilities for artistic exchange, functioning on the margins of major European currents. Many composers only later gained the space for fuller development and wider dissemination of their works. As Theodor W. Adorno observed, the history of music knows many composers whose significance became apparent only with hindsight, when changing cultural conditions made a proper understanding of their works possible<sup>34</sup>. In this context, it can be stated with considerable confidence that had Behr lived longer, his output would have had a real chance of entering the canon of educational and performance repertoire.

Even today, however, the analyzed set of songs reveals its considerable pedagogical potential. These are works that naturally combine accessibility with artistic value. They offer young performers (still in training) the opportunity to work on vocal production, diction, phrasing, and interpretation in a form adapted to their technical capabilities. At the same

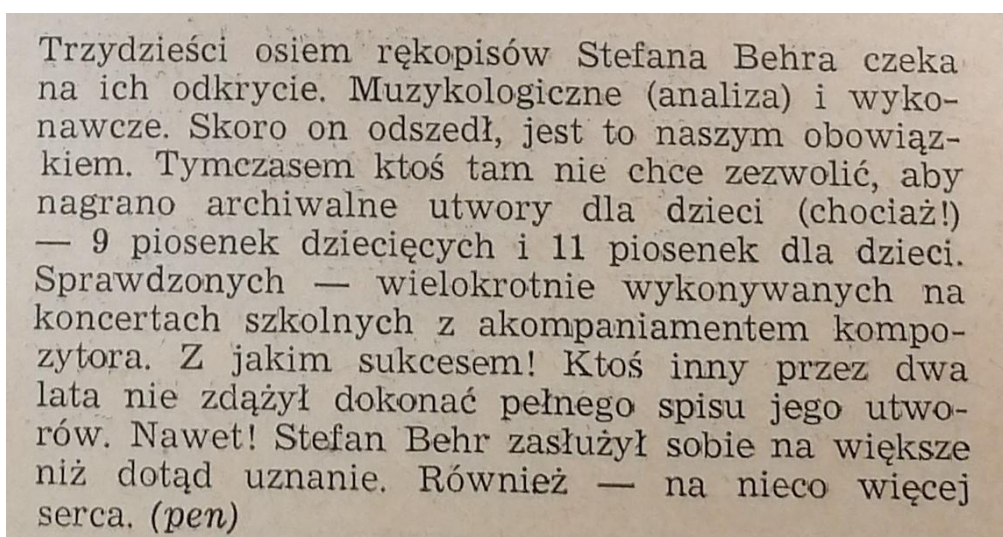
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<sup>34</sup> T. W. Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. F. Wayda, Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1974, pp. 19–21.

time, they require musical awareness and sensitivity to the relationship between word and sound, which makes them a valuable repertoire both in concert practice and in competitions and examinations. In an era of searching for repertoire that is both educational and artistically non-trivial, Behr's music may constitute a valuable addition to pedagogical practice.

This work is therefore not only an analysis of a selected set of pieces, but also an attempt to restore the voice of a composer who – despite clear talent and potential – did not receive his rightful place in music history. It is also a statement on the responsibility of the researcher and performer for what we preserve, what we omit, and how we interpret the past.

In this sense, the words of Zbigniew Penhersi (Polish composer, 1935–2019) remain particularly eloquent:



Trzydzieści osiem rękopisów Stefana Behra czeka na ich odkrycie. Muzykologiczne (analiza) i wykonawcze. Skoro on odszedł, jest to naszym obowiązkiem. Tymczasem ktoś tam nie chce zezwolić, aby nagrano archiwalne utwory dla dzieci (choć!) — 9 piosenek dziecięcych i 11 piosenek dla dzieci. Sprawdzonych — wielokrotnie wykonywanych na koncertach szkolnych z akompaniamentem kompozytora. Z jakim sukcesem! Ktoś inny przez dwa lata nie zdążył dokonać pełnego spisu jego utworów. Nawet! Stefan Behr zasłużył sobie na większe niż dotąd uznanie. Również — na nieco więcej serca. (pen)

**Fig. 42.** On the second anniversary of his death, *Ruch Muzyczny*, biweekly, no. 22, year XX, 24 October 1976.

These words can be understood not only as a commentary on the past, but as a commitment – to works that are still waiting for their place, and to the responsibility of those who undertake the attempt to preserve them.

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## **Musical scores**

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## **Archival and private sources**

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2. *Biografia Stefana Behra* [*Biography of Stefan Behr*], prepared by Barbara Behr. Archival materials held by the author.
3. Documentation concerning Stefan Behr's activity at Polish Television. Archival materials held by the author.
4. Documentation concerning Stefan Behr's employment at the National Philharmonic from 1954 onwards. Archival materials held by the author.
5. Documentation concerning Stefan Behr's employment at Polish Radio, 1946–1948. Archival materials held by the author.
6. Documentation concerning Stefan Behr's employment at the State Higher School of Music (PWSM) in Warsaw, 1973–1974. Archival materials held by the author.
7. Documentation concerning Stefan Behr's employment at the National Theatre in Warsaw, 1951–1953. Archival materials held by the author.
8. Archival documents concerning Stefan Behr's contacts with members of the Home Army (Armia Krajowa). Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw.
9. Correspondence between Stefan Behr and Tadeusz Szeligowski. Materials held by the author.
10. Family accounts concerning Stefan Behr. Materials held by the author.
11. Memoirs of Stefan Behr's daughter communicated to the author.

## **Concert programmes and programme notes**

1. Mielcarek-Krzyżanowska, B. Programme note. In *Programme of the Concert in Memory of Stefan Behr*. Concert Hall of the State Music School Complex No. 1 in Warsaw, 23 April 2023.

2. *Programme of the Concert in Memory of Stefan Behr*. Concert Hall of the State Music School Complex No. 1, ul. Rakowiecka 21, Warsaw, 23 April 2023, 18:00. *Sztuka Źle Obecna* Festival. Organised by the Institute of National Remembrance.

#### **Online and audiovisual sources**

1. *Concert for Children in Memory of Stefan Behr*. Video recording. Online premiere by the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), 1 June 2023. Available at: <https://youtu.be/LuHAHR8Jj3E> (accessed 24 March 2026).
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# ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

## **Stanisław Moniuszko Academy of Music Library in Gdańsk**

(survey conducted: December 2020)

- *Res Facta* No. 5: *Teksty o muzyce współczesnej* [Texts on Contemporary Music], Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1971.
- *Ruch Muzyczny*, No. 22, “Wspomnienie o Stefanie Behrze” [Reminiscence of Stefan Behr], October 1976.
- Information concerning documentation on the life of Stefan Behr contained in the personal file of former Home Army soldier Henryk Kozłowski (“Kmita”), held in the Central Archives of Modern Records (Archiwum Akt Nowych) in Warsaw.
- Stefan Behr, *3 Pieces for Clarinet and Piano*.
- Stefan Behr, *5 Pieces for Five Instruments*.

## **Archive of the State Music School Complex No. 1 in Warsaw**

(survey conducted: January 2021)

- Copy of an application requesting unpaid leave and permission for the composer to undertake a four-year postgraduate programme (*aspirantura*) in Moscow in 1952, including an annotation concerning the interruption of studies and return to Poland after one month.

## **Central Archives of Modern Records** (survey conducted: October 2021)

- **File No. 2729 – Personal File of Henryk Kozłowski (“Kmita”)**
  - Stefan Behr – biography prepared by his wife Barbara Behr.
  - Stefan Behr, *20 Songs for Children for Voice and Piano*, Music Publishing House of the Authors’ Agency, Warsaw 1980.
  - Memoir by Henryk Kozłowski concerning Stefan Behr.
  - Notes by Stefan Behr (unrelated to his vocal and instrumental compositions).
  - Family correspondence concerning the composer’s descendants.
  - Press clippings relating to concerts of Stefan Behr.

## University of Warsaw Library Archive – Music Collections Department

(survey conducted: May 2022)

- Stefan Behr: List of works recorded in the files of the Ministry of Culture and Art concerning composition commissions(Archive of Polish Composers / Music Collections Department / University of Warsaw Library):
  - *Music for Two Pianos*
  - *Cycle of Piano Miniatures (Pieces I–III)*
  - *Cycle of Miniatures for Chamber Ensemble*
  - *Cycle of Children's Songs*
  - *Two Songs for Boys' Choir a cappella: Rain and Two Winds*
  - *Interlude for Orchestra*
  - *Preludes and Fugues for Symphony Orchestra*
  - *Noctiflore for Large Symphony Orchestra*
  - *Two a cappella Songs to Poems by Ludwik Kern*
  - *Ten Piano Pieces*
  - *Seven Pieces for Five Instruments*
  - *Four a cappella Songs to Poems by Joanna Kulmowa*
  - *Six Pieces for Clarinet and Piano*
  - *Eight Piano Pieces*
  - *Simple Music*
  - *Pantomime for Chamber Ensemble*
  - *Cycle of Symphonic Preludes and Fugues*
  - *Abstraction in Mi*
  - *9 Piano Pieces*
  - *Cycle of Miniatures for Four Woodwind Instruments*
  - *5 Ostinato Structures (Hommage à Edvard Grieg) for Large Symphony Orchestra*
  - *Cycle of Songs for Mixed Choir a cappella*
  - *Work for Large Symphony Orchestra*
  - *16 Pieces for Nine Instruments*
  - *11 Pieces for Seven Instruments*
  - *Somnifere for Large Symphony Orchestra*
  - *9 Children's Songs for Voice and Piano*

- *8 Pieces for Piano* (working title: *Piano Preludes*)
- Juliusz Łuciuk, *Lamentazioni ad memoriam Grażyna Bacewicz*
- *Építaphe pour quelqu'un* for Large Symphony Orchestra
- *Work in Five Movements for Symphony Orchestra*
- Piano Works:
  - 1961/62 – *Cycle of Piano Miniatures*
  - 1964 – *9 Piano Pieces*
  - 1965 – *10 Piano Pieces*
  - 1966 – *Piano Miniatures for Two Pianos*
  - 1967 – *6 Piano Pieces*
  - 1968 – *8 Piano Pieces*
  - 1969 – *12 Piano Pieces*
  - 1970 – *10 Piano Pieces*
  - 1970 – *8 Piano Pieces*
  - 1971 – *6 Piano Pieces*
- Orchestral Works:
  - 1961/62 – *Interlude for Orchestra*
  - *Noctiflore*
  - 1963/64 – *Simple Music*
  - 1965 – *5 Ostinato Structures*
  - 1968 – *Somnifere*
- Other Works:
  - 1966 – *Cycle of Pieces for Clarinet and Piano*
  - 1967 – *16 Pieces for Nine Instruments*
  - *11 Chamber Works for Seven Instruments*
  - 1968/69 – *5 Pieces for Five Instruments*
  - *12 Piano Pieces*
  - *6 Orchestral Pieces*
  - *20 Children's Songs for Voice and Piano* (to poems by Jan Brzechwa and Julian Tuwim)
- Materials donated by the composer's daughter Barbara Cortzen (22 August 2020)
  - Manuscripts of Stefan Behr donated to the Music Collections Department, including:

- *Interlude for Orchestra (1962), autograph score.*
  - *7 Pieces for Five Instruments, manuscript copy.*
  - *Pantomime I, II, IV, V, VI, photocopy of autograph.*
  - *Final page of the autograph score of 10 Piano Pieces (1972).*
  - *Dust jacket for 12 Piano Pieces (1969).*
- The donation supplemented an earlier gift (November 2017), which included autograph scores and manuscripts of:
- *7 Pieces for Five Instruments (1966)*
  - *5 Pieces for Five Instruments (1968)*
  - *10 Piano Pieces (1972)*
  - *12 Piano Pieces (1969)*
  - *8 Piano Pieces (1968)*
  - *Infantylia for mixed choir a cappella*
  - *Prelude and Fugue (1962)*
  - *Noctiflore (1962)*
  - *Music for Orchestra (1959)*
  - *Octahedron for strings, seven wind instruments and percussion (1960)*
  - *Work in Five Movements for Large Symphony Orchestra (1961)*
  - *Epitaphe pour quelqu'un (1961)*
  - *Simple Music (1964)*
  - *Abstraction in Mi (1964)*
  - *Nine Piano Pieces (1965)*
  - *Ten Piano Pieces (1965)*
  - *Seven Pieces for Five Instruments (1966)*
  - *Five Pieces for Two Pianos (1966)*
  - *Six Pieces for Clarinet and Piano (1966)*
  - *Sixteen Pieces for Nine Instruments (1967)*
  - *Eleven Pieces for Seven Instruments (1967)*
  - *Eight Piano Pieces (1968)*
  - *Somnifere (1968)*
  - *Twelve Piano Pieces (1969)*
  - *Ten Piano Pieces (1970)*

- *Eight Pieces for Orchestra* (1971)
- *Wiersz ostatni* [*The Last Poem*], song for voice and piano (1972).

### **Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw**

(survey conducted: May 2022)

- Classified records of interrogations concerning war crimes attributed to Home Army commander Jan Mazurkiewicz. Stefan Behr was questioned as a witness. The records indicate that he assisted Home Army members by storing money at his residence in Warsaw's Włochy district and by printing underground leaflets.

### **Fryderyk Chopin University of Music Archive, Warsaw**

(survey conducted: June 2022)

- Copy of birth certificate.
- Application for composition studies.
- Coursework assignments.
- Application requesting permission to continue studies while working as an accompanist at the National Philharmonic.