Tadeusz Baird – Symphony No.3 – Elegia – Epiphany

1. Elegia for Orchestra Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra Wojciech Michniewski – conductor *2. Epiphany for Orchestra* Polish National Symphony Orchestra Witold Rowicki – conductor
3. Symphony No.3 – Evovation. Poco Andante 4. Symphony No.3 – Andante Moderato 5. Symphony No.3 – Non Troppo Allegro 6. Symphony No.3 – Epologue. Moderato e Grave Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra Jan Krenz – conductor

Baird was a leader in the second wave of twentieth-century Polish composers prior to World War II: the first group starred Witold Lutoslawski (1913 - 1994), Grazyna Bacewicz (1913 - 1969), Witold Rudzinski (b. 1913), and Andrzej Panufnik (1914 - 1991). Baird was joined five years later by Krzysztof Penderecki and Henryk Górecki (both b. 1933), who -- despite their initial avant-gardism -- retrograded stylistically in the post-modern backlash: Penderecki into Reger mortis, Górecki into minimalism. Baird had three postwar epiphanies, but serialism came second, then neo-Romanticism in his late works (by way of Penderecki's "aleatoric glossolalia," in Slonimsky's words). Despite Communist domination, the Polish thaw began earlier than elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Movie-star handsome Tadeusz Baird became an early activist in 1949 when he formed Group 49 with two transitional countrymen, Kazimierz Sikorski (1922 - 1981) and Jan Krenz (b. 1926), although their purpose was not to break rules but to conform to socio-musical orthodoxy. By 1956, however, with the return to power of Wladislaw Gomulka (following Khrushchev's "secret" denunciation of Stalinism, Poland's artistic gates opened, letting serialism in.

After private studies during World War II, which Baird continued at the State Higher School in Warsaw along with piano instruction and three years of musicology, he wrote an orthodox Sinfonietta, Piano Concerto, and Piano Sonatina all dated 1949. His first symphony in 1950 won a National Prize. In 1951, he wrote Colas Breugnon: a suite in the old style for flute and strings; in 1952, Symphony No. 2, quasi una fantasia, and in 1953, a frequently played Concerto for Orchestra. The last of his "conformist" works in 1956 were Four Love Sonnets from

Shakespeare, and Cassazione per orchestra. That same year, he and Sikorski founded Warsaw Autumn, a festival of contemporary music that quickly became one of Europe's most daring and enduring.

With it, Baird turned to serialism in his twelve-tone String Quartet of 1957 and Four Essays for orchestra in 1958, which won a UNESCO prize -- the first of three between 1959 and 1966. For voice and orchestra, he created Exhortation on Old Hebrew Texts (to be recited, 1960); Erotics for soprano (1966); Five Songs for mezzo-soprano (1970); Goethe Letters: Cantata for Baritone (with mixed choir, 1970), and at the end of his life Voices From Afar for baritone on Polish texts (1980). He also wrote an opera, Tomorrow, based on Joseph Conrad. From the mid-1960s till his death, Baird created noteworthy scores for orchestra, including Four Novelettes (1967), Sinfonia breve (1968), Symphony No. 3 (1969), Psychodrama (1972), Elegia (1973), Concerto lugubre (1976), and Canzona for large orchestra (1980, premiered posthumously in 1982). He also scored more than forty films and plays, yet while his music enjoyed a vogue in the 1960s and 1970s, most of it vanished from the international repertory. In later interviews Baird insisted on "knowledge and respect for tradition . . . seeking effects and attention [only] leads to a 'pretended' avant-garde. Musical opinion [in 1981] calls me a 'romantic' and I admit to [it]. I do not belong with people who like to ruin and destroy."

His technical expertise was second to none after 1956, irrespective of genre. Symphony No. 3, for example, ends with a crescendo of whirlwind density and dissonance from which tonality finally emerges -- a sound only his Japanese contemporary Takemitsu (1930 - 1996) created more terrifyingly in Asterism, likewise in 1969. Baird's music, however, lacked the personality and individuality that characterized the finest work of the two elder celebrities who survived him, Lutoslawski and Panufnik. ---arkivmusic.com

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