

Interpretation



Jean Fouquet, *Madonna and Child*, c. 1450.

The symphony was dedicated to Górecki's wife Jadwiga Rurańska. When asked why, Górecki responded, "Who was I supposed to dedicate it to?" He never sought to explain the symphony as a response to a political or historical event. Instead, he maintained that the work is an evocation of the ties between mother and child. Górecki was commissioned to write music in response to the Holocaust in the 1960s but was unable to finish any of the pieces he started for that purpose. While Górecki stated that for many years he sought to produce a work specifically in response to [Auschwitz](#), he resisted that interpretation of the symphony, which he preferred to be viewed in a wider context. Other critics have attempted to interpret the symphony in spiritual terms, an approach which Górecki also dismissed. Still others have suggested that the symphony can be understood as a compendium of Polish history:

The symphony alludes to each of the main historical and political developments in Poland's history from the 14th century to 1976, the year of its composition. What is more, each of the three movements appears to represent a different age . . . and [they are] chronologically contiguous. The composer seems to have created three separate and discrete "chapters" in his summary of Poland's history.

Górecki said of the work, "Many of my family died in concentration camps. I had a grandfather who was in Dachau, an aunt in Auschwitz. You know how it is between Poles and Germans. But Bach was a German too—and Schubert, and Strauss. Everyone has his place on this little earth. That's all behind me. So the Third Symphony is not about war; it's not a *Dies Irae*; it's a normal Symphony of Sorrowful Songs." source: [Wikipedia](#)