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Doctoral dissertation *Waldemar Modestowicz as a radio director in the years 1992-2015*

**Key words:** Modestowicz, Waldemar Modestowicz, directing, radio directing, radio play, contemporary radio play, audio text, radio novel, Polish Radio Theatre, radio theatre, sequence coherence.

### **Abstract**

The subject of the dissertation are considerations regarding the radio directing work of Waldemar Modestowicz. The director's work has had a significant impact on the shape of the contemporary Polish Radio Theatre, and to some extent exemplifies the development of forms of radio directing in the field of radio play. The primary aim of the dissertation is to characterize the poetics of Waldemar Modestowicz's radio directing, to define the directing techniques used by Modestowicz and to indicate the methods and tools used. The author tries to specify the forms and thematic areas of the directed radio plays, distinguish the function of music, and describe the "acoustic kitchen". The author also attempts to determine whether Waldemar Modestowicz uses methods characteristic of film directing and attempts to outline Modestowicz's cooperation with the sound director, the acting team, and with the author of selected radio plays. In addition, it is important to indicate the director's approach towards the text of the original radio drama scripts and to determine the creative roles in which Waldemar Modestowicz additionally appears in the radio play, e.g. co-creator of the script or author of the adaptation. It is important for the author to describe the features that distinguish the radio plays directed by Modestowicz from the phonic works of other directors.

The author poses several essential research questions related to the areas of Waldemar Modestowicz's art of directing. They concern the forms of the radio plays directed, the topics discussed, the function of the music element in the discussed phonic works, the characteristic features of the "acoustic kitchen", the director's approach towards the text of the script, the repetition of the methods and tools used, and the aforementioned roles in which, apart from the role of the director, Modestowicz performs. The author also tries to answer the question whether Waldemar Modestowicz, as a radio director, uses film methods, and to what extent the radio

plays directed by him maintain sequence coherence on selected levels. The author also formulates research questions concerning the characteristics of Modestowicz's cooperation with a writer of radio play scripts, a sound engineer, and a group of actors. The question that unites all the others is: what distinguishes Waldemar Modestowicz's radio plays from the works of other radio directors working in the field of radio theatre?

The research was conducted based on selected methods. These are: an analysis of the form and content of radio plays, used in the second subchapter of the analytical part of the dissertation, a comparative analysis of Zbigniew Herbert's *The Other Room* directed by Janusz Warnecki in 1958, and an audio concretization of the same text, directed by Waldemar Modestowicz in 1993, used in the third subchapter of that same part. The fourth subsection of the analytical part of the dissertation was constructed based on the analysis of sequence coherence of radio plays, which is an original proposal of Katarzyna Szklarek-Zarębska. This method derives from the art of filmmaking and has also been partly carried out on the basis of the phenomenological approach to a literary work by Roman Ingarden. The analysis of sequence coherence was also inspired by the analysis using Luhmann's Theory conducted by Marek Ostrowski. The author also used individual in-depth interviews with Waldemar Modestowicz and sound director Maciej Kubera, as well as participant-based observations that she conducted at the Polish Radio Theatre in 2015 for her master's thesis.

The dissertation is divided into five main chapters. The first part *Directing in the Context of Reflections on Media and Culture* is devoted to the issue of directing and an attempt to define it. The second part entitled *Radio Directing and the Audio Work* is a description of the radio director's work – especially in relation to the structure of the audio text, which is a radio play. In the third chapter *Waldemar Modestowicz as a contemporary director of the Polish Radio Theatre* the author attempts to sketch the biography of the artist, as well as to indicate and outline the area of Modestowicz's audio activity, i.e. contemporary radio theatre. The fourth chapter, entitled *The Method of Directing Radio Plays and Radio Novel on the Example of Selected Works by Waldemar Modestowicz. The analysis of individual radio works*, is the analytical part of the dissertation. It is divided into the above-mentioned analysis of the form and content of radio plays, a comparative analysis of two phonic productions of *The Other Room*, and an analysis of sequence coherence, to which the three selected radio plays by Waldemar Modestowicz and three phonic works by other radio directors, namely Jan Warenycia, Anna Wieczur-Bluszcz and Janusz Kukuła, were subjected. In the fifth part, entitled *Waldemar Modestowicz's Collaboration with the Author of Radio Plays, Writer and Scriptwriter Tomasz Maciej Trojanowski*, the subject of the discussion are selected radio plays

co-created by the Trojanowski-Modestowicz duo. These range from phonic works for adults to radio theatre for children. The final part of the dissertation consists of a conclusion, literature, a list of analyzed audio texts, a list of figures and an annex containing transcripts of interviews conducted by the author with Waldemar Modestowicz and Maciej Kubera.

The conducted research has shown that Modestowicz's radio directing in the field of radio drama is characterized by a variety of forms, and Waldemar Modestowicz's style can be described as eclectic. The director undertakes to create i.a. original radio plays, adaptations, documentary radio plays, radio novels, phonic works in which the element of music plays a fundamental role, as well as outdoor radio plays made using film methods. In selected cases, Waldemar Modestowicz also acts as the author of the adaptation, co-author of the screenplay or author of the musical setting. Modestowicz willingly takes up themes where the plot axis are the inner experiences of the main characters and their transformation. The thematic areas also include social problems, work with collective memory and broadly understood historical events. It is also worth noting that the collaboration between Waldemar Modestowicz and Tomasz Maciej Trojanowski resulted in dramaturgically mature works, as well as radio theatre for children, characterized by a light, dynamic structure.

Modestowicz collaborates closely with the acting team, being at the same time a type of director who personally supervises the subsequent stages of the creation of the radio play. Waldemar Modestowicz's approach towards the script of the radio drama can be described as an interpretive one. In his opinion, the director makes the necessary modifications and abbreviations, which are primarily related to the need to adapt the text, also in the case of original radio plays, to the specificity of the radio medium. As far as the audio material is concerned, both music and silence in the radio plays directed by Modestowicz not only have a dramaturgical or structural function, but also have a semantic value. The "acoustic kitchen", like the other "anatomical" parts of the radio play, is individually selected for each piece.

The characteristic features of Waldemar Modestowicz's radio directing include dynamic editing, which is distinguished by short scenes, juxtapositions of contrasting sounds, operating on the border of silence and sound, and the clash of various acoustic sets. A key feature of Modestowicz's radio directing is the high coherence of radio drama sequences at the level of text/verbal, music, and acoustic effects layers. In the textual layer, the distinct coherence of the sequences is determined by specific keywords, individual for each piece. A high level of coherence in the area of music is defined by repetitive musical signals and melodies, and at the level of the "acoustic kitchen" – by individual sounds or collections of sounds. The particular

coherence of the sequences distinguishes the radio plays directed by Waldemar Modestowicz from other audio texts by selected radio directors.

The author also concludes that radio dramas directed by Modestowicz are systems that produce meaning and, in Marek Ostrowski's understanding<sup>1</sup>, strive to sustain their existence. This is visible, as research has shown, at the level of literary material (script or adaptation), while the additional, inherent meanings are built up in the sound layer of radio plays and coexist with each other in subsequent elements of the work, such as acoustic effects, often reinforcing the role of words, and music.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Ostrowski, *The Bob Dylan Protest song 'Masters of War' – An analysis using Luhmann's Theory*, "Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis. Folia Litteraria Polonica" 2018, No. 5 (51), p. 151.