Polish Music Press in the Face of Systemic Change in 1989 as an Example of Cultural Transformation in Post-communist Countries

Konrad Tyszka & Michał Jagosz

University of Warsaw, Warsaw, POLAND
Faculty of Culture and Art Studies, Institute of Musicology

Received: 1 December 2020 • Accepted: 22 December 2020 • Published Online: 25 December 2020

Abstract

The systemic transformation has significantly increased and diversified the music press market. Liquidation of the monopoly, privatization, censorship abolition and media pluralism are just some of the factors that contributed to shaping new cultural policy in Poland. The research material used for this paper’s analytical purposes consists of Polish music magazines; based on a query covering over 110 journals being published since 1946 to the present, a historical and comparative analysis was made. It allowed to determine what new solutions the publishers started to put into practice to make their magazines more attractive. Moreover, it showed a clear fragmentation of the market. After ’89, popular music magazines began to prevail; there are also many specialist journals devoted to a specific topic. A look at cultural transformation from the perspective of the music press is therefore an innovative idea, combining knowledge from the borderline of musicology, cultural studies, and press studies.

Keywords: music press, systemic transformation, post-communist countries, cultural policy, Polish publishing market.

1. Introduction

The following article is devoted to the functioning of the music press in the face of the systemic transformation in 1989. This interdisciplinary topic covers a significant issue on the border of musicology, history as well as media and social studies. Music press is one of the durable and settled mass media, which makes it an extremely important cultural carrier. Therefore, it hands down the cultural heritage to next generations in an effective and conscious way.

For the further considerations, it is crucial to clarify two concepts: music press and system transformation. The former can be defined as “all newspapers and magazines”. Thus, according to Julian Maślanka (1976: 46), the music press is “a set of magazines devoted to the issues of music and musical life with a different level and scope of specialization depending on the circle of readers for whom the journal is intended for”. The latter term can be explained as “the transition from centrally planned economy to a market economy, including change of the political system and creation of market conditions for the functioning of all economic entities” (Nasiłowski, 1995: 17). Moreover, the systemic transformation introduces political democracy, freedom of
speech and new legal forms, while the economic transformation involves activities aimed at creating new operating conditions for economic entities (Báltowski & Miszewski, 2015: 23-24).

- The music press plays an important role as a carrier of culture.
- Before 1989, Polish magazines were under constant control of the authorities.
- The system transformation has significantly influenced the shape of the press market in Poland.
- The abolition of the state monopoly opened up the possibility of new publishers entering the market.
- After 1989, pop music magazines started to dominate the Polish press market.

This topic is also important because it has not been thoroughly researched yet both in Polish scientific and popular science literature, especially in such broad perspective. Therefore, the research work should have been started by cumulating as much material as possible, in this case the music press. Searching for magazines that appeared before 1989 was possible thanks to the Włodzimierz Pigła’s (1991) Central Catalogue of Polish Music Magazines and Periodicals on Music: Polish Collections. The periodicals that survived the transformation but were shut down shortly afterwards, were possible to examine thanks to Komorowska’s (2001) rather superficial yet useful Polish music press in 1945-2000.

The journals created or reactivated after 1989 were examined during the query in National Library of Poland. When compiling mentioned register, the fact of lacking complete and central catalogue covering post 1989 music magazines was highly inconvenient. Some journals appear irregularly, which makes it impossible to assume when or whether the next issue will appear at all. Moreover, not all of them fulfil the obligation of sending obligatory copies to National Library; it is likely that library’s main catalogue is incomplete.

The following paper aims to analyse the music press market before and after 1989 – the Autumn of Nations, when Poland, along with other European countries, shed the yoke of communism, and thus initiated the systemic transformation. It is also supposed to classify periodicals being released since 1946. During research we tried to answer significant question: how the transformation influenced the development and shape of Polish music press market as an example of one of the post-communist domestic economies in Europe.

2. Methods

The research material used for this paper’s analytical purposes consists of Polish music magazines. Conducted query resulted in bringing up roughly 110 journals in total (for the full list along with every issue examined, see appendix), mainly of nationwide and regional coverage. They have been ordered in accordance with the following categorization key:

(a) Periodicals published until 1989 – 31;
(b) Periodicals that survived the transformation, but no longer appear – 4;
(c) Periodicals that survived the transformation, but still being published to this day – 6;
(d) Periodicals reactivated after transformation – 3;
(e) Periodicals created after transformation – 64.

The research method used for the purposes of this paper is primarily a historical-comparative analysis. It seems to be most precise, as it allows the query to be conducted for the
past several dozen years and to analyse gathered material considering certain turning point, which
in this case is the mentioned systemic change in Poland. Importantly, to obtain the most accurate
and valuable results, it was also necessary to analyse the content of each published issue of all 108
titles. On this basis, the structure and general subject was examined, which made possible trying
to typologize and classify them. Also, a quantitative analysis was performed to establish their
periodicity. Using all the above methods was mandatory, to be able to present the image of the
music press market in the most reliable way possible. Therefore, confronting it with the knowledge
of cultural and socio-political changes after 1989 allows us to draw specific conclusions.

3. Results

3.1 Periodicals published until 1989

The conducted query made it possible to collect data on 31 periodicals matching the
analysed category. Most of them were nationwide, however, the list also includes several titles
issued only on a regional basis. Journals included in the research (see Table 1) appeared on the
Polish press market after the end of World War II, from 1946, when the first issue of “Życie
Muzyczne” (for title translations see the appropriate table) was released. The closing point of
discussed period is the range between 1989 and 1991 – it is the time when Polish government
began to implement political, economic, and social reforms. The journals published during this
period were often published for a short time, usually for several years. Only 12 (e.g. “Poradnik
Muzyczny”, “Res Facta”) of listed in the table, have been published for more than 10 years. Almost
half of the periodicals – 15 (e.g. “Studia Muzykologiczne”, “Biblioteka Organisty”) – appeared
irregularly. The remaining titles are those published monthly, quarterly, and yearly. Almost all the
magazines were published by music academies, cultural and educational institutions, and
associations. Only “Jazz”, “Non Stop” and “Forum Rozrywki” were published by independent
publishing houses. As to the magazines subject, the dominant ones were oriented to music culture
in general (e.g. “Życie muzyczne”) and musicology (e.g. “Forum Musicum”). There were also press
releases about music educations (“Śpiew w Szkole”), student songs (“Ballada”) or specialist
magazines dealing with a specific topic, e.g. life of Frederic Chopin (“Chopin w Świecie”), religious
music (“Muzyka Religijna w Polsce”) or the classical guitar (“Wiadomości Gitarowe”). Some
magazines were also published as an information bulletin (“Studia i Rozprawy”). What is
important, almost all of them were devoted to the classical and contemporary music. The first
popular music magazines were “Jazz” followed by the “Non Stop”. Then again, some of them, such
as “Forum Muzyki”, were of marginal importance, because only 2 issues were published.

The circulation of mentioned periodicals was relatively small, ranging from several
hundred to several thousand copies. A specific phenomenon in the 1980s was “Non Stop”, which
reached the circulation number of over 100,000 copies. It is not without reason considered to be
the most influential Polish music magazine of that decade.

| # | Name [Translator] | Years | Periodicity | Subject |
|---|------------------|-------|-------------|---------|
| 1 | Życie Muzyczne [Musical Life] | 1946–1948 | irregular | musical culture |
| 2 | Poradnik Muzyczny [Musical Guide] | 1947–1989 | monthly | musical culture |
| 3 | Życie Śpiewacze [The Singers’ Life] | 1948–1973 | monthly | musical culture |
| No. | Title | Edition Dates | Frequency | Subject |
|-----|-------|---------------|-----------|---------|
| 4   | Echo Teatralne i Muzyczne [Theatrical and Musical Echo] | 1948–1949 | quarterly | musical culture and theatre |
| 5   | Kwartalnik Muzyczny [Music Quarterly] | 1948–1950 | quarterly | musicology |
| 6   | Scena Świetlicowa [Common Room Scene] | 1950–1951 | monthly | musical culture |
| 7   | Praca Świetlicowa [Common Room Work] | 1951–1962 | monthly | musical culture |
| 8   | Studia Muzykologiczne [Musicological Studies] | 1953–1956 | irregular | musicology |
| 9   | Śpiewamy i Tańczymy [Let's Sing and Dance] | 1954–1987 | biweekly/monthly | sheet music |
| 10  | Jazz/Magazyn Muzyczny [Jazz/Music Magazine] | 1956–1991 | irregular | jazz |
| 11  | Biblioteka Organisty [The Organist's Library] | 1957–1958 | irregular | church music |
| 12  | Wiadomości Gitarowe [Guitar News] | 1957–1966 | quarterly | specialist (classical guitar) |
| 13  | Śpiew w Szkole [School's Sing] | 1957–1967 | irregular | music education (sing) |
| 14  | Amatorski Ruch Artystyczny [Amateur Art Movement] | 1958–1961 | irregular | newsletter |
| 15  | Muzyka w Prasie Zagranicznej [Music in the Foreign Press] | 1959–1969 | monthly | newsletter |
| 16  | Z Dziejów Muzyki Polskiej [From the History of Polish Music] | 1961–1971 | irregular | musical culture/18th and 19th century music |
| 17  | Informator Polskiego Wydawnictwa Muzycznego [Polish Music Publishing House's Guidebook] | 1963–1966 | annual | musicology |
| 18  | Musica Medii Aevi | 1965–1991 | irregular | early music |
| 19  | Forum Musicum | 1966–1974 | irregular | musicology |
| 20  | Polish Music. Polnische Musik | 1966–1992 | quarterly | musicology |
| 21  | Res Facta | 1967–1982 | irregular | musicology |
| 22  | Szkice o Kulturze Muzycznej XIX wieku [Sketches on the 19th Century Musical Culture] | 1971–1984 | irregular | musical culture |
| 23  | Studia i Rozprawy [Studies and Dissertations] | 1971–1973 | annual | newsletter |
| 24  | Pagine | 1972–1989 | irregular | musicology |
3.2 Periodicals of the transformation era

This group includes journals that endured the transformation, but no longer appear (see Table 2). To this category covers four journals. “Życie Muzyczne” i “Śpiewak Śląski” were published until 2009 and 2017, respectively. Those were periodicals published by the same organization, except that the latter one was being released regionally – in Silesia. They were both devoted to amateur music movement. Until 2002, the “Kwartalnik Polskiej Sekcji ISME” also managed to survive on the press market, and “Musica Antiqua Europae Orientalis”, which was a post-congress magazine, was last published in 2012.

Table 2. Periodicals that survived the transformation but no longer appear

| #  | Name                                         | Years              | Periodicity | Subject                                    |
|----|----------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Śpiewak Śląski                               | 1920–1948/1985–2017| quarterly   | local musical movement                     |
| 2  | Życie Muzyczne                               | 1974–2009          | monthly     | amateur musical movement/music education   |
| 3  | Musica Antiqua Europae Orientalis            | 1966–2012          | irregular   | early music                                |
| 4  | Sygnały ISME/Kwartalnik Polskiej Sekcji ISME | 1973–2002          | quarterly   | education/music pedagogy                   |

Another detailed category are journals that have survived the transformation and are still being published (see Table 3). The conducted query allowed to indicate 6 of such properties. These are magazines of rich tradition, some of them, such as “Muzyka”, having their origins before World War II, or even back in the 19th century (“Ruch Muzyczny”). It is worth mentioning that these periodicals are devoted to classical and contemporary music, only one (“Jazz Forum”) is devoted to popular music.
Table 3. Periodicals that survived the transformation, but still being published to this day

| #  | Name                          | Years       | Periodicity       | Subject            |
|----|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1  | Muzyka [Music]                | since 1928  | quarterly         | musicology         |
| 2  | Ruch Muzyczny [Musical Movement] | since 1945  | biweekly, monthly since 2013 | musicology         |
| 3  | Jazz Forum                    | since 1965  | monthly since 1993 | jazz               |
| 4  | Wychowanie Muzyczne w Szkole/ Wychowanie Muzyczne [Musical Education in School/Musical Education] | since 1967 | bimonthly         | education/musical pedagogy |
| 5  | Wiadomości ZAiKSU [ZAiKS’ News] | since 1971  | irregular         | newsletter/musical culture |
| 6  | Chopin in the World           | since 1986  | annual            | specialist (F. Chopin) |

Despite the opening of the press market and the lifting of many restrictions after 1989, only a few publishers decided to reactivate their magazines. Of the most significant journals published before transformation, three attempted to come back: “Taniec”, “Res Facta Nova” (formerly “Res Facta”) and “De Musica” (formerly “Pagine”). Only the second one is still present on the press market (see Table 4). All three magazines were focused on classical music and appeared irregularly. They had the same goals as before their first closure and were reactivated by the efforts of the same editors-in-chief as before 1989.

Table 4. Periodicals reactivated after transformation

| #  | Name                          | Years       | Periodicity | Subject            |
|----|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 1  | Taniec [Dance]                | 1992–1994   | irregular   | dance              |
| 2  | Res Facta Nova (Res Facta)    | 1994–today  | irregular   | musicology/modern music |
| 3  | De Musica (Pagine)            | 2006–2012   | irregular   | musicology         |

3.3 Periodicals founded after transformation

The systemic transformation that had begun in 1989 have significantly influenced media functioning in Poland, including the segment of social and cultural press, including the music press. It was the time when People’s Republic of Poland’s government practices such as supervision and central control of press media came to an end. This resulted in liquidation of many magazines, but new titles began to appear rapidly in their place. They had to adapt to the new realities of the market and, above all, convince readers to their own editorial line. Basing on the query output, the total amount of 64 titles was extracted (for journals founded after 1989, see Table 5). They were assigned to categories based on the subject matter. First group covers musicological (e.g. “Forum Muzykologiczne”) and university magazines (e.g. “Klucz”). The second one includes general music journals (such as “Gazeta Magnetofonowa”), music and cultural magazines (“Piosenka”), periodicals on church music (“Musice Ecclesiastica”) and contemporary music (np. “Kwarta”). In addition, specialist magazines, i.e. those devoted to specific issues, such
as guitar itself (e.g. “Gitarzysta”) or music equipment (e.g. “Audio”), constitute a separate category. Another group of periodicals was created by gathering those of objects of interests covering popular and youth music (e.g. “Bravo”) and folk music (e.g. “Pismo Folkowe”), as well as rock or metal music and industry (e.g. “Mystic Art”). Magazines devoted to other music genres, e.g. electronic music (“Techno Party”), were also included. The last category consists of printed sheet music (e.g. “Zagraj to Sam”), informational periodicals (“Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Harfowego”) and educational (e.g. “Scala”). Yet his distinction is not rigid or closed. Some of the magazines, such as “Przegląd Muzykologiczny” could also be classified as a university journal, then again “Presto” can be put among music and culture magazines. However, to maintain the clarity of division, periodicals were assigned based on their dominant features.

Table 5. Periodicals created after transformation

| # | Name                                           | Years            | Periodicity | Subject                |
|---|------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Popcorn                                        | 1990–2012        | monthly     | entertainment          |
| 2 | Metal Hammer                                   | 1990–today       | monthly     | metal, rock            |
| 3 | Tylko Rock (potem Teraz Rock) [Only Rock (later Now Rock)] | 1991–2002 | monthly | rock                   |
| 4 | Bravo                                          | 1992–2017        | biweekly    | entertainment          |
| 5 | Brum                                           | 1993–1999        | monthly     | rock                   |
| 6 | Muzyk: FCM [Musician: FCM]                    | 1993–today       | monthly     | specialist (equipment, hardware) |
| 7 | Barok [Baroque]                                | 1994–2015        | semi-annual | musical culture        |
| 8 | Zagraj to Sam [Play It Yourself]              | 1994–today       | quarterly   | sheet music            |
| 9 | Ślizg [Slide]                                  | 1995–2007        | monthly     | hip-hop                |
|10 | Atmospheric                                   | 1995–2013        | irregular   | heavy metal            |
|11 | Audio                                          | 1995–today       | monthly     | specialist (equipment, hardware) |
|12 | Hi-Fi i Muzyka [Hi-Fi and Music]              | 1995–today       | monthly     | specialist (equipment, hardware) |
|13 | Machina [Machine]                             | 1996–2002, 2006–2011 | monthly | music in general       |
|14 | Gadki z Chatki (potem Pismo Folkowe) [Chats from the Hut (later Folk Magazine)] | 1996–2014 | bimonthly | folk music             |
| No. | Title [Language] | Years | Frequency | Category |
|-----|------------------|-------|-----------|----------|
| 15  | Klucz [The Clef] | 1996–2015 | irregular | academic |
| 16  | Estrada i Studio [Stage and Studio] | 1996–today | monthly | specialist (equipment, hardware, sound production) |
| 17  | Mystic Art | 1996–today | irregular | heavy metal |
| 18  | Musica Galiciana | 1997–today | irregular | musicology, musical culture |
| 19  | Techno Party | 1998–2001 | monthly | electronic music |
| 20  | Kwartet [The Fourth] | 1998–2006/2011–2013 | irregular | Polish contemporary music |
| 21  | Muzyka21 [Music21] | 2000–2017 | monthly | contemporary music |
| 22  | Twój Blues [Your Blues] | 2000–today | quarterly | blues |
| 23  | Przegląd Muzykologiczny [Musicological Review] | 2001–2015 | irregular | musicology, scientific |
| 24  | Laif | 2001–today | bimonthly | music in general |
| 25  | Wokalistyka w Polsce i na Świecie [Vocal Studies in Poland and in the World] | 2002–2014 | irregular | academic/specialist (singing) |
| 26  | Teraz Rock [Now Rock] | 2003–today | monthly | rock |
| 27  | Twoja Muza [Your Muse] | 2003–today | bimonthly | musical education, music in general |
| 28  | Polski Rocznik Muzykologiczny [Polish Musicological Yearbook] | 2004–today | annual | musicology, scientific |
| 29  | Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Harlowego [Polish Harp Society Bulletin] | 2004–today | irregular | newsletter |
| 30  | Glissando | 2004–today | quarterly | modern and contemporary music |
| 31  | Musicology Today | 2004–today | annual | musicology, scientific |
| 32  | Free Colours | 2005–2016 | irregular | reggae |
| 33  | Forum Muzykologiczne [Musicological Forum] | 2005–today | irregular | musicology, scientific |
| 34  | Top Guitar | 2005–today | monthly | specialist (guitar) |
| No. | Title                                      | Dates     | Frequency  | Focus                      |
|-----|--------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------------------|
| 35  | Top Drummer                                | 2006–today| bimonthly  | specialist (drums)         |
| 36  | Biuletyn Stowarzyszenia Polskich Muzyków Kościelnych (potem Musica Ecclesiastica) Bulletin of Polish Church Musicians Association (later Musica Ecclesiastica) | 2006–2014 | annual     | church music               |
| 37  | Gitarzysta [Guitarist]                     | 2006–today| monthly    | specialist (guitar)        |
| 38  | Musica Sacra Nova                          | 2007–2011 | annual     | religious music            |
| 39  | Carillon Review                            | 2008–2013 | annual     | specialist (carillon)      |
| 40  | Perkusista [Drummer]                       | 2008–today| monthly    | specialist (drums)         |
| 41  | Studia Gregoriańskie [Gregorian Studies]   | 2008–today| annual     | Gregorian chant, church music |
| 42  | Beethoven Magazine                         | 2009–today| irregular  | musical culture            |
| 43  | Krytyka Muzyczna [Music Criticism]         | 2010–2014 | irregular  | musicology                 |
| 44  | Lizard                                     | 2010–today| quarterly  | rock, psychedelic          |
| 45  | J Music : magazyn o muzyce azjatyckiej [J Music : Magazine on Asian Music] | 2011–2012 | irregular  | Asian music                |
| 46  | Aspekty Muzyki [Aspects of Music]          | 2011–today| annual     | musicology, scientific     |
| 47  | JazzPRESS                                  | 2011–today| monthly    | jazz                       |
| 48  | Pro Musica Sacra                           | 2011–today| annual     | church music, scientific   |
| 49  | Estrada i Studio Plus [Stage and Studio Plus] | 2012–today| irregular  | specialist (sound production and equipment) |
| 50  | Muzyka w Mieście [Music in the City]       | 2012–today| monthly    | classical and contemporary music |
| 51  | Presto                                     | 2012–today| quarterly  | musical culture, contemporary music |
4. Discussion

4.1 Interpreting the ‘before 1989’ situation

All periodicals that appeared until 1989 were published by Polish publishing houses, which was closely related to the policy of the People's Republic of Poland. The government introduced many legal restrictions on the freedom of the press. The creation of a periodical during communism required a permission. Despite the spurious pluralism that was to be provided by i.e. press law of 1984, the state had almost complete control over the officially published press. Content restrictions included preventive and repressive censorship, compulsory publication of certain content, and limitations on provided information. As for Polish national press, repressive censorship in this case was of marginal importance, as all publications first went through the preventive one. On the other hand, the former was widely applied when it comes to foreign press publishers, because only at this stage the authorities could verify the content of such publications. Due to above, the procedure of entering the Polish press market by a foreign publisher was very
difficult, and the example of domestic magazines clearly shows that it is practically impossible. The issue of controlling and active influencing the content was also important. Magazines like “Poradnik Muzyczny” or “Praca Świetlicowa” explicitly aimed at transmitting ideological values as one of the goals of their activity. Another, “Muzyka”, where the chronicle of the concert movement was kept, focused only on Polish composers (of course those not banned by the authorities).

Western music authors were completely omitted, which negatively affected the objectivity of the published articles (Rzanna-Szczechaniak, 2013: 95-97). During the Polish People’s Republic, there were also a warning system against the periodicals suspension. It was regulated by the Act of July 31st, 1891 on the control of publications and performances. The essence of the system was to issue reminders for publishing undesirable press materials, and repeated reminders resulted in the temporary od permanent publisher’s suspension.

Also characteristic for this period in the Polish press in that since most magazines were devoted to musicology or musical culture, articles written by musicologists or instrumentalists dominated there. The music journalist profession was not as popular as it is today. Moreover, many people wrote in several titles at the same time such as Jadwiga and Marian Sobieski (well-known marriage of Polish ethnomusicologists) or Zofia Lissa (founder of Warsaw Institute of Musicology). Some of the authors also acted as editors-in-chief in several houses, such as Michał Bristiger (musicologist and writer on musical culture) in “Res Facta” or “Pagine” and Józef Chomiński (musicologist and music theorist) in “Muzyka” or “Studia Muzykologiczne”. In order to be able to act as the nationwide journal editor-in-chief, it was necessary to be approved by the appropriate party department. This means that the publishing houses’ decision makers could be only those suiting the then authorities. It shows the closure and hermetic nature of this market segment, as well as the full control power over the journal’s activities.

Also, worth noting is the magazines circulation, which very rarely exceeded the number of several thousand. One of the factors that greatly influenced this was the rationing of paper. By controlling his allocations, it was possible to directly control the circulation of periodicals. Moreover, the use of paper for printing purposes required consent of relevant authority. This issue was regulated by legal provisions, including “Decree of the Council of Ministers of 26 April 1948 on the management of paper” (1948), as well as numerous regulations.

When it comes to the appearance of the periodicals, until 1980s any colour graphics, posters or non-standard fonts appeared in magazines very rarely. It is therefore worth noting that it was the 80s that brought a remarkable acceleration and development of culture, especially the independent one. On that decade, the legal framework concerning preventive censorship changed several times. They were mainly caused by the economic and political crisis in Poland, which resulted in numerous protests and social demonstrations. Parallel to the development of the political and social affairs in Poland, the music magazine “Non Stop” evolved. It existed since 1972 and initially it was characterized by a rigid language, simple structure, and poor graphic design. In the 1980s, the language of writing loosened, and in 1988 a colourful graphic design appeared, and the magazine’s profile changed – apart from musical topics, a general cultural one began to emerge.

It was thanks to such titles as “Non Stop” and “Magazyn Muzykologiczny” that the press addressed to young ones began to develop, attracting people with a certain graphic and rhetorical innovation. It was also the first press dealing with popular music in broader meaning.

4.2 Understanding the ‘in-transformation’ case

Socio-political changes at the end of the 80s led to collapse of the publishing houses controlled by the communist authorities. Therefore, as the query revealed, many journals ended their activities in then decade and at the very beginning of the following one. Moreover, in the
times of the People’s Republic of Poland, there was a common tendency that periodicals appeared irregularly and for short time, which was due to i.a. economic problems. It is worth adding that from the magazines that went bankrupt in the 1980s, only three were finally reactivated after market opening. This means that the editors so far looked for challenges in new magazines or other media formats, in particularly audio-visual, strongly developing at the turn of the 20th and 21st century.

Few magazines have survived the systemic change period. The main motivation for keeping certain titles on the market may have been their rich history and long tradition. “Ruch Muzyczny” and “Muzyka” were in the past and are still most prestigious musicological periodicals in Poland. The Ministry of Culture and Art also contributed to maintaining the publishing continuity of “Ruch Muzyczny”, when in 1990, after two-month break in printing, it commissioned the publishing of the Author’s Agency magazine (Komorowska, 2001: 8-11).

Importantly, the study showed that there were also journals that survived the transformation and maintained publishing continuity, although they collapsed during the new, post-communist reality. It was caused by being unable to find themselves and adapt to the then situation on the liberal and competitive press market. Moreover, the financial problems of some publishers, as the case of “Życie Muzyczne”, were also a significant cause.

4.3 Interpreting the ‘post 1989’ era

The entire course of systemic changes in Poland had a significant impact on the shape of the press market. New press titles began to appear rapidly, and the vast majority of old periodicals collapsed. The liquidation of the state monopoly and privatization led to the emergence of publishing houses with their own capital. The consequence of this was the phenomenon of press concentration, which resulted in the fact that some of the publishers had many magazines in their portfolio. One of such companies is AVT-Korporacja, which has been operating on the market since 1992. She is the publisher of the magazines “Audio”, “Estrada i Studio”, “Estrada i Studio Plus”, “Gitarzysta” and “Perkusista”. In addition, there were also publishers with foreign budgets (Bajka, 1998: 22), but when it comes to the music press, their contribution to this market was minimal, such as Ringier Axel Springer (“Popcorn”) or Bauer Media (“Bravo”).

Reading trends also influenced the appearance of an increasing number of magazines in the 1990s. They indicated a shift away from reading the daily press, and thus switching to reading magazines, especially monthly and bimonthly magazines (Secler, 2011: 66-67). This thesis is also confirmed by the result of the conducted query. There are 19 monthly, 6 bimonthly, 10 quarterly, 2 semi-annual, 10 annual and 17 periodicals appearing in 64 journals.

The subject matter of the magazines in question is very diverse. About 23 magazines are devoted exclusively to the contemporary music, 29 is about popular music in general or a hybrid one; there are also 12 specialist journals. However, it should be remembered that this classification is not entirely strict, because the music genres interpenetrate all the time, which means that the content of magazines does not always stick to specific frames. Nevertheless, comparing to the situation before 1989, that magazines dealing with popular music started to prevail.

Another novelty were pop culture magazines (“Bravo” and “Popcorn”). These magazines can be classified as tabloids, geared towards gossip, scandals, colour photos, and huge fonts. Their circulation at the end of the 90s reached almost 500,000 copies, which meant that they were the most popular magazines on the market. However, since the youth moved to the Internet, the circulation of these magazines gradually began to decline, leading to the closure of both magazines.
The 1990s also brought changes in the structure and appearance of magazines. Compared to periodicals from the pre-transformation period, colour newspapers began to dominate, on slippery paper, often in A4 format, not reaching more than 100 pages. In addition, various gadgets began to be added to magazines, such as CDs, posters, calendars, and key rings. Only magazines classified as musicological, university and church music are usually published in the traditional book form. A novelty are also magazines devoted to classical music, such as “Glissando” and “Presto”, which explicitly indicate that they want to write in “loose” language that is understandable for everyone. Such a procedure shows that magazines are trying to adapt to the current market requirements, working out certain compromises, and looking for their own place. It is not without reason that they call themselves popularizing magazines.

Despite the opening of the market described above and the large expansion of new titles, not all of them survived long in the new reality. Some of them have ended their activity (e.g. “Machina”), others have only suspended it (e.g. “Sześć Strun Świata”), and some have moved to the Internet and are only released in electronic form (e.g. “Musicology Today”). Some magazines have closed their publishing activities, but still place their content in the form of articles or posts on their own websites (e.g. “Vaib” or “Lai’f”). It is worth noting that there are also periodicals that have been operating only on the Internet from the very beginning (e.g. “JazzPRESS”).

The main reasons for this may be: very high competition on the press market, financial problems of publishing houses and the amazing development of the Internet medium, which in the 21st century had a significant impact on the decline in the readership of the traditional press. It is true that the influence of the Internet on the condition of the current music press market is a subject so large and autonomous that it would require a separate space to be devoted to it, but in order to maintain the continuity of the argument, it is worth mentioning its extremely important role. Nowadays, the Internet is the dominant medium that we use almost every day. Therefore, music publishers, following the spirit of the times, in addition to traditional editions more and more often decide to publish in various Internet formats, which is also evidenced by the conducted query. As many as 46 magazines out of the 64 analysed have their place in the Internet space, and the list also includes periodicals that have not been published for many years (e.g. “Brum”).

5. Conclusions

Cultural transformation, which was one of the elements of systemic change in the communist bloc countries, led to great social development. Societies through changes, from the monocultural world, were included in the system of cultural diversity. The analysis of the Polish press market shows exactly how the process of these changes proceeded. The opening of the media market in Poland resulted in a rapid increase in new titles on the press market, while information about foreign musicians, concerts and events was already published in mass. Moreover, privatization has led to the emergence of a large number of new publishers with their own capital. It also opened a gate for foreign publishers. By increasing circulation, the music press became more accessible to people. Therefore, the journals have adapted their language, form of message and graphic structure in such a way that they could reach the largest number of readers. As far as the subject matter is concerned, periodicals about pop music started to dominate, which was a marginal phenomenon even in the pre-transformation times.

The functioning of the music press is an extremely important issue for further work on the border of social sciences, media studies and musicology. This is evidenced by a small number of literature on this subject, as well as the fact that in the era of the expansion of the Internet, the press takes on new shapes, as well as its content and functions.
Acknowledgements

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

The authors declare no competing interests.

References

Bajka, Z. (1998). Kapitał zagraniczny w polskiej prasie – lata dziewięćdziesiąte [Foreign capital in the Polish press – the nineties]. Zeszyty Prasoznawcze 1-2, 21-35.

Białkowski, M. & Miszewski, M. (2015). Transformacja gospodarcza w Polsce [Economic transformation in Poland]. Warsaw: PWN.

Komorowska, M. (2001). Polska prasa muzyczna w okresie 1945-2000 [Polish music press in the period 1945-2000]. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademii Muzycznej im. F. Chopina.

Maślanka, J. (1976). Encyklopedia wiedzy o praze [Knowledge encyclopedia about praise]. Cracow: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Nasilowski, M. (1995). Transformacja systemowa w Polsce [System transformation in Poland]. Warsaw: Key Text.

Pigła, W. (1991). Centralny katalog polskich czasopism muzycznych i wydawnictw ciągłych o tematyce muzycznej: zbiory polskie [Central catalog of Polish music magazines and periodicals on music: Polish collections]. Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Bibliotekarzy Polskich.

Rzanna-Szcześniak, E. (2013). Stalinizm a powojenna kultura muzyczna w Polsce [Stalinism and post-war music culture in Poland]. Opole: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scriptorium.

Secler, B. (2011). Konsekwencje przemian roku 1989 dla środków społecznego przekazu w Polsce - wybrane problem [The consequences of the transformations of 1989 for the media of social communication in Poland – A selected problem]. Media Dawne i Współczesne, 1, 66-67.

Decree of the Council of Ministers of 26 April 1948 on the management of paper for printing (1948). Retrieved 25 November 2020, from: http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19480240163

The Act of 26 January 1984 Press Law (1984). Retrieved 26 November 2020, from: http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=wdu19840050024
Appendix

List of periodicals analysed during the query with every issue examined for the purpose of the paper:

„Amatorski Ruch Artystyczny”, 1958–1961; 1958, nr 1–4/5; 1959, nr 1–3; 1960, nr 4–5; 1961, nr 6.

„Aspekty Muzyki”, 2011–today; T. 1–T. 6.

„Atmospheric”, 1995–2013; 1995, nr 1; 1996, nr 2–3/4; 1997, nr 5–6; 1998, nr 7; 1999, nr 8; 2000, nr 9; 2001, nr 10; 2002, nr 11; 2006, nr 12; 2007, nr 13; 2008, nr 14; 2009, nr 15; 2010, nr 16; 2011, nr 17; 2013, nr 18.

„Audio”, 1995–today; 1995, nr 1–3; 1996–2017, nr 1–12; 2018, nr 1–6.

„Ballada”, 1983–1984; 1983, nr 1; 1984, nr 1/2.

„Beethoven Magazine”, 2009–today, 2009, nr 1–2; 2010, nr 6–10; 2011, nr 12–13; 2012, nr 14–16; 2014, nr 19; 2016, nr 21–22; 2017, nr 23.

„Biblioteka Organisty”, 1957–1958, 1957, nr 1–4, 1958, nr 1.

„Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Harfowego”, 2004–today, 2004, nr 1–2; 2005–2017, nr 1–3; 2018, nr 1.

„Brum”, 1993–1999, 1993, nr 1–4; 1994–1998, nr 1–12; 1999, nr 1–6.

„Carillon Review”, 2008–2013, nr 1–6.

„Chopin w Świecie”, 1986–1988, nr 1–3.

„De Musica”, 2006–2012, 2006, Vol. 1/3; 2009, Vol. 4/5–7/8; 2011, Vol. 9; 2012, Vol. 10, 11–12.

„Echo Teatralne i Muzyczne”, 1948–1949, 1948, nr 1–3/4; 1949, nr 5–7/8.

„Estrada i Studio”, 1996–today, 1996, nr 1; 1997–2017, nr 1–12; 2018, nr 1–7.

„Folk24”, 2013–today.

„Forum Musicum”, 1966–1974, 1966, nr 1/2–6; 1967, nr 1; 1968, nr 2–3; 1969, nr 4–6, 1970, nr 7–8; 1971, nr 9–12; 1972, nr 13; 1973, nr 14–15; 1974, nr 16.

„Forum Muzykologiczne", 2005–dzieś, 2005, 2010, 2011, 2012/13, 2014, 2015/16.

„Forum Rozrywki”, 1983, nr 1–2.

„Gadki z Chatki”, 1996–2014, 1996, nr 1–3; 1997, nr 7–15; 1998, nr 16–17; 1999, nr 21–26; 2000, nr 27–31; 2001–2014, nr 1–6.

„Gazeta Magnetofonowa”, 2015–today, 2015, nr 1; 2016, nr 2–5; 2017, nr 1–4; 2018, nr 1.

„Gitarzysta”, 2006–today, 2006–2017, nr 1–12; 2018, nr 1–6.

„Glissando”, 2004–today, 2004, nr 1–2; 2005, nr 3–7; 2006, nr 8–9; 2007, nr 10/11–13/14; 2009, nr 15; 2010, nr 16; 2011, nr 17–19; 2012, nr 20; 2014, nr 23–24; 2015, nr 26–27; 2016, nr 28–29.
“ISME”, 1973–2002, 1973–1975, nr 1–2; 1976-1978, nr 1–5; 1979, nr 1–4; 1980, nr 1; 1983–2002, nr 1–4.

“J Music”, 2011–2012, 2011, nr 1; 2012, nr 2.

“Jazz”, 1956–1981, 1956, nr 1-6; 1957–1980, nr 1–12; 1981, nr 1.

“Jazz Forum [ed.international]”, 1967–1992, 1967, nr 1; 1968, nr 1–2; 1969, nr 1–3; 1970, nr 1–4; 1971, nr 1–3/4; 1972–1992, nr 1–6.

“Klucz”, 1996–2015, 1996, nr 1; 1997, nr 2; 2003, nr 3; 2006, nr 5; 2008, nr 6; 2009, nr 7; 2010, nr 8; 2011, nr 9-10; 2012, nr 11; 2013, nr 12; 2014, nr 13; 2015, nr 14.

“Kwarta”, 1998–2006, 2011–2013, 1998 nr 1–2; 1999, nr 3; 2000, nr 4–7; 2001, nr 8–9; 2002, nr 10–11; 2003, nr 12; 2004, nr 13, 2005, nr 14; 2006, nr 15; 2011, nr 1–2; 2012, nr 3–4; 2013, nr 5.

“Kwartalnik Muzyczny”, 1948–1950, 1948, nr 21/22–24; 1949, nr 25–28; 1950, nr 29/30.

“Laif”, 2001–2016, 2001, nr 1–4; 2002, nr 5–10; 2003, nr 11–15; 2005/2006, nr 26-32; 2006, nr 33–38; 2007–2009, nr 1–12; 2010, nr 1/2–3/4; 2011, nr 1–5; 2013, nr 1–4; 2014, 1/2–6; 2015, nr 1–3.

“Lizard”, 2010–today, 2010, nr 1; 2011–2016, nr 1–4; 2017, nr 1.

“Machine”, 1996–2002, 2006–2011, 1996–2001, nr 1–12; 2002, nr 1–3; 2006, nr 0–9; 2007–2010, nr 1–12; 2011, nr 1–5.

“Magazyn Muzyczny Jazz”, 1981–1991, 1981, nr 2–8; 1982, nr 1–4; 1983–1985, nr 1–6; 1986–1990, nr 1–12; 1991, nr 1–10.

“Musica Antiqua Europae Orientalis”, 1966–2012, T. 1–T. 16.

“Musica Ecclesiastica”, 2014–today, nr 9–13.

“Musica Galicana”, 1997–today, 1997, T. 1; 1999, T. 3; 2000, T. 5; 2001, T. 6; 2003, T. 7; 2005, T. 9; 2007, T.10; 2008, T. 11; 2010, T. 12; 2012, T. 13; 2014, T. 14; 2016, T. 15.

“Musica Medii Aevi”, 1965–1991, 1965, T. 1; 1968, T. 2; 1969, T. 3; 1973, T. 4; 1976, T. 5; 1977, T. 6; 1986, T. 7; 1991, T. 8.

“Musica Sacra Nova”, 2007–2011, 2007, nr 1; 2008, nr 2; 2009/10, nr 3/4; 2011, nr 5.

“Muzyk: FCM”, 1993–today, 1993–2017, nr 1–12; 2018, nr 1–6.

“Muzyka21”, 2000–2017, 2000, nr 1–7; 2001–2016, nr 1–12; 2017, nr 1–3.

“Muzyka Religijna w Polsce”, 1975–1988, 1975/76, T. 1; 1978, T. 2; 1979, T. 3; 1980, T. 4; 1983, T. 5; 1984, T. 6; 1985, T. 7–8; 1988, T. 9–10.

“Muzyka w Mieście”, 2012–today, 2012, nr 1–8; 2013–2017, nr 1–12; 2018, nr 1–5.

“Muzyka w Prasie Zagranicznej”, 1959–1969, 1959–1968, nr 1–12; 1969, nr 1–6.

“Noise Magazine”, 2014–today, 2014, nr 1–2; 2015, nr 1–4; 2016, nr 1–5; 2017, nr 1–5; 2018, nr 1–2.

“Non Stop”, 1972–1990, 1972, nr 1–5; 1973-1989, nr 1-12; 1990, nr 1–9.

“Notes Muzyczny”, 2014–today, 2014-2017, nr 1–2.

“Page”, 1972–1989, 1972, T. 1; 1974, T. 2; 1979, T. 3; 1980, T. 4; 1989, T. 5.

“Perkusista”, 2008–today, 2008, nr 1; 2009–2011, nr 1–6; 2012, nr 1–8; 2013–2017, nr 1–12; 2018, nr 1–6.
„Piosenka”, 2013–today, nr 1–5.
„Polnische Musik”, 1966–1992, 1966, nr 1–3; 1967–1992, nr 1–4.
„Popcorn”, 1990–2012, 1990–2011, nr 1–12; 2012, nr 1–7.
„Poradnik Muzykologiczny”, 1947–1989, 1947, nr 1–10; 1948–1977, nr 1–12; 1978–1982, nr 1–6; 1983–1989, nr 1–12.
„Praca Świąteczna”, 1951–1962, 1951, nr 1–8; 1952–1961, nr 1–12; 1962, nr 1–7/8.
„Presto”, 2012–today, 2012, nr 1–3; 2013–2015, nr 1–4; 2016, nr 2/3; 2017, nr 1–3/4; 2018, nr 1.
„Przegląd Muzykologiczny”, 2001–2015, 2001–2007, nr 1–7; 2011, nr 8; 2013, nr 9; 2015, nr 10.
„Quarta”, 2014–2015, 2014, nr 1–3; 2015, nr 1–2.
„Res Facta”, 1967–1982, 1967–1973, nr 1–7; 1977, nr 8; 1982, nr 9.
„Res Facta Nova”, 1994–today, 1994, nr 1; 1997, nr 2; 1999, nr 3; 2001, nr 4; 2002, nr 5; 2003, nr 6; 2004, nr 7; 2005, nr 8; 2007, nr 9; 2008, nr 10; 2010, nr 11; 2011, nr 12; 2012, nr 13; 2013, nr 14; 2014, nr 15.
„Ruch Muzyczny”, 1957–today, 1957, nr 1–16; 1958, nr 1–24; 1959, nr 1–17/18; 1960–1973, nr 1–24; 1974–80, nr 1–26; 1981, nr 1–25; 1982, nr 1–15; 1983–1991, nr 1–26; 1992, nr 1–14; 1993–2012, nr 1–26; 2013, nr 1–22; 2014–2017, nr 1–12; 2018, nr 1–6.
„Rytm”, 1972, nr 1–6.
„Scala”, 2012–today, 2012, nr 1; 2013 nr 2–3; 2014, nr 4; 2015, nr 5–6; 2016, nr 7.
„Scontri”, 2013–2016, 2013, nr 1; 2015, nr 2; 2016, nr 3.
„Studia i Rozprawy”, 1971–1973, nr 1–3.
„Studia Muzykologiczne”, 1953–1956, 1953, nr 1–2; 1954, nr 3; 1955, nr 4; 1956, nr 5.
„Studia z Wychowania Muzycznego”, 1975–1988, 1975, Z. 1; 1977, Z. 2; 1978, Z. 3; 1980, Z. 4; 1981, Z. 5; 1983, Z. 6; 1988, Z. 7/8.
„Sześc Strun Świata”, 2014–2017, 2014, nr 0; 2015–2017, nr 1–4.
„Szkice o Kulturze Muzycznej XIX wieku”, 1971–1984, 1971, T. 1; 1973, T. 2; 1976, T. 3; 1980, T. 4; 1984, T. 5.
„Ślizg”, 1995–2007, 1995, nr 1–2; 1996, nr 3–11; 1997, nr 1–12; 1998, nr 1–8; 2002–2006, nr 1–12; 2007, nr 1.
„Śpiew w Szkole”, 1957–1966, 1957, nr 1–4; 1958–1960, nr 1–6; 1961–1966, nr 1–5.
„Śpiewak Śląski”, 1985–2017, 1985/86, nr 1/2; 1986/87, nr 5/6–7; 1988–1993, nr 1–4; 1994–2011, nr 1–6; 2012–2017, nr 1–4.
„Śpiewamy i Tańczymy”, 1954–1987, 1954–1987.
„Taniec”, 1974–1986, 1974, nr 1; 1975, nr 1–2; 1977, nr 1; 1979, nr 1–2, 1980, nr 1; 1982, nr 1; 1983, nr 1; 1986, nr 1.
„Taniec”, 1992–1994, 1992, nr 1–3/4; 1993, nr 1–3/4; 1994, nr 1–2.
„Techno Party”, 1998–2001, 1998, nr 1–6; 1999, nr 1–10; 2001, nr 7/8, 10.
„Teraz Rock”, 2003–today, 2003, nr 1–10; 2004–2017, nr 1–12; 2018, nr 1–7.
„Top Drummer”, 2006–2014, 2006, nr 1–4; 2007/08–2012/13, nr 1–6; 2013, nr 1–4.
„Top Guitar”, 2005–today, 2005, nr 1; 2006–2009, nr 1–6; 2010–2017, nr 1–12; 2018, nr 1–6.
„Twoja Muza”, 2003–today, 2003, nr 1; 2004–2017, nr 1–6; 2018, nr 1–2.
„Twoja Muza”, 2003–today, 2003, nr 1; 2004–2017, nr 1–6; 2018, nr 1–2.
„Tylko Rock”, 1991–2002, 1991, nr 1; 1992–2001, nr 1–12; 2002, nr 1–9/10.
„Vaib”, 2015–today, 2015, nr 1–3; 2016, nr 4–8; 2017, nr 9–11.
„Wiadomości Gitarowe”, 1957–1966, 1957, nr 1–2; 1958–1965, nr 1–4; 1966, nr 1.
„Wiadomości ZAIKSF”, 1971–dziś, 1971–1995, nr 1–4; 1996, nr 1–3; 1997–2005, nr 1; 2006, nr 1–3; 2007, nr 1–2; 2008, nr 1; 2009, nr 1–3; 2010–2011, nr 1–2; 2012–2017, nr 1–3; 2018, nr 1.
„Wokalistyka w Polsce i na Świecie”, 2002–2014, 2002, T. 1; 2003, T. 2; 2004, T. 3; 2006, T. 4; 2008, T. 5; 2010, T. 6; 2011, T. 7; 2012, T. 8; 2014, T. 10.
„Wychowanie Muzyczne w Szkole”, 1967–2010, 1967–2010, nr 1–5.
„Z Dziejów Muzyki Polskiej”, 1961–1971, 1961, nr 2–3; 1962, nr 4; 1963, nr 6; 1964, nr 7–8; 1965, nr 9–10; 1966, nr 11–12; 1969, nr 13–14; 1971, nr 15.
68
„Zagraj to Sam”, 1994–today, 1994–2010, nr 1–12; 2011–2017, nr 1–4; 2018, nr 1.
„Życie Muzyczne”, 1946–1948, 1974–2009, 1946, nr 1/2; 1947, nr 3/4–5/6; 1974–2007, nr 1–12; 2008–2009, nr 1–4.
„Życie Śpiewacze”, 1948–1973, 1948, nr 1–3; 1949–1973, nr 1–12.