



# Bastarda: *Beyond the Present*

16 November (Saturday) ——— 5.00 pm

Royal Castle in Warsaw – Museum  
Great Assembly Hall  
4 Zamkowy Square

The concert programme features religious music known from Central European sources of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the first part, we will hear compositions by one of the most outstanding creators of this era – Piotr of Grudziądz (Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz), whose works became widely popular. The musical material of the second part of the concert comes from the Wrocław hymnbook of Valentin Triller – an evangelical pastor from Ratajno in Silesia. The Bastarda trio will perform these pieces in their own contemporary instrumental adaptations.

## Concert programme

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Material from the album  
*Promitat aeterno* (2017)  
based on works  
by Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz  
(ca. 1392–after 1452)  
*Praedulcis eurus*  
*Pax aeterna*  
*Praesidorum erogatrix*  
*Praesulem ephebeatum*  
*Kyrie fons bonitatis*  
*Praesulis eminenciam*  
*Promitat aeterno trono regi*

Pieces from *The Silesian Songbook*  
by Valentin Triller (1555 and 1559)  
*Christ ist erstanden*  
*Carnis nube jam detecta*  
*Efficax pax fax*  
*Felici peccatrici*

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Performers:

**Bastarda:**

**Paweł Szamburski**  
clarinet

**Tomasz Pokrzywiński**  
cello

**Michał Górczyński**  
contrabass clarinet

## Bastarda: *Beyond the Present*

The music traditions of Central Europe are an inexhaustible source of compositional and artistic inspiration. This was once the case when the then authors composed works based on models known from the past. This is also the case today when contemporary musicians re-arrange melodies, rhythms and textures recorded in preserved sources. Both prove that the past can happen in the present; what is more, it is difficult to understand the present without being aware of the past. Therefore, by returning to former traditions, one tries to find one's place in contemporary times. Consolidating one's own oeuvre serves to affirm not only the present recipients, but also the memory of those who will look at it in the future...

This attitude characterised many authors of the early modern age, educated according to the humanistic ideals of *ad fontes* (back to the sources) and *sibi ac posteritati* (for themselves and future generations). Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz was such an author; after studying at the Cracow Academy, the fifteenth-century poet and composer visited many cultural and academic communities all over the continent, staying even in the most important centres of secular and ecclesiastical power, that is in Vienna and Rome. In addition to his priestly and political activities, he was an artist, leaving behind many works comprising text and music. The lyrics of his pieces reveal features of conceptual poetry. One of them was the self-referential tendency to form an acrostic of his name (Petrus) by starting each subsequent word with respective letters. Musical works written to texts arranged in such a manner represent the then popular genres of religious music: first of all, *cantiones* (songs based on material unrelated to Gregorian chant), *rotula* (compositions on a constantly recurring theme, often based on Christmas), musical settings of Mass parts and multi-text motets with a liturgical or journalistic function. Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz's works have survived in several dozen manuscripts. In the notebook of one of the Cracow students, we find a *cantio* on St Martin – *Praesulis eminenciam*. A similar piece, dedicated to Mary, *Praedulcis eurus*, was written down in a manuscript from the church of St Elisabeth in Wrocław, where a Christmas *rotulum* entitled *Promitat aeterno trono regi* is also featured. Marian *cantiones* by this composer (including *Praesidorum erogatrix*) are also preserved in the famous Czech Speciálník Codex. On the other hand, *rotula* can be found, among others, in German manuscripts, for example, in the collections of Benedictines from Regensburg, in which one can find *Praesulem ephebeatum*, dedicated to St Martin.

In turn, the following are examples of liturgical works: the three-text motet *Iacob scalam aviam cernebat – Pax aeterna templo regis – Terribilis est locus iste*, associated with the University of Leipzig due to its origin, as well as the three-part setting of *Kyrie fons bonitatis* (containing elements of the *faux bourdon* technique), which made its way to the famous Trent Codices. As can be seen, works by this fifteenth-century composer reached a wide range of countries and regions.

The popularity of pieces by Petrus Wilhelmi de Grudencz is also evidenced by the fact that these works were known for many subsequent decades and subjected to a number of creative adaptations. The canon *Praesulem ephebeatum* was quoted by several later composers (including Heinrich Isaac in his Mass based on this material). The most popular, however, was *Praelustri elucencia – cantio* known from as many as twenty later copies and a polyphonic arrangement, which was printed in the Wrocław edition of Valentin Triller's hymnbook. The latter also studied in Cracow, and in the mid-sixteenth century, he became an evangelical pastor in Ratajno near Niemcza. In 1555, he developed a hymnbook containing the repertoire he collected, which was to serve Lutheran parishes in Silesia. The publication quickly became popular, as just four years later, its reprint appeared in Wrocław. The reason for this success was probably Triller's collector strategy advertised in the title of the hymnbook, who – like the figure of one of the evangelical parables (Matthew 13:52) – brought out of his treasure what is new and what is old. Next to songs written by Reformation advocates (for example, the hymn *Vom Himmel hoch* attributed to Luther), in the Wrocław print, we can also find numerous compositions derived from the pre-Reformation tradition, provided with new texts for the needs of the recipients (properly 'cleared', theologically speaking). Therefore, apart from the Easter hymn *Christ ist erstanden*, there is an adaptation of the hymn *Efficax pax fax* sung to the text of *O Herr Gott Vater wir singen dir* or *Christus in diese Welt ist kommen* adapted to the melody of the antiphon *Felici peccatrici*, which had so far served the cult of St Mary Magdalene. In turn, from the responsory on St Hedwig of Silesia *Margarita solo tecta*, Triller used only a fragment of the verse *Carnis nube jam detecta*. Such a creative approach to the repertoire allows both performers and recipients of this music to actively refer to the existing tradition.

Tomasz Jeź



## Bastarda

Founded in 2017 by the clarinetist, improviser and composer Paweł Szamburski in conjunction with two other unconventional musicians: Tomasz Pokrzywiński (cello) and Michał Górczyński (contrabass clarinet). This unusual combination of instruments creates a unique, completely new timbre, which has become the characteristic feature of Bastarda's style. The trio has been praised for inventing their own musical language, which has become the tool for creating new music – taking inspiration from a wide array of sources – from the so-called 'early music', to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century

Hasidic sacred songs, to traditional music of Portugal, Poland, Lithuania and Belarus. For Bastarda, all these musical genres become merely starting points for improvisation and new compositions – the early Baroque method of *alla bastarda* finds its way in a new context. Thus, musical traditions of the past morph into a modern, original and personal artistic voice. Building upon the success of their first three CD albums, which established Bastarda as one of the most interesting ensembles on the Polish scene, they continued with a series of fruitful collaborations with both Polish and international artists (such as the Dutch

orchestra Holland Baroque or the Sutari ensemble), which led to further four highly acclaimed CDs. In recent years, the ensemble has also developed new programmes, composed on commission for festivals (such as the Warsaw Autumn and the Unsound Festival) and cultural institutions (the *Polish Film Music Composers* programme prepared for the eighty-fifth anniversary of Polish Radio 2 or *Faraon [Pharaoh]* implemented for the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute). A release of their album by the renowned Pentatone label and the related concert tours in the Netherlands also must be considered a success.

