

Heroines of Polish Music

16 November (Saturday) — 7.00 pm

POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews
6 Anielewicza Street

The concert presents pieces by four generations of Polish female composers. In the Concerto for String Orchestra, Grażyna Bacewicz individually transforms the Baroque tradition. Krystyna Moszumańska-Nazar offers a subtle approach to the idea of sonorism in her *Musica per archi*. Joanna Wnuk-Nazarowa uses extended techniques to enhance the expression of *Lamento*, while in *Quintetto per archi* No. 2, she pays tribute to the memory of Krzysztof Penderecki. In turn, the premiere of *Mémoire de mémoire* by Hanna Kulenty, in her idiomatic style, commemorates the Polish liberators of Breda.

Concert programme

Joanna Wnuk-Nazarowa
(b. 1949)

Quintetto per archi No. 2
Krzysztof Penderecki in memoriam
for string orchestra
(2023)

Lamento
for oboe, string orchestra and saw
(1983–84)

Krystyna Moszumańska-Nazar
(1924–2008)

Musica per archi
(1962)

Hanna Kulenty
(b. 1961)

Mémoire de mémoire (Polish premiere)
for trumpet, bass trombone
and string orchestra
(2023)

Grażyna Bacewicz
(1909–1969)
Concerto for String Orchestra
(1948)

Performers:

Piotr Majoor
trumpet

Adrian Gryciuk
bass trombone

Mariusz Pędziałek
oboe

Sinfonietta Cracovia

Katarzyna Tomala-Jedynak
conductor

Heroines of Polish Music

It is a truism that studies on the history of Polish music rarely include female names. Not so much because there have been relatively few female composers, but because they usually remain – so to speak – invisible. Among the few exceptions, Maria Szymanowska is typically mentioned as a representative of the nineteenth century and Grażyna Bacewicz – in the context of the twentieth century. In fact, the list of female names in the history of Polish music is quite extensive, and their significance is often underestimated. The programme of this concert presents only a fraction of this rich spectrum through works by four generations of female artists active over the last eighty years.

When the doyen of female composers, Grażyna Bacewicz, wrote the Concerto for String Orchestra (1948), her output had already included over sixty compositions of various genres. And yet, it was only those created after World War II that made her professional colleagues see her – as Roman Palester put it – as a ‘real, serious composer’.¹ After the premiere of the Concerto, Stefan Kisielewski wrote, ‘We finally experienced a “gutsy piece” of healthy and tasty music, written with creative potential – truly masculine.’² It would have been difficult to get a greater compliment for this brilliant composition at that time. It heavily relies on the Baroque *concerto grosso* tradition while preserving its individual nature – behind the expansion of the outermost movements’ drive, there are irregular accents, ‘spicy’ harmonies and instrumental chants inspired by folk music, whereas the middle movement echoes almost Romantic lyricism.

Musica per archi by Krystyna Moszumańska-Nazar (1924–2008) could be heard for the first time at the Warsaw Autumn Festival in 1963, fitting into the trend of the ‘Polish compositional school’, already enjoying recognition in the world. In this respect, it was a highly original statement, far from reproducing the gestures typical of native ‘sonoristic manifestos’ of that time, that is sound masses dominated by murmurs rolling in front of the listeners’ ears. In order to give the tone colour and sound a constitutive role, the composer used much more subtle means – when using sophisticated types of articulation (for example, hitting with the bow against the bridge or behind the bridge), clusters and glissandi, she never lost sight of the pitch. Moreover, she organised those elements based on orders derived from the twelve-tone series, expressed through distinct motivic figures.



Grażyna Bacewicz

☐ author unknown



Krystyna Moszumańska-Nazar

☐ Andrzej Zborski / ZKP

Joanna Wnuk-Nazarowa (b. 1949), a student of Krzysztof Penderecki, could not remain indifferent to the great tradition of the ‘Polish school’. On the one hand, the concert programme reminds of the beginnings of her creative path and the never performed *Requiem II* (1972) for soprano or mezzo-soprano and great symphony orchestra, the chamber version of which is *Lamento* for oboe and string orchestra, created nine years later. On the other hand, the programme gives a testimony of her current oeuvre – after years of very intensive organisational work for Polish culture, Wnuk-Nazarowa returned to her ‘learned profession’. The oboe lament spreads itself over expressive, narrow-range motifs extended over the sounds of a string orchestra. These parts have been enriched with unconventional types of articulation such as vibrato, irregular bow changes or hitting the soundboard with the palm. At key moments, the saw enters, in a counterpoint with the solo instrument. All that is meant to enhance the expressive qualities evoked by the title of the work. In turn, *Quintetto per archi* No. 2, a ‘multiplied’ version of the String Quintet No. 2, makes us aware of how complex an homage composition can be. The work reflects the concept of Beethoven’s four-movement symphonic cycle (referring to Penderecki’s tastes as a conductor) and contains unfinished phrases from Penderecki’s String Quartet No. 3 (‘Leaves from an Unwritten Diary’) while consistently pursuing Wnuk-Nazarowa’s own artistic goals. After all, it is the architectural planning and awareness of the final goal that are the foundation of the composer’s creative technique.



Joanna Wnuk-Nazarowa

☐ Bartek Barczyk / Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne

The concert will end with the latest piece by Hanna Kulenty (b. 1961) – *Mémoire de mémoire* for trumpet, bass trombone and string orchestra. This ‘memory of memory’, using a rare combination of brass instruments, has various connotations. On the one hand, it commemorates the eightieth anniversary of the liberation of the Dutch city of Breda by the First Polish Armoured Division led by General Stanisław Maczek, which is celebrated in October of this year (the piece was commissioned on this occasion). On the other hand, it reflects the composer’s unique, idiomatic style, closely intertwined with her creative philosophy. The main features of Kulenty’s music are a coherent form, guaranteed by original dramaturgical techniques (especially in relation to rhythm and time), a strong emotional load and a specific sound aura; at this concert, she represents the youngest generation of the ‘heroines of Polish music’.



Hanna Kulenty

☐ Bartek Barczyk / Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne

Iwona Lindstedt

¹ Roman Palester, *Grażyna Bacewicz*. RWE programme in the *Wiadomości kulturalne* series No. 623, broadcast on 22 January 1969, <https://www.palester.polmic.pl/index.php/pl/felietony-wolnej-europy/1969/116-o-grazynie-bacewicz> (accessed 27.08.2024).

² Stefan Kisielewski, ‘Zjazd kompozytorów’, *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1950, No. 28, p. 5.

Piotr Majoor – trumpet



□ Veerle Bastiaansen

He began his adventure with music at the age of nine, learning to play the trumpet in the Netherlands under the supervision of famous trumpeter Marc Blaauw. Piotr Majoor's teachers quickly noticed his

talent, as a result of which he continued his education with Andrzej Karpiński at the Karol Kurpiński State Music School in Warsaw. There, not only did Piotr improve his skills, but he also graduated top of his class. In 2010, he won the Grand Prix at the ninth Wind Instrument Music Encounters. He spent the following years of his musical journey studying with Wiesław Woźnicki at the Karol Szymanowski

State Music School in Warsaw and with Gertjan Loot and Erwin ter Boden at the Royal Conservatoire – School for Young Talent in The Hague, the Netherlands. At that time, Piotr Majoor began to specialise in contemporary music and had the opportunity to participate in the Stockhausen courses in Germany. He confirmed his passion and determination by completing his studies at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam in 2020 under the supervision of renowned professors – Ad Welleman and Theo Wolters.

Piotr Majoor is a trumpeter in symphony orchestras, chamber orchestras and in smaller ensembles, performing in many countries. He has worked with acclaimed orchestras, such as

the Dutch Philharmonic (Nederlands Philharmonisch Orkest) and the German Philharmonie Südwestfalen, giving concerts in the prestigious Concertgebouw Amsterdam. Between 2017–2019, he served as a solo trumpeter at Christmas concerts, presenting Handel's *Messiah* with the Dutch Opera (Nederlandse Reisopera). Since 2022, Piotr Majoor has been a permanent trumpeter of the Holland Symfonie Orkest, where he performs classical music, for example, works by Bach, Vivaldi or Mozart. In 2023, his passion for contemporary music resulted in the premiere of Hanna Kulenty's *La scala tutti* (at the Łódź Philharmonic), as part of which the artist cooperated with the trombonist Adrian Gryciuk and the Primuz string orchestra.

Adrian Gryciuk – bass trombone



□ Michał Janik

Between 2009–2015, he attended the General Education Secondary Music School in Białystok (in the trombone class of Piotr Kania), from which he graduated with the grade of 'excellent' in trombone. After finishing

high school, he went to the Netherlands, and between 2015–2020, he studied at the Amsterdam Conservatory in the bass trombone class of Ben van Dijk. During his studies, he worked with professional symphony orchestras, including the

Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Orkest van het Oosten, Sinfonica Galicia, Residentie Orkest and the Netherlands Philharmonic. While studying at the conservatory, he also participated in music courses and competitions.

In 2019, he won prizes in the Edward Kleinhammer Competition and the Daniel Yaxley Competition (orchestral and solo bass trombone, respectively), organised by the International Trombone Association (ITA) as part of the International Trombone Festival (ITF) in Muncie, USA.

After returning to Poland in October 2020, he pursued his studies at the Krzysztof

Penderecki Academy of Music in Cracow in the class of Zdzisław Stolarczyk (MA studies). Between 2020–2023, he was a bass trombonist of the Representative Band of the Polish Police in Warsaw. Since September 2023, he has been a musician of the Jerzy Semkow Polish Sinfonia Iuventus Orchestra. In his career, he has also worked with other Polish orchestras, such as the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, Sinfonia Varsovia, the Cracow Philharmonic Orchestra, the Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra and the Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Warsaw.

Mariusz Pędziałek – oboe



□ from the artist's archive

He began his music education at the age of three at the Experimental Music Studio in Cracow. He studied in the oboe class of Edward Szcześniak; he also participated in a masterclass run

by Lothar Koch. In 1977, he went on his first US concert tour with a group of students of the State Higher Music School in Cracow (now the Krzysztof Penderecki Academy of Music). He has received the Grand Prix of the Confrontations of Art School Students. He performs as a soloist, playing with excellent conductors and orchestras. The oboist is regularly invited to the Warsaw Autumn Festival. He has

recorded theatre and film music and performed in theatre plays. He used to be a concertmaster of the Cracow Philharmonic Orchestra. The artist has participated in international and European projects – Bridges and Ensemble Spiel. He took part in the German and Austrian tour of Nigel Kennedy and the Berliner Philharmoniker and in the *Bach Meets Ellington* project, as part of which he played with Nigel Kennedy and his Orchestra of Life.

Mariusz Pędziałek's achievements include numerous archival recordings for the Polish Radio, appearances in television programmes and CD recordings. He received a nomination for the Fryderyk 2001 award for the recording of the Concerto for Oboe and Harp by Witold Lutosławski with harpist

Anna Sikorzak-Olek. The artist recorded the album *20th-Century Polish Music for Oboe and Piano* with pianist Renata Żelobowska-Orzechowska. He also registered *Sinfonietta No. 2* by Krzysztof Penderecki and *Lamento* by Joanna Wnuk-Nazarowa on an album published by the Polish Chamber Philharmonic. Member of the 'Muzyka Centrum' Art Association, the Polish Society for Electroacoustic Music and the Witold Lutosławski Society. He used to be a lecturer at the International Academy for New Composition and Audio-Art Avantgarde Tirol in Seefeld. Decorated with the Gold Cross of Merit and the Gloria Artis Medal for Merit to Culture, the Cracow badge Honoris Gratia and the Polonia Minor medal of the Lesser Poland Voivodeship.

Katarzyna Tomala-Jedynak – conductor



Edyta Dufaj

She graduated from the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in symphony and opera conducting (2013) and from postgraduate studies in management of cultural institutions at the Wrocław University of Economics and

Business (2019). She has been developing her conducting skills at masterclasses led by Jin Wang, Jorma Panula, Sian Edwards, Marek Heron, Tadeusz Strugała, Gabriel

Chmura and Rafał Delekta. Her repertoire ranges from symphonic and chamber works, to operas, operettas and ballets, to film scores and musicals.

In the 2014/2015 season, she was a conductor-resident of the Beethoven Academy Orchestra (under a programme of the Institute of Music and Dance). In 2015, she started working with the Grand Theatre in Poznań on a regular basis. In 2017, she was among the five scholarship holders of the prestigious Dartington International Summer School programme.

In 2021, Katarzyna was awarded the Jan Kiepura Music Theatre Award in the 'Best Conductor' category. Moreover, she has conducted many ensembles both in Poland and abroad, cooperating with outstanding soloists and renowned festivals. Classical music promotion and educational projects fostering participation in cultural life constitute an important share of the artist's activities. Since 2022, she has been the artistic director and first conductor of Sinfonietta Cracovia – the Orchestra of the Royal Capital City of Cracow.

Sinfonietta Cracovia

Sinfonietta Cracovia is one of the leading chamber ensembles in Poland. The orchestra stands out due to its versatility, precision and flexibility, which it successfully transfers to the symphonic ensemble. Sinfonietta Cracovia is appreciated for its performances of broadly understood contemporary music (from avant-garde

to film music). In search of new forms, the orchestra is involved in numerous undertakings promoting new music and Polish composers. The ensemble is famous for its interpretations of works by Krzysztof Penderecki – mentor and patron of a number of the orchestra's projects. On a daily basis, Sinfonietta Cracovia, as a municipal cultural institution, co-creates

the cultural offer of the city dedicated both to the residents of Cracow and guests from outside the city. The promotion of Cracow and Polish music abroad is also an important area of the ensemble's activities. Since the 2021/2022 season, Sinfonietta Cracovia has been led by the following duo: Agata Grabowiecka (cultural manager) and Katarzyna Tomala-Jedynak (conductor).



Edyta Dufaj