

Tadeusz MAJERSKI

CONCERTO-POEM FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA
PIANO QUINTET IN THE FORM OF VARIATIONS
CELLO SONATA
PIANO PIECES

Michał Drewnowski, piano
Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Emil Tabakov, conductor
New Art Chamber Soloists
Arkadiusz Dobrowolski, cello

TADEUSZ MAJERSKI *Concerto-Poem* and Other Works

1	<i>Concerto-Poem</i> for piano and orchestra	16:37
	(1946, rev. 1956; scoring rev. and ed. Emilian Madey, 2008–9)	
	<i>Piano Quintet in the Form of Variations</i> (1953)	14:55
2	<i>Andante – Tema: Andante semplice</i>	1:19
3	Var. I <i>L'istesso tempo</i>	0:54
4	Var. II <i>Allegro feroce, ma non troppo</i>	1:05
5	Var. III <i>Allegretto</i>	0:31
6	Var. IV <i>Allegro deciso</i>	2:18
7	Var. V <i>Allegro, ma non troppo</i>	1:00
8	Var. VI <i>Allegretto con moto</i>	0:52
9	Var. VII <i>Andante con magna espressione</i>	1:13
10	Var. VIII <i>Allegretto con moto</i>	1:30
11	Var. IX <i>Allegro – Andante</i>	4:14
	<i>Sonata for Cello and Piano</i> (1949)	11:38
12	I <i>Largo ma in tempo rubato</i>	4:12
13	II <i>Allegro con brio</i>	7:26

Four Piano Preludes (1935)	8:01
14 No. 1 <i>Misterioso. Lento non troppo</i>	2:51
15 No. 2 <i>Allegro appassionato</i>	1:24
16 No. 3 <i>Andante molto espressivo</i>	3:13
17 No. 4 <i>Presto ma non troppo</i>	0:33

La Musique Oubliée: Three Musical Pictures (1948–49)	5:37
18 No. 1 Sorrow	1:55
19 No. 2 In the Dark	1:57
20 No. 3 At the Crossroad	1:45

Three Pieces for Piano	4:15
21 No. 1 Etude (1963)	0:48
22 No. 2 Unsentimental Waltz (1935)	2:09
23 No. 3 Prelude (1935)	1:18

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Michał Drewnowski, piano
Royal Scottish National Orchestra **1**
Emil Tabakov, conductor **1**
New Art Chamber Soloists **2–11**
Arkadiusz Dobrowolski, cello **12 13**

FIRST RECORDINGS

TADEUSZ MAJERSKI, FORGOTTEN POLISH RADICAL

by Michał Drewnowski

Tadeusz Majerski was born on 29 June 1888 in Lwów, which then was the third-largest city in the Polish-speaking area (it is now Lviv, in Ukraine, 70 miles from the Polish border). In 1905, at the age of seventeen, he was admitted to the piano class of Ludomir Różycki¹ at the Conservatoire of the Galician Music Society (now the Lviv National Music Academy), graduating in 1911. After his studies in Lwów, Majerski honed his piano skills in Leipzig, studying for two years under the supervision of the outstanding Austrian pianist and composer Josef Pembaur.² On his return from Germany Majerski began a long career as a teacher. At first he gave private piano lessons and, from 1920, having been offered a job at the Lwów Conservatoire, he taught there until the end of his life, over four decades later. In parallel with his teaching career, Majerski was active as a performer and critic and, most importantly of all, as a composer. On all these artistic activities, as on more everyday ones, he lavished enthusiasm and commitment.

Majerski's concert-life was especially active in the period 1920–30, when he gave frequent performances as a solo pianist and chamber musician all over Poland and further afield. Shortly after taking up the job at the Lwów Conservatoire, he went on a concert tour with his brother Jan, a tenor at the Opéra de Paris, appearing in Belgrade, Vienna and Budapest. In 1923 Majerski gave a series of concerts with the then famous singer Ada Janowska, during which they performed songs by Karol Szymanowski. In 1927, Majerski founded The Lwów Piano Trio, with which he gave a series of concerts in various Polish cities, receiving very favourable reviews. He also

¹ Różycki (1883–1953) was, with Szymanowski, Karłowicz and Grzegorz Fitelberg, one of the founders of 'Young Poland in Music', a group that sought to invigorate Polish music, in parallel with similar efforts in the other arts. His most successful work was the ballet *Pan Twardowski*, Op. 45 (1919–20), which enjoyed over 800 performances in Poland and abroad.

² That is, Josef Pembaur the younger (1875–1950), whose conductor father, also Josef Pembaur (1848–1923), was likewise an important teacher. Both were born in Innsbruck.

performed with the cellist Dezyderiusz Danczowski (1891–1950), his brother-in-law (he was married to Majerski's sister Jadwiga), with compositions dedicated to Danczowski featuring in their repertoire.

In 1927 Majerski was appointed to a chair at the Lwów Conservatoire where, as well as running his piano class, he taught the theory and practice of piano performance. He also began to publish a number of theoretical writings, presenting the results of his research into performance-related issues as well as reflections stimulated by a hand disorder he had suffered as a result of poor performance practice – a fate that had befallen Robert Schumann a century earlier. In 1931 he founded the Society of Music and Opera Lovers. Concurrently with all this activity, he also acquired a profile as a drama and music critic, often for *Słowo Polskie*, the daily Lwów newspaper, where his natural linguistic skills and his excellent Polish style were appreciated.

But the most important of Tadeusz Majerski's many activities is his own music. In the 1930s he belonged to the first generation of Polish dodecaphonists – together with Józef Koffler,³ to whom he was bound by creative and artistic friendship. They worked together at the Lwów Conservatoire and often exchanged views on new musical trends in Poland and abroad. Another important contact was Arnold Schoenberg, with whom Majerski corresponded – but he wasn't in thrall to Schoenberg, as some were: he approached this new compositional technique in an individual manner and, when he felt it necessary, didn't hesitate to criticise some of the novel musical solutions already being practised. He was not satisfied, for instance, with some aspects of Schoenberg's dodecaphony and modified them in his own compositions, as in the third of his *Four Piano Preludes* [16]. Although he was keen that his music should experiment and explore, the most important thing for him was that it convey an emotional message. And, indeed, in his later works he returned to more traditional means of expression, considering them essential to his purpose.

³ Koffler, born in 1896, studied first (1914–16) in Lwów and then (1918–24) in Vienna, with Paul Graener and Felix Weingartner, and taught at the Lwów Conservatoire from 1928 until 1941. After Lwów was occupied by the Germans, Koffler and his wife and son were removed to the ghetto in Wieliczka, just south of Kraków, and they appear to have been murdered early in 1944. Just over twenty of his works (including four symphonies and a piano concerto) survive; eleven others vanished in the Holocaust.



Majerski photographed the last time he stayed at the house of his sister Helena in Głowno (near Łódź) in 1960

Majerski wrote his first compositions – a few songs for voice and piano – in his youth, probably as a result of his brother Jan's fascination with opera. No other, more significant pieces seem to have survived from that time. His artistic maturity arrived with the 1920s, among the works he wrote then being *Miss Ellis*, a three-act musical comedy to his own libretto, and *Daleka Księżniczka* ('The Distant Princess'), based on Edmond Rostand's early (1895) play *La princesse lointaine*.

Current research⁴ suggest that his main period of fascination with dodecaphonic technique was 1934–38, when he produced a series of cycles of short piano pieces (for example, the Four Preludes and Three Pieces on this recording), a suite for cello and piano and the principal composition of that time, the *Symphonic Études* for large orchestra, which won critical acclaim from performances in Lwów and in Switzerland and has since been the object of musicological research and analysis. Majerski's music was played in many Polish cities as well as in Kiev, Moscow and Basel, with Jascha Horenstein and Hermann Scherchen among those who conducted it.⁵ The outbreak of the Second World War brought living conditions so harsh that any creative activity was out of the question, and there are no surviving Majerski compositions between 1939 and 1945.

In the post-War period, especially after 1948 – the period in which the Communist authorities enforced the Stalinist doctrine of 'Socialist Realism' – Majerski was criticised as a 'formalist'.⁶ The label exposed him to political criticism and alienated him from the musical mainstream. But although the Conservatoire was already in the grip of the pro-Soviet authorities, the ideologically uncompromising Majerski kept on writing music which, although it did return to tonality, nevertheless remained faithful to his belief in

⁴ Ewa Nidecka, *Twórczość polskich kompozytorów Lwowa a ukraińska szkoła kompozytorska: 1792–1939* ('The Work of Polish Composers in Lwów and a Ukrainian School of Composition: 1792–1939'), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów, 2005; Natalia Kaszkadamowa, *Мистецтво фортепіано у Львіві* ('The Art of the Piano in Lviv'), Aston, Ternopil, 2001; Iwona Lindstedt, *Dodekafonia i serializm w twórczości kompozytorów polskich XX wieku* ('Dodecaphony and Serialism in the Works of Polish Composers of the Twentieth Century'), Polihymnia, Lublin, 2001.

⁵ The details of these performances have not yet been established.

⁶ Formalism was vaguely defined as a concern more with academic considerations of form rather than the promotion of political ideas; it was a catch-all condemnation for those who were not prepared to do the bidding of the state.

the primacy of emotion and expression. At the time he wrote such pieces as his Piano Suite, Piano Quintet, *Concerto-Poem* for piano and orchestra and *La Musique Oubliée: Three Pictures for Piano*.

Political pressure was not Majerski's only problem: in the last years of his life he suffered from a heart attack but continued to compose music of a very personal character. Among the works from this period are *Two Études* for piano and a violin concerto for his exceptionally talented young niece, Kaja Danczowska, daughter of Dezyderiusz⁷ – a score in which he returned to dodecaphony. Unfortunately, he did not manage to finish the concerto and it remained in short score.

Majerski died of heart failure on 6 October 1963. He was buried in the Łyczakowski Cemetery in Lwów, where many renowned Polish artists had been laid to rest before him.

The fact that Majerski began his composing career as an adult suggests that he had been developing a style of his own, based chiefly on twelve-tone material, for some time before he 'went public'. The most recognisable feature of his works is an oscillation between dodecaphony, atonality and unapologetic tonality, combined with the use of a deeply emotional melodic line and sophisticated harmony – a constellation of features which raise considerable interpretative challenges for the interpreters of his music.

In local terms, Majerski broke with most of the nineteenth-century musical traditions of Lwów: he did not cultivate choral music, and his works do not reveal any national-patriotic qualities. And his compositions make hardly any references to folklore – although there are occasional departures from that rule (for example, in the fourth variation in the *Piano Quintet in the Form of Variations* [6]).⁸

For Majerski music was first and foremost a reflection of personal experience. He did not find epic or heroic themes interesting, and his melodic material is of a lyrical-dramatic nature. And he paid a lot of attention to tone colour, with quartal chords,

⁷ Danczowska (b. 1949) studied with Eugenia Umińska in Kraków, David Oistrakh in Moscow and Ruggiero Ricci in Canada. After winning a sheaf of international prizes, she went on to become one of Poland's most prominent violinists, as active in the recording studio as the concert hall. Since 1972 she has taught at her *alma mater*, the Academy of Music in Kraków.

⁸ The manuscript of the Piano Quintet adds to that generic title 'in the form of variations'. It is not clear whether or not he intended *Piano Quintet in the Form of Variations* to be the formal title of the work or not. I have adopted it for the simple reason that it makes the structure instantly clear. Cf. also pp. 12–14, below.



Majerski in the Głowno garden of his sister Helena, probably in the summer of 1959; in the middle is the young Kaja Danczowska, already the prodigy violinist for whom Majerski composed a concerto

tritone sonorities in figurations or chromatic sequences featuring among a wide range of coloristic harmonic resources.

From a theoretical perspective Majerski applied dodecaphonic technique in an entirely unorthodox manner. One of the symptoms of that ‘unorthodoxy’ was his fascination with a non-serial row of twelve tones, presented in, for instance, the Etude [21], ‘Unsentimental Waltz’ [22] and Prelude [23] which form the *Three Pieces for Piano*. He was also far from strict in complying with the rule of the unrepeatability of notes and used many tonal ‘atavisms’: sequences, fermatas, repeated pitches, returns to initial tones of the series, tremolos and so on. Thus Majerski’s series employ not only the figurations typical of dodecaphony but also the means of formal development habitual in tonal music: transpositions, variational transformations of the series, or the use of fragments of series as ostinati. In the *Four Piano Preludes* [14–17], written at the peak of his dodecaphonic period, one can find solutions that stand in clear opposition to orthodox dodecaphonic thinking: tremolos, figurations, octave-sequences. In the 1930s, then, although Majerski shared the dodecaphonic enthusiasm prevalent at the time, he always subordinated it to thematic thinking and melodic and textural development. His dodecaphony is essentially Expressionist: it furnished only a part of the technique he required to present the enormous emotional charge of his music. And so it was hardly surprising that in the post-War period, his musical language turned from serialism towards overt tonality, enriching its textures and range of expression.

Concerto-Poem for piano and orchestra (1946–56)

Majerski’s *Concerto-Poem* [1] was written in 1946 but revised several times over the next decade. The original version he labelled ‘*Concerto-Fantasia* for piano and large symphony orchestra’. The premiere (according to notes on the manuscript) took place on 15 June 1947 in Lviv, with the composer as soloist and the Lviv Philharmonic conducted by Isaac Pain.⁹ In 1956 Majerski finished work on the second version of the concerto;

⁹ In 1939 the new Soviet authorities ‘established’ the Lviv Symphony Orchestra (from the existing Lviv Philharmonic) and, under the conductors Mykola Kolessa and Isaac Pain, attached it to the local radio station. The pre-War status quo was resumed after the return of peace.

it was now given its final title, *Concerto-Poem* for piano and orchestra, and in 1957 (I haven't been able to identify the precise date) was first performed by Mihail Brandorf, again with the Lviv Philharmonic, this time under the direction of Yuriy Luciv. Then the work fell into oblivion; it has never appeared in print.¹⁰

In 2008, I was given some of Majerski's manuscripts by a relative of his, Marek Rogalski. I had never heard of the composer, and the music was in very poor condition. But out of curiosity I read through the score of the *Concerto-Poem*, which struck me as excellent, and so I began my investigation of Majerski's music. Once I had managed to find all the material pertaining to the *Concerto-Poem*, I had the task of merging its various versions into a single, uniform, fully credible final form. That assignment turned out to be exceptionally complex because the two existing versions of the score (both in manuscript), a reduction for two pianos (arranged by Majerski himself) and the orchestral parts (made by his copyist) all differed significantly. Not only that: in both the 1946 original and 1956 revision of the work, the orchestral part of the manuscript seemed to be unfinished; it looked like a sketch, an outline, intended for later elaboration. The outcome of my initial efforts was the Polish premiere of the *Concerto-Poem*, on 12 September 2008 at the 42nd Polish Piano Festival in Słupsk (in Pomerania, in northern Poland), where I performed it with the Koszalin Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ruben Silva. But an enormous amount of further work was necessary: the score required the correction of a huge number of errors, in the detail of the harmony and orchestration, a task undertaken in 2009 by my friend the pianist, composer and conductor Emilian Madey. His work enabled the first performance of the revised *Concerto-Poem* in Zamość, in south-eastern Poland, on 26 April 2009, with me at the piano and Emil conducting.

The *Concerto-Poem* generally observes the conventions of a concert fantasia, but with the emotional and narrative qualities of a tone-poem, which explains Majerski's hesitation about the title. Skilfully oscillating between dodecaphony, atonality and tonality, the work has a remarkable emotional charge and displays considerable

¹⁰ An edition is now in preparation from Toccata Press.

coloristic diversity of timbre thanks to its rich, highly figurative decorative texture and its harmonic resourcefulness. Nevertheless, if it had to be classified as being in a particular style, the closest would be late Romanticism. The solo part, though devoid of spectacular pianistic complexity, demands considerable musicality of the performer, who is required, for example, to execute contrasting octave passages in both hands simultaneously, to articulate precise differences in dynamic in fast tempos, and to master some very complicated phrasing.

The title itself gives an indication of what Majerski intended: a piece for piano and orchestra free in form, where the emotional content is more important than the structure. Even so, the *Concerto-Poem* does have a readily identifiable form. It begins with an innocent and peaceful piano cadenza (preceded by tap on the tam-tam and a timpani roll) in a heavenly C major. After eight bars the main theme emerges, a four-bar motif that will appear often and in various configurations. The piece can be divided into multiple sections of varying character, which are usually connected by small cadenzas from the piano or other solo instruments. In its macro form, indeed, the *Concerto-Poem* is fairly symmetrical: the first section leads to a large and virtuosic piano cadenza (preceded by the material from the introduction, this time in E flat minor), after which comes a recapitulation that leads step by step to the final section. The mood is sad and melancholic but also very directly emotional, and my suspicion is that, deliberately or otherwise, it reflects that the prevailing atmosphere of the years of its composition and revision, when Lviv was under Soviet occupation.

Piano Quintet in the Form of Variations (1953)

The manuscript of Majerski's Piano Quintet – written in Lviv in 1953 – adds two qualifications to its generic title: 'in the form of variations' on a second line, and '*in modo antiquo*' on a third – one identifying the structure and the other reflecting its nostalgic allusions. The theme is followed by nine variations, preceded by an introduction and followed by a finale. Majerski treats variation-form fairly freely, extending some variations with repetitions or enriching them with completely new melodic-harmonic material, and he uses a variety of means to obtain contrast, with changes of rhythm and a

wide range of tone-colour – *pizzicato*, *détaché*, *martellato*, *spiccato* and incidental timbral change through the use of the mute. The Quintet begins [2] with a slow introduction, the material of which is not used in each variation, although it is recalled twice. The theme itself does not have much rhythmic or melodic personality, which allows Majerski all the more freedom in its transformation in the variations to follow – but it does have a particular feature, in that it varies its tempo: it begins *Andantino semplice* but then passes through two bars marked *più mosso* before returning to the *Tempo primo*. In Var. I, *L'istesso tempo* [3], Majerski begins to increase the emotional intensity and complexity before launching into the more virtuosic Var. II, *Allegro feroce, ma non troppo* [4], where he condenses the melodic material, changing the time-signature to $\frac{3}{8}$ and accentuating both rhythm and dynamics. Var. III, *Allegretto* [5], is rhythmically complex but relaxed in mood. Majerski did not often use folk-elements in his music, but they emerge towards the end of Var. III, preparing the way for the explicit evocation of Góral (highland) folk-music in Var. IV, *Allegro deciso* [6], which is reinforced by fourths and fifths in the bass. But the earthy energy slowly dissipates, and a dream-like *Quasi adagio* passage is introduced by gentle piano chords and brief solos from the cello and viola – and here the material from the opening *Andante* now returns for the first time, reinforcing the impression that the music has slipped into some private world. The burlesque Var. V, *Allegro ma non troppo* [6], sweeps away the dreamworld, before Var. VI, *Allegro con moto* [7], concerto-like, pitches bold chords in the piano against the theme in the strings. Here, too, the passion dies down, and, over rolling piano arpeggios, Var. VII, *Andante con magna espressione* [8], seem set to expand upon a lyrical treatment of the theme, but instead a *misterioso* passage cuts it off and brings in Var. VIII, *Allegretto con moto* [9], which dispenses with the piano, allowing the strings to dance, in alternating $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{9}{8}$, towards a cadenza, still unaccompanied, which seems to be something of a conversation between the members of the quartet. The piano returns emphatically in Var. IX, *Allegretto* [10], which swirls towards in an expansive $\frac{3}{4}$ waltz treatment of the theme – but just as the mood seems to be reaching towards a triumphant conclusion, the textures collapse and an elegiac passage, marked *lugubre*, reintroduces the rocking piano textures that opened the work. It's my belief that the dedication of the Quintet, 'To the memory

of M. Karłowicz, points to a programme underlying this closing section, and perhaps also explains the evocation of Góral folk-music in Var. VI. Mieczysław Karłowicz was only 32 when, in 1909, he was killed by an avalanche in the Tatra Mountains. The date of his death was 8 February, during the Shrovetide carnival that precedes Lent in many European countries, Poland included. Majerski adored Karłowicz's music – indeed, he is perhaps the Polish composer who took most from him – and I read this waltz and tragic dénouement as an allusion to Karłowicz's death under the avalanche while the rest of the world grotesquely danced away its cares.

Cello Sonata (1949)

The structure of Majerski's Cello Sonata – written in Lviv in 1949 – does not have much in common with that of a typical Classical sonata. First of all, it has only two movements, the first of which [12] is much shorter than the second [13]; indeed, marked *Largo ma in tempo rubato*, it seems to be more of a slow, lyrical introduction. It opens with bell sounds in the bass of the piano introducing a recitative-like theme in the cello, which slowly climbs out of the lower register, articulating a rhapsodical shape that can be summarised as ABCA¹. The following *Allegro con brio* is a conflation of sonata form and rondo, taking the form ABCA¹A²A³D–coda, alternating virtuoso passages for both cellist and pianists with islands of lyrical respite. Here, perhaps more than in the first movement, one can hear Majerski as part of a tradition that includes Rachmaninov and Shostakovich.

Four Piano Preludes (1935)

The cycle of *Four Piano Preludes* composed in 1935 comprises miniatures of varying character and tempi: No. 1 is marked *Misterioso. Lento non troppo* [14], No. 2 *Allegro appassionato* [15], No. 3 *Andante molto espressivo* [16] and No. 4 *Presto ma non troppo* [17]. These Preludes provide the clearest examples of Majerski's dodecaphonic technique. In all four he uses exactly the same series, which undergoes only slight modifications. They show that Majerski could assimilate the first principles of the avant-garde and yet also maintain a sense of melody and musical narrative.

La Musique Oubliée: Three Musical Pictures (1948–49)

These three miniatures were written in 1948–49 and were given the collective title *La Musique Oubliée*, with an explanatory subtitle in Polish: ‘Trzy obrazki muzyczne na fortepian’ (‘Three Musical Pictures for piano’). All three pieces – ‘Sorrow’ [18], ‘In the Dark’ [19] and ‘At the Crossroads’ [20] – are based on simple formal schemes: ‘Sorrow’ is AB+coda and the other two ABA¹. Majerski maintains a tranquil, melancholic mood across all three pieces, not least by avoiding fast tempi. Intriguingly, the harmony is gradually simplified as they unfold.

Three Pieces for Piano (1935, 1963)

In 1963, not long before his death, Majerski wrote a piano Étude [21], which he combined, for reasons that are unclear, with an ‘Unsentimental Waltz’ [22] and Prelude [24] written 28 years earlier, in 1935. He seems to have been happy with the oddities of the suite he thereby created: the central movement is much longer than the outer two, and the work ends with a prelude. Moreover, the three pieces show little affinity in terms of the musical material and are completely different in character. The Etude is only sixteen bars in length and maintains its tension in continuous movement. Although the Waltz (ABA¹–coda) keeps to a time-signature of $\frac{3}{4}$, the use of numerous accents on weak beats, syncopation and *staccato* articulation disrupt the rhythm and make this particular waltz unusually aggressive. The Prelude refracts the impressionism of middle-period Szymanowski through Schoenbergian atonality, demonstrating Majerski’s ability to reconcile these two stylistic worlds.

Michał Drewnowski was born in Warsaw in 1977 into a musical family (his father is the pianist and conductor Marek Drewnowski). He started to play the piano at the age of eight, in Italy, where he lived with his family. His musical education began in 1991, in the Karol Szymanowski Music School in Warsaw, where he studied with Bronisława Kawalla and Ewa Pobłocka. He continued his studies at the Academy of Music in Łódź, graduating with honours in 2001. He completed his post-graduate studies in Conservatoire of Music in Geneva under Dominique Merlet and Pascal Devoyon. In 2005 he obtained his master's degree. He also participated in numerous master-classes, not least those given by Eugen Indjic, Rudolf Kehrler, Miłosz Magin, Naum Shtarkmann and Fou T'song.



Michał has won prizes at a number of piano competitions: a special prize at the International Individual Musical Competition A. Tansman in Łódź (1996), first prize at the Thirteenth Chamber Music Competition G. Bacewicz, also in Łódź, and the 32nd Polish Piano Festival in Słupsk (both in 1998), second prize at the International Piano Competition M. Masin in Sangemini, Italy (2000), and second prize at the A.GI.MUS competition in Rome (2005).

He performs as a soloist and chamber musician in his native Poland and across Europe, and has appeared as a concerto soloist with orchestras in Poland and abroad. As well as countless festival recitals, he has played in a number of major European venues, among them the Bulgaria Hall in Sofia, Gianicolo in Rome, Steinway Kammeraal in Copenhagen, Wigmore Hall in London and the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona. In 2000–2 he performed as an actor-pianist in the New Theatre in Warsaw, in the title role in the Adam Hanuszkiewicz play *Chopin, his Life, his Love, his Music*.

His discography includes recordings for Gega New (music for two pianos and percussion with the Voland Quartet), Dux (*Doppio Espresso*: piano duets by American and Latin American composers – Bernstein, Piazzolla and Ziegler Bragato), Compact Disc (the Swiss contemporary composer Dominique Loup) and Pro Art (works for piano and orchestra by Tadeusz Trojanowski).

Tadeusz Majerski is not the only little-known Polish composer to interest Michał: others include Ludwik Grossmann (1835–1915), Stefan Kisielewski (1911–91) and Jadwiga Sarnecka (1883–1913). In 2009 he was a co-founder of the New Art Radio Philharmonic Orchestra in Polish Radio Łódź and has been its art director since 2009. He is currently on the staff of the Academy of Music in Łódź.

The composer and conductor **Emil Tabakov** was born in 1947 in Ruse, northern Bulgaria. He first took to the podium at the age of seventeen and won the Nikolai Malko Young Conductors Competition in Copenhagen in 1977. At the Bulgarian State Academy of Music he studied double-bass with Todor Toshev, conducting with Vladi Simeonov, and composition with the distinguished Bulgarian composer Marin Goleminov. While still at music school he founded a chamber orchestra made up of friends. He came to the attention of the principal conductor of the Ruse Philharmonic Orchestra, Ilija Temkov, who invited the eighteen-year-old to conduct his orchestra, among the works he chose to perform being his own *Two Improvisations for String Orchestra and Timpani*.



Tabakov conducted, in succession, the Ruse Symphony Orchestra (1975–79), the Sofia Soloists Chamber Orchestra (1980–89) and the Sofia Philharmonic, first in 1985 and being its general music director three years later. With this orchestra, and as guest conductor with several others, he has performed all over the world.

He began to compose at the age of fourteen but, like Mahler before him, he composes mostly during the summer months: during the concert season he is busy conducting. He numbers Shostakovich, Brahms, Skryabin and Richard Strauss among his foremost influences. An affinity for large-scale works has resulted in a number of compositions for a sizable body of musicians, such as the cantata *Tarnovgrad the Great – 1396* (1976) and a Requiem for soloists, chorus and orchestra (1992–93). Among other orchestra works there are nine symphonies (1981–2015) and no fewer than twelve concertos, for a wide range of solo instruments (1975–2015). A Toccata Classics cycle of the symphonies began in 2016 with the Symphony No. 8 and *Five Bulgarian Dances* (TOCC 0365).

Arkadiusz Dobrowolski was born in 1976 in Gdańsk and began to learning the cello at the age of seven. He took his undergraduate degree at the Academy of Music in Łódź, where his tutor was Andrzej Orkisz, graduating in 2001. A further period of study took him to the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hannover, where he attended the class of Gerrita Zitterbarta (2003–4).

He has won prizes in many national and international competitions, among them the National Chamber Music Auditions in Wrocław, the



International Musical Impressions in Bydgoszcz and the XX Century Music Competition in Warsaw, all three in 1995, winning a further prize in the last of these in 1999; in 1998 he won second prize in the International Chamber Music Competition of in Łódź. In 1994–95 he was awarded a grant by the National Fund for Children; another grant, from the Ministry of Culture, was awarded in 2002. In 2000, as a member of The Polish Trio, he took part in the Second Johannes Brahms International Chamber Music Competition in Gdańsk and won the special award for the best performance of a Brahms composition – it turned out to be only one of several prizes he won that year.

He has participated in many master-courses in Poland and further afield, in Austria, the Czech Republic, Norway, Switzerland and the USA. He has honed his skills under the direction of such tutors as Emanuel Ax, Ian Brown, Isaac Stern, David Finckel, Leon Fleisher, Roman Jabłoński, Joseph Kalichstein, Joel Krosnick, Laurence Power, Marianne Thorsen, Solve Sigerland and Øyvind Gimse, as well as musicians from the Emerson, Guarneri, Juilliard, Miró and Orpheus Quartets and the Abegg and Grieg Trios.

His concert career has taken him to Algeria, Austria, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Tunisia and the United States, not least to participate in a series of prestigious music festivals. As a soloist he played the Dvořák Concerto in the concert celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the National Baltic Philharmonic Orchestra in 1995; he has also played concertos with the Silesian Chamber Orchestra and the Tirol Symphony Orchestra in Innsbruck.

He has recorded for Polish Radio, Radio Gdańsk, Radio Łódź and the ORF in Austria, as well as for the Fox 8 TV station in the USA. In 2003, with The Polish Trio and the French clarinetist Jean-Marc Fessardem, he recorded Messaien's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* for Dux.

Piotr Kwaśny, violin, was born in Kraków. A series of scholarships allowed him to attend the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia (where he studied with Yumi Scott and Ida Kavafian) and the Musikhochschule in Lübeck (Shmuel Ashkenasi of the Vermeer Quartet); there he also completed his postgraduate studies with Wilfried Laatz. He received his master's from the Music Academy in Łódź from the violin class of Iwona Wojciechowska. In Philadelphia he studied chamber music with Peter Wiley and Ida Kavafian (of the Beaux Arts Trio), Michael Tree (Guarneri Quatret), Joseph Silverstein (Boston Symphony) and in Lübeck with



Walter Levin (LaSalle Quartet). He has taken part in master-classes led by Schlomo Mintz in Israel, Thomas Brandis in Germany and the chamber-music course of Shmuel Ashkenasi in The Netherlands.

He frequently works with the pianist Michał Drewnowski and the New Art Chamber Soloists Ensemble. He appeared in recitals, as a soloist and chamber musician, in Poland, United States and in Germany. Currently he is a member of the first violins of the Polish Baltic Philharmonic Orchestra in Gdańsk.

Paweł Polak, violin, was born in Katowice in 1982 and studied at the Academy of Music in Katowice, where he attended the classes of Janusz Skramlik, and in Leipzig under Roland Baldini. He has taken part in several master-classes with such musicians as Bartosz Bryła, Marieke Kesser, Christoph Wyneken and Semion Yaroshevich. He has played with the Aukso Tychy Chamber Orchestra, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Radom Chamber Orchestra, Silesian Chamber Orchestra and Silesian Philharmonic. Since 2006 he has worked in the Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic in Białystok. He has performed chamber music as a member of the Libero String Quartet, with the pianists Kevin Kenner and Michał Drewnowski and with the Lontano Piano Trio. With an interest also in early music, he has performed as leader of the vocal-instrumental ensemble Diletto, with which he has recorded two CDs.



The violist **Michał Czlonka** was born in 1978 in Łódź and graduated from the Academy of Music there in 2004, having attended the viola classes of Zbigniew Frieman. In 2002 he was awarded second prize at the Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz International Chamber Music Competition in Lodz. He has participated in many solo and chamber-music workshops and master-classes and now performs in Poland and abroad as a soloist and chamber-musician. He has worked with many Polish symphony orchestras, among them the Łódź Philharmonic and that of the Roma Musical Theatre in Warsaw. He fulfils his passion for chamber music in partnerships with the pianists Kevin Kenner and Michał Drewnowski, among others. He is currently employed in the Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic European Art Centre in Białystok.





Recorded in the RSNO Centre, Glasgow, on 15 December 2015 (*Concerto-Poem*) and the K. Penderecki Hall, Radom, on 23, 24 and 30 November 2013

Recording engineer (*Concerto-Poem*): Philip Hobbs

Editor (*Concerto-Poem*): Jakub Garbacz

Engineer and editor (other tracks): Vadim Radishevskiy

Producers: Ivo Varbanov (*Concerto-Poem*) and Michał Drewnowski



Financial support from the following is gratefully acknowledged: Jerzy Bauer, Aldona Budrewicz-Jacobson, Małgorzata Członka, Marysia and Michał Członka, Anna Drewnowska, Daniel Eibin, Elżbieta Galińska, Alina and Marek Graczyk, Jacek Korchowiec, Paweł Mazurkiewicz, Andrzej Nikodemowicz, Sylwia and Grzegorz Nyc, Regina Pawliszyn-Jaremin, Robert Pluta, Joanna, Maciej and Maja Ptak, Ewa, Marek and Marcin Rogalski, Maria Dębiec Rychter, Urszula Stanisławska, Maciej Szal, Maciej Szczukowski, Lidia and Tadeusz Trojanowski and Ivo Varbanov.

Michał Drewnowski

Booklet text: Michał Drewnowski

Cover design: David M. Baker (david@notneverknow.com)

Typesetting and lay-out: KerryPress, St Albans

Executive producer: Martin Anderson

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