

12TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL



PRESENCE(S)

OLGA HUMEŃCZUK
NFM DIRECTOR

PIERRE JODLOWSKI
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

WROCŁAW, NFM
16 — 24.05.25



FESTIVAL CALENDAR

16.05.2025

Friday, 8 pm

NFM, Red Hall

**> BLACK PAGE
ORCHESTRA**

16.05.2025

Friday, 9 pm

NFM, Red Hall

**> BLACK PAGE
ORCHESTRA &
FRANÇOIS SARHAN**

17.05.2025

Saturday, 5 pm

NFM, Black Hall

**> HOMO LUDENS –
RECITAL BY GOŠKA
ISPHORDING**

17.05.2025

Saturday, 6 pm

NFM, Red Hall

**> RECITAL BY
MAŁGORZATA
WALENTYNOWICZ**

17.05.2025

Saturday, 7 pm, 7.45 pm, 8.45 pm

NFM, ORLEN Main Hall

**> ORCHESTRA &
ELECTRONICS
– PART 1, 2, 3**

17.05.2025

Saturday, 10 pm

NFM, Red Hall

**> MOUNTAIN &
MAIDEN**

18.05.2025

Sunday, 6 pm

NFM, Red Hall

> ASTRALIS

Accompanying event

18.05.2025

Sunday, 8 pm

NFM, Black Hall

**> CONCERT OF POLISH
COMPOSERS' UNION**

21.05.2025

Wednesday, 9 pm

NFM, ORLEN Main Hall

**> L'ÊTRE CONTRE
LE VENT**

22.05.2025

Thursday, 6 pm

NFM, foyer -3

**> YOUNG
COMPOSERS**

22.05.2025

Thursday, 7.30 pm

23.05.2025

Friday, 5 pm

NFM, Black Hall

> GREETING THE SUN

22.05.2025

Thursday, 9 pm

NFM, Red Hall

> DES ÉCLATS

23.05.2025

Friday, 6.30 pm

NFM, Black Hall

**> AKUSMA FORUM –
FRANCE, CANADA**

23.05.2025

Friday, 9 pm

NFM, Black Hall

> KTV [HYPNOS]

24.05.2025

Saturday, 11 am, 12 pm

NFM, Black Hall

**> MINI AKUSMA
FORUM**

24.05.2025

Saturday, 5 pm

NFM, Black Hall

**> AKUSMA FORUM –
GREECE**

24.05.2025

Saturday, 6.30 pm

NFM, Chamber Hall

> LA FORME DE L'ÂME

24.05.2025

Saturday, 8.30 pm

NFM, Red Hall

> ENSEMBLE VORTEX

ACCOMPANYING EVENTS

14.05–15.06.2025, NFM

**> 21ST MEDIA ART BIENNALE
WRO 2025 QUALIA**

16–24.05.2025, Krupa Art Foundation

> RANDOM CHECK 7

16.05.2025, Friday, 11 pm

House Tęczowa, ul. Tęczowa 79/81

**> SOMETHING OUT OF
APOCALYPSE**

17.05.2025, Saturday

NFM

> NIGHT OF THE MUSEUM

23.05.2025, Friday, 11 pm

Klubokawiarnia Recepcja, ul. Ruska 46

> LIVE ACT

ESSAYS

Marta Konieczna
Face to Face or Interface?

Jakub Kopaniecki
Playing (with) Music

Joanna Kwapięń
The Body as...

Szymon Atys
At Present

* premiere



Olga Humeńczuk
Director
National Forum of Music

Dear Music Lovers,

I am more than happy to invite you to the 12th Musica Electronica Nova, which in 2025 is held under the motto *Presence(s)*.

This is a keyword open to many interpretations, which leads us to reflect on what it means to be here and now – in a world dominated by technology, in times of distracted attention and digital beings. *Presence(s)* is also a question about relationships: between the body and the machine, the past and the future, the listener and the sound space.

We invite you to listen together, to be attentive. May this year's Musica Electronica Nova become a space for meetings – real and virtual, intense and subtle – but always truly present.

I would like to thank Pierre Jodlowski, artistic director of MEN, and the entire team responsible for organising this edition of the festival.

See you at MEN 2025!



Pierre Jodlowski

Artistic Director
Musica Electronica Nova

For several years now, a certain type of artistic projects have been qualified as “Post-Internet culture”, referring to integration of the global network into creative practices of all kinds. Acceleration, a sign of our times, today brings a new issue: the inclusion of AI processes, which can (as it is said...) replace part of human actions or thoughts. We cannot really acknowledge AI as being such a deep change in our cultures as, most of the time, AI is just an extension of big data management without any kind of autonomy or self-conscience. But, as a matter of fact, a new era of relationships between humankind and machines is indeed beginning...

This is in this context that the programme of this new edition of MEN festival has been conceived. And probably with a “malicious” aim which would be to emphasise the human presence as a “wonderful need” in such a “technological context”.

Most of the pieces in the programme have a relationship with the new media: real-time electronics, sensors,

video tracking... And each time it seems that our look, even fascinated by the extensions that those tools provide, cannot avoid focusing on the deep presence of human gestures. For this edition we have prepared a wide range of projects, from solo (Małgorzata Walentynowicz or Gośka Isphording) to the orchestra and choir of the NFM. In collaboration with the Wro Art Center, the exhibition of the 21st WRO 2025 Qualia Media Art Biennale will be shown in the NFM gallery space, and a concert-performative installation will take place as part of this partnership.

We will present our special cycle Akusma Forum, dedicated to electroacoustic music and new discoveries of international scene: this year with programmes from Greece, Poland, France, and Canada. As a sign of the importance of human presence, we will invite two projects with dance (Greece and Switzerland) including video projection and interactive lights. Two major European ensembles will be our guests: Black Page Orchestra from Vienna and Vortex from Geneva. Even though they are coming

with very different programmes, among them two new premieres commissioned by the festival, those ensembles share an expertise in integrating the most advanced technologies with an awareness of their fragile and ephemeral existence. Once more, the human factor is probably what builds up the energy on the stage: human presences, augmented or not, playing in those complex networks of sound and visuals, trying to find a poetic path, meaningful and deep, as an opposition to the constant flow of data which overwhelms us.

Maybe one project of this edition would summarise or symbolise the general theme: "Des Éclats" by French performer Hervé Birolini; in this project the artist built an ensemble of 16 Tesla coils (visible electric discharge generators), by means of which an external electric field enters in dialogue with neural networks. During the performance, we see electric arcs, shaping a constant energetic flow around the performer, his body, his gestures... one can ask himself or herself if this tension would exist without the human presence?



Mieczysław Kominek
Polish Composers' Union

Twenty years later...

The twelfth edition of the Musica Electronica Nova festival is beginning, which arose from the need to bear witness to the latest technology drawn into the service of music. In 2005, the event was conceived and implemented by Stanisław Krupowicz – at that time one of the pioneers of using computers in music, who, having received scholarships, studied at Stanford University in California. The festival has always been patronaged by the Polish Composers' Union, and initially the organisation of the event was the responsibility of the Wrocław Branch of the Polish Composers' Union in collaboration with the Academy of Music in Wrocław, Wrocław City Office, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Foundation of Friends of the "Warsaw Autumn", ZAiKS and private spon-

sors. The artistic director of the first edition of the festival was Stanisław Krupowicz, while the second edition was directed by Michał Talma-Sutt, as each directorship of the festival was supposed to cover only one edition. This has changed and since 2019, under the guarantee of the Polish Composers' Union, Pierre Jodkowski has served as artistic director.

So it has been twenty years, a long time has passed, but Musica Electronica Nova is still tracking new traces of technology in music. Currently, we are focusing on artificial intelligence. In the foreword, Pierre Jodkowski writes: "The sign of our times – the acceleration that accompanies everyday life – brings up a new issue: including artificial intelligence processes in the area of interest of artists, which (allegedly) would replace some of human actions or

thoughts." And he involves AI in the programme of the 20th-anniversary MEN, but with the word "allegedly" – which is heartening. This issue also appears during the traditional concert of the Wrocław Branch of the Polish Composers' Union: "This year's premieres will oscillate around reflection on the potential of artificial intelligence," declare the organisers of the concert, but they will be accompanied by "reflection on human existence". This again gives rise to hope that we will not give up without a fight...

I wish the MEN festival another good twenty years, and the best sonic experiences, but also intellectual reflections to you. AI is on the threshold!

FACE TO FACE OR INTERFACE?

Marta Konieczna

For violin. For violin and oboe. For clarinet, viola, cello and piano. For soprano or voice. For accordion and electronics?

But there's no such instrument as electronics.

It's familiar, appearing in programmes more and more frequently. In the concert hall, the instruments – violins, oboes, accordions – always look pretty much the same; you can recognise and name them. But where are the electronics on stage? So sometimes it's someone sitting in front of a computer. Sometimes they plug a guitar into it. They click something on the laptop, but I can't really see what they're clicking – maybe they're playing solitaire? Sometimes they stand alone on stage, waving their hands. Sometimes they're wrapped in cables, or circled by various, usually metal boxes. They're a type of black box – all of them are a type of black box – whose recordings, or perhaps rather mysteries and the sense of how they work, I can only start to uncover.

Are the computer and cables also instruments?

The strangest thing is that sometimes the performer isn't even on stage at all. Yet the concert goes on, the music plays, and at the end, the composer comes out and stretches their applauding hands toward the sound engineer. Oh! There have been a few times when I saw the people from behind the soundboard come out for applause at the end.

At concerts of the “...and electronics” sort, I often hear one thing and see another. Perhaps this heralds a peak era of music, where it has truly become a completely abstract medium. With music freed from the shackles of visual centrism, I find myself distrusting my eyes, but I follow my hearing.

Maybe electronics are a type of technique? Aesthetic? Style? Or are they simply the new musical reality? Sometimes this reality is virtual – true. It makes use of new media – also true. In fact, both analogue and digital media coexist, which is perhaps why people are more inclined to talk about electroacoustics than about electronics.

Art in the 21st century, music included, is new, multi-, inter-, trans-, and hypermedial. It's a “renaissance of the sensual,” as I read in the book *Muzyka a nowe media* by Andrzej Mądro¹. That's also where I find inspiration for the title of this text. As human beings, we rely on sensations and stimuli, and the body – or perhaps even understanding through the body – has become a central focus for artists. Moreover, bodies are enhanced, extended, and expanded in their abilities – particularly in performance. As a result, we find ourselves admiring transhumanist musicians and performer-cyborgs.

Maybe electronics (but electroacoustics as well!) are so hard to classify because they developed somewhat alongside other inventions and discoveries in physics and acoustics. Electrophones – as the first instruments associated with electronics were called – were only added to the **Hornbostel-Sachs classification of instruments** in 1940, even though some of them had already existed for several decades by then. Initially, they were meant to surpass human performance capabilities: to be louder, faster, and to have more voices. Consider the electric guitar

1 A. Mądro, *Muzyka a nowe media. Polska twórczość elektroakustyczna przełomu XX i XXI wieku* [Music and New Media. Polish Electroacoustic Work at the Turn of the XXI Century], Kraków 2017.

—originally just an amplified guitar — which now functions as a separate instrument. Therefore, as Mađro notes, those new means initially only served to amplify the old ones, while preserving their language and conventions. Indeed, the current that drives a mechanism in an instrument or amplifies its volume is distinct from the current that generates vibrations producing sound. When categorising electrophones, one should distinguish between electromechanical, electroacoustic, and electronic instruments. All are powered by electricity, but only the latter transforms electronic circuitry into an instrument (or rather, a series of instruments: sine wave generators, oscillators, filters...). And although they remained plugged in, over time the source of musical energy — that is to say, the energy of vibrations — shifted from analogue to digital. At that point, musical notation truly turned into binary code, but there was no need to click “save” — everything still went directly to the speaker, which simply interpreted how it should vibrate to produce sound exactly as intended.

That’s more or less how the cables and integrated circuits work in every black box. And now, what else do they — and the cryptic “for electronics” — hide?

Sometimes, we recognise the box as a **synthesizer**. Whether we call it an **analogue** or **digital** one depends on how it produces sound, according to the principles described above. Through a series of knobs and buttons, sound can be sculpted — synthesised — from electrical currents and, in later times, from a sequence of zeros and ones. The parameters at our disposal include volume, duration, and timbre — the latter of which has by far the most knobs dedicated to it. Pitch can also be determined through a knob, although synthesizers often have a keyboard that directly influences the sound, similar to a piano. The keyboard can also sometimes serve as a tool for triggering crafted sounds that may not nec-

essarily be associated with any scale. Each key can be assigned a synthesised sound or another, as in the case of the sampler, soon to be described. The thing is, such a **keyboard** is referred to as **MIDI**. Now, in **modular synthesizers**, the knobs are accompanied by labelled jacks and a tangle of cables instead of keys. Patching them together in an analogous way influences the shape of the electronic audio signal.

The setup may include other types of boxes. Illuminated, flashing colourful buttons often indicate a **sampler**. This device can record, play back, and modify all sorts of sounds. It’s a type of keyboard (with pads instead of keys), from which a dog bark can be heard instead of a G-sharp. It works wonders when connected to a synthesizer. The **sequencer’s** lights often pulse in time with the sequence of sounds recorded on it and played back. Further modification of the sounds is also possible (which likely contributed to the evolution of this device into a drum machine). A **looper** has a similar purpose, but it operates in a more straightforward way: it simply loops the recorded material. You’ll know it’s on stage when a musician presses a button with their foot after playing a theme, and then that segment plays back in a loop. The foot is also often used to press many other pedal-like boxes called **effects**. The results of their actions vary widely, but the method is essentially the same. The sound data enters the box via a cable, where it is processed — for example, high frequencies can get filtered out, and the modified sound is sent to the speaker.

An entire synthesizer and accompanying set of boxes can be entirely virtual, often as part of a **DAW** (Digital Audio Workstation), which is a computer program for creating electronic music (but electroacoustic music as well!). These programs can contain what used to require an entire studio, and more. They can be used to compose, produce, and perform a piece live (more on this in

a moment). While they vary in graphic design, they most often resemble blocks arranged on a timeline.

However, the laptop screen, hidden from the audience's view, may be displaying a slightly different program, namely **Max**. It operates as a programming language and is also known to visual artists. Here, composition occurs in real time based on a grid of commands and variables arranged in so-called patches (to put it simply, though it's not a simple matter). Changes and transitions between patches can also be programmed or triggered, for example, by pressing a key. Music can also be created with the help of a laptop through **live coding**, which involves programming in real time using other languages still.

If the boxes are small enough to fit in the hands or be strapped to the wrists, and the performer is moving their limbs on stage, their movements strangely relating to the changes in sound – this most likely means we are dealing with **motion controllers**. The sensor registers the position, tilt, and height, then transmits that data to a designated program (often Max), which interprets the data based on the sounds specified by the composer. The easiest way to imagine this is as three axes in our three-dimensional world, where the position of the controller, like a fader on a **mixer**, determines the individual qualities of the sound.

The mixer ultimately remains the most important box of all. Accompanying it are the interface and the sound card, providing a sort of common language through which all the other devices can pass and interact with each other.

In all these cases, we can see the performer on stage doing something; and we hear, or at least seem to hear, that they are performing live. This is why the term “**live electronics**” is often used, referring to a practice – one that may even utilise technologies not

yet invented – that is rooted in quite a traditional performance approach. Sounds can be generated or processed in real-time – both those that have already been generated and those coming from other instruments. Monika Szpyrka will process the bass clarinet, electric guitar, and string trio in her piece *Ghost-like*; Engin Dağlık will bring forth sound from a thunder sheet and fishing lines, while Matthias Krüger will connect the world's oldest synthesizer, the organ, to a computer.

It's not uncommon for the performer to be the composer, and this arrangement isn't necessarily as ideal as it may seem. For Agata Zemla, this dual role takes away the opportunity to fully listen to her composition. As she sits down with her laptop alongside the musicians, the stress of how the piece will be received is amplified by the added responsibility of performance. Add to that the artist's claim that computers freeze, programs crash, and bugs cause problems far more often than instrument strings break. It is, of course, possible to compose a piece in such a way that the performers are responsible for changes and processing in the electronic layer, for example, by using a pedal, button, or even the space bar to click through effects and modifications. It will be interesting to see which solutions Zemla applies in her *Coup de grâce*.

However, sometimes the instrumentation specifies “**for tape**”. This means that during the concert, the music will be played back – either autonomously or alongside what is being performed on stage. However, it is rare for someone to literally come on stage with a reel-to-reel tape recorder, unless they are **Paweł Malinowski**. This composer described one of his works as “for analogue tape”, which leans more towards musical mixed media.

Music for tape, or phantom tape – which has generally been replaced

by backing tracks – may evoke associations with experimental electronic studios, and the dawn of electroacoustics, whether in the realm of *musique concrète* or *Elektronische Musik*. What is particularly significant is that this approach completely redefines the dynamics between the roles of the performer and the composer. Musical notes on paper are not yet audible – here, I deliberately omit the previews available in notation software (such as *Finale* or *Sibelius*), as they are simplified and just don't sound good; it is simply not their purpose. By transferring their ideas directly onto tape/track/audio files, the composer creates sound itself, rather than composing with sounds. This allows for full control over all its parameters – not just pitch and duration, but also accentuation, reverb, depth, and timbre understood in countless ways. It's the realisation of serialist dreams.

Today, when the tape is mostly a thing of the past but musicians remain on stage, **audio playback** comes into play. No, not the kind that's unwelcome at the Sopot International Song Festival. Rather, the soundtrack with pre-composed material usually interacts in some way with what is performed live – whether contextually, narratively, or even harmonically. To ensure that everything aligns smoothly rhythmically, a click track is used, which acts as a metronome played for the musicians, typically through headphones. This makes it easier to navigate the course of the piece and the track, which is often difficult to notate in sheet music form. Marta Śniady also opted for this practice in the premiere of *BODY X ULTRA – UNDER THE SKIN*.

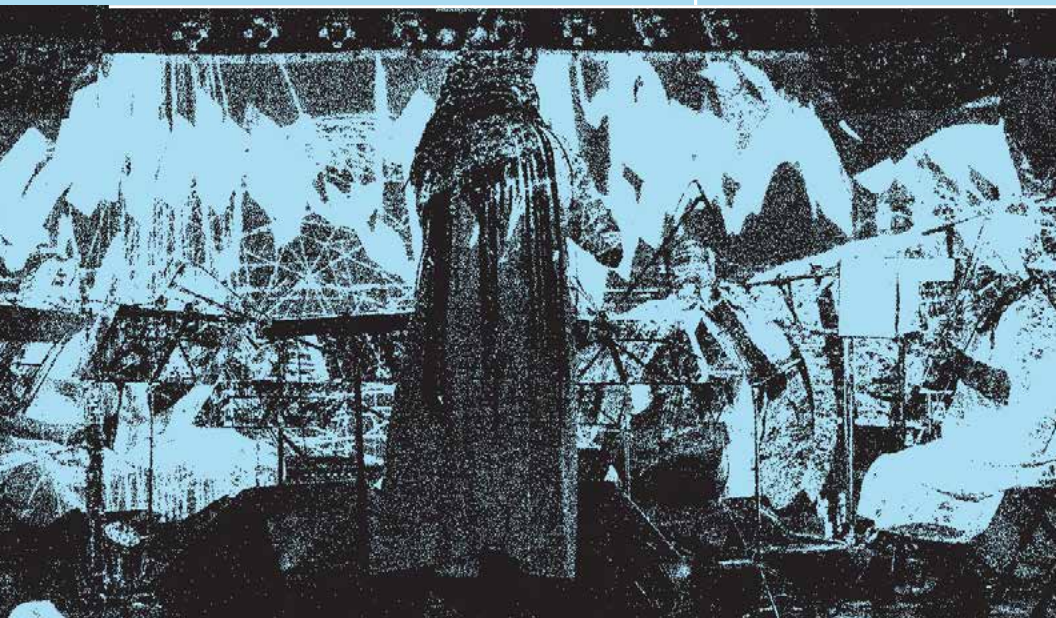
In essence, or perhaps as a consequence, tape music has become a means for composers to at least somewhat reclaim the element of performance. A wall of sound is suddenly upon us, or it creeps up slowly, lurking from corner to corner, seemingly in

motion. This kind of music is often referred to as “**acousmatic**”, a type of music that is composed from the outset for listening through loudspeakers. It is frequently presented in a **spatial** or space-imitating manner (the spatiality of sound is, of course, also achievable in live electronic music). Word has it that not everyone appreciates feeling as if they were at a listening session rather than a concert. It cannot be denied that the performer in this case – if we take “performer” to mean the one responsible for how the performed piece sounds – are the acoustics of the hall and the sound system. Or the sound engineer.

One such sound engineer, Bohdan Mazurek, was the first performer of Bogusław Schaeffer's now-canonical work *Symphony: Electronic Music* from 1966. The score of this work, intended for electronic material and (to a lesser extent) recordings of violin and piano, remains largely indeterminate – or rather, determinate in a non-traditional way. Instead of markings like *forte* or *staccato*, “a constellation of a great many quiet and subtle impulses” is indicated, which Mazurek was to perform using various sound generators, filters, and equalizers. It was already fifty-nine years ago, that he was entrusted with the performance of the piece, which came with a significant degree of personal sensitivity. Others followed in his footsteps, creating from the *Symphony* a piece that cannot be reproduced with the push of a **PLAY** button, but rather a composition that comes to life with each performance and interpretation.

One last thing – the issue of presence(s), or absence(s). What if the performer of live electronics stays out of view, or what if the tape music player remains on stage? Actually, doesn't the composer, sitting at the mixing desk and controlling the course of the piece, also blur the dynamics between creator and performer?

16.05

Friday, 8 pm
NFM, Red HallBLACK PAGE ORCHESTRA
CONCERT

PERFORMERS

Black Page Orchestra:**Kaoko Amano** – soprano**Matei Ioachimescu** – flute**Yukiko Krenn** – saxophone**Samuel Toro Pérez** – electric guitar**Elnaz Behkam** – piano**Kaja Farszky** – percussion**Matthias Kranebitter** – electronics

PROGRAMME

Marta Śniady *Body X Ultra* – *Under the Skin* for flute, baritone saxophone, electric guitar, MIDI keyboard, drumset, objects, video and 4-channel-electronics (2025)* [12']**Bernhard Lang** *Count 2 4*, *Another Door for Jenny* and *Burning Sister* from *DW 16.4 'Songbook I.4'* for voice, saxophone, electric guitar, piano and percussion (2023) [13']**Matthias Kranebitter** *Combative Music and its Algorithmic Demystification* for flute, soprano/tenor saxophone, electric guitar, piano, percussion and 4-channel-electronics (2021) [11']

Jagoda Olczyk: Amid today's informational overload, there are still concerts where we listen to music in dimmed lighting, sinking into cushions. You often decide to engage two of the senses by combining music with video, as you will in your new piece, which will be premiered at the festival by Black Page Orchestra. What inspired this decision?

Marta Śniady: We live in a state of constant overwhelm in today's world – our attention has grown used to scrolling, and we're easily distracted. This is why I see the visual element as an effective way to capture and maintain the audience's attention. Contemporary music is far from an easy art form – it requires specific preparation that most people lack. The language of film is more familiar to us than the abstract language of music. The use of images makes it easier for me to build a relationship with reality more intuitively, facilitating contact with both viewer and listener.

Body X Ultra – Under the Skin for flute, baritone saxophone, electric guitar, MIDI keyboard, drumset, objects, video and 4-channel-electronics by Marta Śniady was co-financed from the funds of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage coming from the Culture Promotion Fund, as part of the "Composing Commissions" programme realised by the National Institute of Music and Dance.



Ministerstwo Kultury
i Dziedzictwa Narodowego

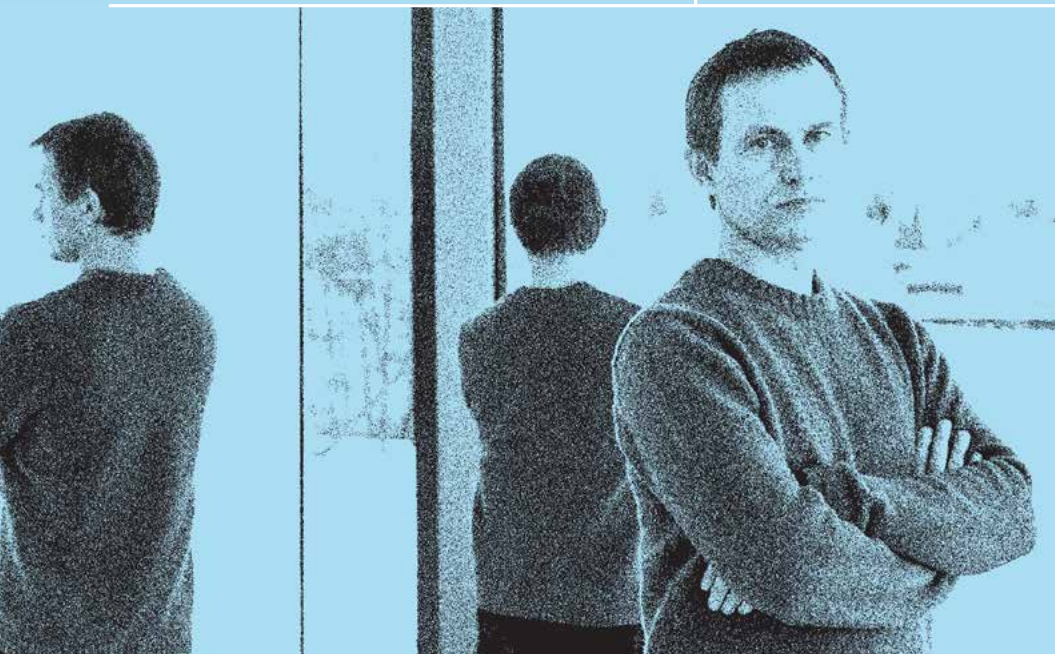
J.O.: You appear in some of the clips for your pieces, embodying the presence of a composer who is usually "behind the scenes". What meaning does the body hold in art – both your own and that of the artists who perform your works on stage?

M.Ś.: The body has inspired me for years. At first, I viewed it as a manifesto against the "objectification" of women and the false ideals of beauty promoted by the media. Now my focus is on the inside. I am fascinated by intestines, teeth, tongues, and the boundaries between what is natural and what is artificial, beautiful and weird, sometimes even disgusting. In my works, I draw on gestures, choreography, and unconventional objects as instruments. This requires me to compose not only sound but also movement, to shape the situation on stage, and to notice the performers' bodies, and care for them.

By revealing my physical presence, I enter an intimate relationship with the work and the audience. I go beyond the music – I open up and expose myself to the audience, confronting my insecurities, which has almost a therapeutic effect.

J.O.: What does it mean to be present?

M.Ś.: To resonate with the reality that surrounds us.

16.05Friday, 9 pm
NFM, Red Hall**BLACK PAGE ORCHESTRA &
FRANÇOIS SARHAN
CONCERT****PERFORMERS****François Sarhan** – voice, electronics, video**Black Page Orchestra:****Kaoko Amano** – soprano**Matei Ioachimescu** – flute**Yukiko Krenn** – saxophone**Samuel Toro Pérez** – electric guitar**Elnaz Behkam** – synthesiser, piano**Kaja Farszky** – percussion**PROGRAMME****François Sarhan** *Log Book* 2024 for voices and
instruments (2024)* [40']

I'm happy because I've put the heating on only two times this winter.

And I'm also very happy because I've noticed that I can use the water in hof for free, so I don't need to pay for it.

It reminded me that last summer, when it was very hot, there was this woman in the street who asked me, (it was so hot you remember?) for a bucket of water to water the tree in front of my window.

And I said no, why should I pay for this water?

But actually, I could give to her, I didn't have to pay for it!

Prague, 31st of march 2023.

From my bench I contemplate the façades. And I envy the people who live on the highest floor: they have potentially view on the most beautiful city in the world. Some of these windows are half covered with satellite dishes.

The little girl sits opposite her father. She in the stroller, he on the bench next to me.

He takes out a book he's apparently just bought and starts leafing through it. The little girl is busy peeling peas, which she carefully eats one by one.

She pauses, looks at her father's book, makes a face and plunges back into her peas.

Sensitive to this argument, the father closes the book and peels some peas too.

To be interested in nothing, in the useless, in the mediocre, in the scums of thought, in the parasites of sight, in what is immediately forgotten, to show it, to rule it. It's putting spikes on reality, it's breaking once again the thick glass that separates me from the world. It is to give myself the illusion of being in the world, of being part of it, as certainly as this curtain, this door, this shadow on the grass, these miserable and courageous vegetal attempts between the paving stones.

To be ambitious, to look at the beautiful, the great, the valuable, the art, the already-admired, the self-designated art, the important, the literary, the musical, is to sink into the muddy impasse of the agreed upon, the fake, the world filtered by aesthetics, by good taste, by fashion, by a scale of value already dead.

— Okay but what are you doing now? Isn't it art, isn't it fake ?

— Oh yes but then we'll go together to the trash bin.

Fragments of the project *Log Book* by François Sarhan, trans. Sz. Atys

17.05Saturday, 5 pm
NFM, Black Hall**HOMO LUDENS – RECITAL
BY GOŚKA ISPHORDING
CONCERT****PERFORMERS****Gośka Isphording** – harpsichord, electronics**Hugo Morales Murguía** – electronics**PROGRAMME****Ewa Trębacz** *Abrasion* for harpsichord and surround sound (2021)* [9']**Nina Fukuoka** *howto jouissance* for harpsichord, video and electronics (2019) [12']**Anahita Abbasi** *Intertwined Distances* for harpsichord and electronics (2018) [15']**Hugo Morales Murguía** *Alpha 2.0* – game-specific aim training routines for harpsichord and NES [Nintendo Entertainment System] (2025)* [12']

Jagoda Olczyk: Assuming that wiring a centuries-old harpsichord – enhancing and modifying its sound through technology – will not only take away its salon character but also its “spirituality”; how is it that the contemporary harpsichord is so accommodating of the emotions and visions of both composer and performer?

Gośka Isphording: I think composers who are not afraid of a challenge and are open to exploring new sounds are eager to reinterpret the harpsichord, using it as a means of discovery. “Spirituality” is not lost due to technology; on the contrary, it creates room for new spaces of expression, broadening its artistic potential. Perhaps that is why the contemporary harpsichord is so receptive to emotions and visions – rather than remaining closed off in the past, it resonates with the spirit of the times, of which it is a part.

Concert cofinanced from the Creativity Support Fund of Society of Authors ZAiKS

za·ks
inspiring imagination

J.O.: Your harpsichord recital for this year's festival, which features retro game consoles, is titled *Homo ludens*, meaning “Man the player” in literal translation. When do you most feel that you are playing, and having fun with music; and what non-professional activities bring you the most joy?

G.I.: It's my belief that life should be at least a bit carefree and light. However, play can also be something deeper – a game of contexts, meanings, and references.

What fascinates me most in music is the possibility of fantasizing, playing with the sound code, the details. The pieces that allow me to do so are the most valuable to me – where every nuance becomes a field for play. Music is fun when I can surprise myself, the instrument, the listeners. When the harpsichord goes beyond the conventions and enters a dialogue with unconventional sounds. It's in these moments that the performance ceases to be merely an interpretation – it becomes an adventure.

J.O.: What does it mean to be present?

G.I.: Presence is the conscious decision to embrace the moment and to have resilience in what you do and create.

Jakub Kopaniecki

PLAYING (WITH) MUSIC

Music is often regarded as both sound expression and emotional communication, embodying both harmony and controlled chaos. Play, on the other hand, is viewed as a form of competition, based on established rules, strategic thinking, and elements of chance. Nonetheless, for centuries, these two worlds have intertwined, with music functioning as a game of sorts – both in the technical sense and as a metaphor. Composers “play” with the listeners’ expectations, with conventions and rules, frequently breaking or deliberately subverting them. Performers rival each other in virtuosity and interpretative skill, while listeners engage in musical “riddles”, searching for hidden meanings, motifs, and connections. Rhythm and meter form a kind of puzzle, while the variations and transformations of musical themes may resemble strategic gameplay. All of this is further reinforced in the present day – technology allows music to reach new interactive spaces where the roles of creator and audience can interchange.

Thus, music can be understood not only as the art of sound but also as a form of play, cognitive entertainment, a challenge for the senses and the mind. It functions as a game – both intricate in its compositional techniques and accessible in its aim to provide straightforward enjoyment. This is evidenced by both an analytical exploration of a musical work's structure and the experience of its performance.

Let's rewind a few hundred years to the era of Renaissance counterpoint, and to the techniques of imitation, and the various ways to lead the theme through various voices without losing its essence. While composers adhered strictly to the established rules, they still had plenty of space to creatively play with sounds and structures. One such Renaissance master was Josquin des Prez. He is known for the so-called *cavato* technique, which entailed “converting” a chosen phrase of the text into a *cantus firmus* (the melodic foundation of the composition) by matching solmization syllables to vowels of the text. For instance, the theme in *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae* was derived from the “melodised” syllables of the name and title of the composer's patron – Ercole d'Este I, Duke of Ferrara. Another work by Josquin is the motet *Illibata Dei Virgo Nutrix*, in which he employed an acrostic – the first letters of successive lines of text spell out his name. While this might seem like a not-so-subtle way of boosting his ego, it was a way to highlight authorship in a manner characteristic of the Renaissance's intellectual play in music and literature. In turn, Johannes Ockeghem utilized a *prolation canon* in *Missa Prolationum*, skillfully playing with numerical-musical symbolism while meticulously maintaining the proportions of voices, rhythms, and intervals. And this is merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the Renaissance's pursuit of pleasure in intertwining music with clever brain-teasers.

Since we are already on the subject of imitation, it is only natural to mention the intricate form of the fugue, which is built on strict imitation, and of which none other than Johann Sebastian Bach was a master. The very name (from Latin *fuga* – “flight”) has something in common with childhood games like tag, as it refers to the melodic theme appearing in successive voices, sometimes transformed – in inversion or retrograde. The theme constantly eludes the listener, and just when we think we've “caught” it, it reappears elsewhere, darting from the top of the staff to the very bottom. This is play that requires considerable mental gymnastics on the part of the composer, who seeks increasingly nuanced ways to present and transform the theme. It also presents a challenge for performers, as Bach's fugues often demand excellent technique and significant physical endurance. For the listener, it is a special treat, one that requires them to navigate through the thicket of sounds and musical twists and turns. And Bach, like few others, knows how to lead the listener down a winding path with his dense, sophisticated modulations and persistent evasion of the tonic – the long-awaited return to a state of equilibrium. It is no coincidence that “Herr, unser Herrscher” – the opening words of the *St John Passion* BWV 245 – to which we traverse through a lengthy eighteen-measure tonal labyrinth – evoke such a delightful thrill of awe.

Each composer would play with music in ways that reflected their era. The puzzles of one period might give way to overt humour in another, stripped of complex counterpoint or mathematical secrets. For example, classical composers often worked in the courts of aristocrats, creating light repertoires to accompany ceremonies, feasts, and festivities. Joseph Haydn, one of the three Viennese classics, was particularly fond of giving his listeners

(and even his patrons!) a playful jab. During the performance of the final movement of his *Symphony No. 45 in F-sharp minor*, known as the “Farewell” Symphony, the musicians gradually finished their playing according to the score, and as each musician concluded their part, they extinguished their candles and quietly exited the hall one by one. In this subtle yet poignant manner, they signalled that it was time to allow them to return to their homes and families, from whom they had been separated for many months of service at the prince’s court. Haydn is also renowned for his *Symphony No. 94 in G major*, or the “Surprise”, in which the soft, delicate theme of the second movement (Andante) abruptly transitions into a loud chord that is sure to startle even least attentive listeners.

The image of Mozart as a jokester, popularised by Miloš Forman’s film *Amadeus*, is largely rooted in reality. The composer’s sense of humour is evident in many of his compositions, including the aptly titled *Ein musikalischer Spaß* (*Musical Joke*), KV 522. This satirical divertimento for two horns and string quartet is filled with dissonances, errors, and clumsy orchestration, while also showcasing the pioneering use of polytonality that creates the impression of out-of-tune instruments. Although Mozart never admitted it explicitly, biographers and scholars generally agree that the composer intended to parody incompetent composers.

And what about modern and contemporary music? After all, at its core lies a departure from classical-romantic conventions, with the major-minor system pushed to its breaking point by neo-romantic symphonies and Wagner’s musical dramas. By the dawn of the 20th century, Italian futurists manifested their rebellion through a celebration of noise, beginning with Luigi Russolo’s trailblazing manifesto, *The Art of Noises*. The liberation of music from the confines of tonality, regu-

lar meter and rhythm, along with the development of electrophones, the use and processing of sounds recorded on magnetic tape, and the incorporation of non-musical sounds into music, and many other previously unimaginable phenomena – all of this allowed for a full exploration of the malleable material of sound. This free approach to music, which enables the creation of monumental orchestral works like Karlheinz Stockhausen’s *Gruppen* as well as previously unrecognised industrial soundscapes, continues to inspire artists to this day. It has led contemporary music to frequently mingle with art, performance, visual arts, and video games. The latter not only serves as a source for recordings of gameplay sounds, characteristic audio effects, and musical themes but also acts as an inspiration and starting point for musical compositions. For example, Daniele Ghisi’s piece *Any Road* is accompanied by a projection by Boris Labbé, in which the 1972 game Pong, a tennis simulator, undergoes increasing distortions and transformations, with the music illustrating the visual and acoustic paradigm of this game – seemingly primitive, yet inscrutable in its simplicity. Similarly, Jagoda Szmytka draws from video games of the 1970s and 1980s (including Pong) in her piece *empty music* – a work for instrumental ensemble and video projection, which we could hear at last year’s Musica Polonica Nova festival. The nostalgic sound of eight-bit game consoles is evoked by Hugo Morales Murguía, who combines the harpsichord with retro Nintendo consoles and an interactive video projection – achieving a challenging synthesis of art, technology, and entertainment. And speaking of the harpsichord, in *howto jouissance* Nina Fukuoka uses fragments of the game Unreal in her projection, opening a part of the composition titled *UNREAL HARPSICHORD*, pun intended. The entire piece reflects on the concept of homo ludens as play that

transcends the boundaries of pleasure, a delight that flows from both creative enthusiasm as well as deep, if not painful, reflection on life. Meanwhile, Simon Steen-Andersen's *TRIO* for symphony orchestra, big band, choir, and video projection, featured at last year's Warsaw Autumn, is an overt play with the audience. It is intimidating in its precision and unpredictability; a juggling act of film, two worlds of instrumental music, and a vocal component that starkly contrasts them.

When considering musical play in contemporary music, we mostly think of play with sound qualities, timbre, texture, or space—both the measurable space, counted in bars or minutes, and the immeasurable spaces of human cultures and emotions. This is evident in the festival compositions of Anahita Abbasi and Ewa Trębacz. They push the boundaries of audience perception, teasing their senses, and expanding awareness; toying with human nature, putting it to an exciting test. This music undoubtedly places “homo” alongside “ludens” at the forefront, as it seeks to develop human competencies and discover, through intellectual and sometimes even physical effort, an aesthetic pleasure yet unknown.

Examples of innovative play in the creative process are hardly just a thing of the past. What's more, we needn't focus only on so-called “high art” music. Ha, we don't even have to compose music through and through, from scratch! DJing is a fantastic example of sonic play, during which new musical qualities arise. I'm thinking first and foremost of disco and the roots of hip-hop; the first MCs (Masters of Ceremony) and later rappers. The gramophone or turntable—specifically, two turntables that the DJ uses in turn to maintain an uninterrupted flow—have become fully-fledged musical instruments, with their pre-created and recorded content serving as the musical material. To this day, a DJ skilfully selects and blends

tracks, guiding the crowd on a journey. However, the listener is not passive in these sonic manoeuvres—their reactions influence how the experience plays out. There's a constant stream of energy reflected back and forth between the dancing crowd and their “conductor”, like the ball at a tennis match. The difference is that we don't want either side to score, because then the journey is at its end, and reality hits.

There's a paved road from DJing to sampling, the creative collage of fragments from earlier compositions. While hip-hop continues to rely on the skilful selection of snippets from other recorded tracks, especially for the instrumental layer, and rapping to that backdrop—I want to draw attention to artists like the French duo Daft Punk, who took sampling to new heights with their path-breaking album *Discovery*. The musicians combined heavily processed snippets from various tracks, particularly rock and disco from the 1970s, layering their original lyrics over this constructed instrumental backdrop with a fresh melody. Such musical puzzles delight the audience, inviting them to guess what is and isn't a sample, and then attempt to recognise the quoted tracks. Along the way, as I have personally experienced, a wealth of fascinating music awaits discovery.

The marriage of music and play is something else, more than mere entertainment. It's the tension between structure and spontaneity, rules and freedom. And it's clear that composers played a kind of musical game throughout the ages—from strict counterpoint to playful surprises and sonic deconstruction. New, contemporary technologies, interactivity, and the influence of video games, drive music towards even more dynamic forms. Ultimately, it's these elements—unpredictability, discovery, intellectual and emotional pursuit—that keep music unchangingly fascinating and endlessly open to interpretation.

17.05Saturday, 6 pm
NFM, Red Hall**RECITAL BY MAŁGORZATA
WALENTYNOWICZ
CONCERT****PERFORMER****Małgorzata Walentynowicz** – piano, electronicsConcert cofinanced from
the Creativity Support Fund
of Society of Authors ZAiKS**za'ks**
inspiring imagination**PROGRAMME****Monika Dalach Sayers** *CARBON IS THE NEW BLACK*
– MIDI controller, audio playback and video version
(2024, orig. 2020) [12']**Mathias Monrad Møller** *Apricot, Cherry and Kiwi* from
Fruits for piano and orchestra MIDI files (2018,
rev. 2024) [9']**Piotr Peszat** *Plant Concerto with Pianosong* – piano
solo, sampler and audio playback version (2024,
orig. 2020) [12']

Jagoda Olczyk: You will perform four pieces for piano and electronics during this year's festival, which touch upon the issue of consumerism. What's your approach to the distinction between natural sounds (acoustic instruments) and artificial ones (electronics)? Do you prioritise one over the other in terms of value?

Małgorzata Walentynowicz: I selected the compositions so that they share a common theme, and I treat the performance as a coherent whole. All of the pieces use electronics – this is the premise of the festival but it also aligns with my artistic preferences. In the works of Sarah Nemtsov and Piotr Peszat, I will simultaneously play on the piano keyboard and the MIDI keyboard – which require the same level of engagement. I do not differentiate how I approach these two instruments – it is difficult to separate the integral parts of a single piece. The electronics in *Apricot*, *Cherry* and *Kiwi* from the cycle *Fruits* function a bit differently – here, alongside the piano, there are three electronic tracks that I had to prepare independently, according to the framework provided by the composer, Mathias Monrad Møller. I would like to thank Cezary Duchnowski who helped create them – it was a challenging task, and possibly the reason that no one had attempted to interpret this cycle before. It took six years from its composition to the premiere of *Fruits*.

J.O.: Your shopping list – handwritten or on your phone? Or do you play it by ear? During shopping – headphones or the commercial audiosphere?

M.W.: I don't use shopping lists – I dislike them and I'm not good at buying in bulk. I also don't usually use headphones, I see them more as a tool for work.

Audiosphere is such a beautiful word – it evokes something soft and snug. Its use in the context of a shopping centre is interesting. I don't visit them very often – we have the internet, after all – but if I am there, I don't cut myself off from the noise.

J.O.: What does it mean to be present?

M.W.: To contemplate.

17.05

Saturday
NFM, ORLEN Main HallORCHESTRA & ELECTRONICS – PART 1, 2, 3
CONCERT

PART 1 (7 PM):

PERFORMERS

Vincent Kozlovsky – conductor
NFM Wrocław Philharmonic
Yann Brécy (IRCAM) – electronics (in
 Franck Bedrossian's work)
Luca Bagnoli (IRCAM) – sound
 diffusion (in Franck Bedrossian's work)

PROGRAMME

Franck Bedrossian *Twist* for orchestra
 and electronics (2016) [12']
Øyvind Torvund *A Walk into the Future*
 for orchestra and sample playback
 (2019) [10']

PART 2 (7.45 PM)

PERFORMERS

Vincent Kozlovsky – conductor
Daniele Ghisi – electronics
NFM Wrocław Philharmonic

PROGRAMME

Daniele Ghisi (music), **Boris Labbé**
 (video) *Any Road* for orchestra,
 electronics and video (2015) [10']
Nicole Lizée *Arcadiac* orchestra,
 playback and video with 1970s/1980s
 arcade consoles (2004–2012) [12']

Any Road by Daniele Ghisi and Boris Labbé was
 commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture
 and Communication. Original production: Biennale
 Musiques en scène 2016 GRAME (Centre National de
 Création Musicale) Max Bruckert, computer music
 design (Grame).

Jagoda Olczyk: You seem very open to the variety of new possibilities that technology provides to the composer. The creative use of software to process speech from *Alice In Wonderland* audiobook to music in your piece *Any Road* serves as a great example of this. Where do you see some untapped potential in terms of technology providing composers with new ways of expressing themselves?

Daniele Ghisi: I'm not necessarily optimistic about technology, but I recognise that the history of music is deeply intertwined with its technological advancements. There's no point in rejecting new tools outright—but it is always valuable to question them.

My *idée fixe* is a complete and expressive representation for timbre, something that remains far from reach. Within the current wave of machine learning models, I would love to see a flexible sound and score editor—much like how Photoshop's AI can add or remove objects from an image. So far,

most AI tools focus on generating entire rock or pop songs. Despite the fast growth, technology still doesn't allow full granular control that electroacoustic composers require.

J.O.: Regarding the titular hitting the road—while walking/travelling, do you like to get lost, extend your route or do you rather stick to a plan and a map?

D.G.: I love the experience of getting lost! Right now, I'm teaching in Turin, and I constantly complain that it's just too Cartesian. I find cities much more exciting when I can stumble upon an unfamiliar corner, wondering how it connects to the places I've already seen. It's a particular kind of 'topological' thrill—not necessarily one that everyone shares, but one that I deeply enjoy.

J.O.: What's "being present" for you?

D.G.: Being present is when a visual cue, an auditory cue, and even other sensory cues all coalesce in the creation of an instant.

PART 3 (8.45 PM)

PERFORMERS

Vincent Kozlovsky—conductor

Tomasz Hajda—trombone

NFM Wrocław Philharmonic

Yann Brécy (IRCAM)—electronics (in Selim Jeon's work)

Luca Bagnoli (IRCAM)—sound diffusion (in Selim Jeon's work)

Carolina Santiago Martínez—upright piano

Engin Dağlık—electronics, sound diffusion (in his own work)

PROGRAMME

Selim Jeon *Chant radioactif* for trombone with electronics and orchestra (2023–2024) [10']

Engin Dağlık *a light stung the darkness* for upright piano, fishing lines, thunder sheet and electronics (2023) [14']

17.05Saturday, 10 pm
NFM, Red Hall**MOUNTAIN & MAIDEN**
SCREENING WITH LIVE MUSIC**PERFORMER**

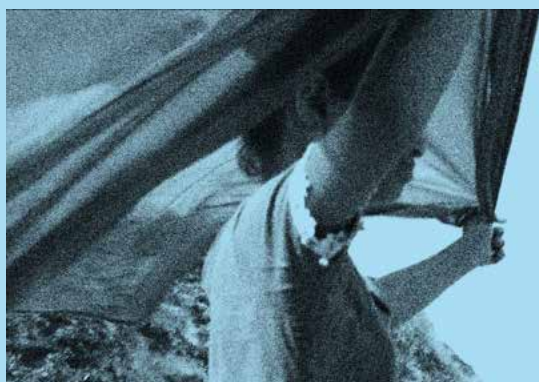
Małgorzata Walentynowicz – keyboard, amplified piano and voice

PROGRAMME

Mountain & Maiden (2019) – directors: Shmuel Hoffman and Anton von Heiseler, music: Sarah Nemstov [24']

Concert cofinanced from
the Creativity Support Fund
of Society of Authors ZAiKS

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18.05

Sunday, 6 pm
NFM, Red Hall

ASTRALIS CONCERT

ACCOMPANYING EVENT



PERFORMERS

Lionel Sow – conductor

Christian-Pierre La Marca – cello

Iñaki Cuenca – timpani

Maciej Michaluk – electronics

NFM Choir

PROGRAMME

Wolfgang Rihm *Astralis* for small choir, cello and timpani (2001) [30']

Kaija Saariaho *Tag des Jahrs* for mixed choir and electronics (2001) [13']

Carl Vine *Inner World* for cello and electronics (1994) [13']

THE ABSENT

Kaija Saariaho (1952–2023) was a Finnish composer associated with the movement known as spectralism, which emerged in Paris in the 1970s. Although she studied in Freiburg im Breisgau, she did not like the extremely abstract aesthetics of post-serialism. Meeting the spectralists Grisey and Murail in Darmstadt in 1980 was crucial to Saariaho's development. She soon became a Parisian composer associated with IRCAM. The Finnish composer eagerly reached for various 20th-century compositional techniques in her work, as well as older musical genres (operas deserve a special mention). The techniques she used included slow transformations of complex chords and pioneering compositional uses of the computer. She was fascinated by sound colours, sensory impressions and nature. This is clearly perceptible in the 2001 piece *Tag des Jahrs*, composed to words by Friedrich Hölderlin. The four poems, whose titles are the seasons, were written when the poet, considered a madman, was living in a famous tower in Tübingen. Saariaho's piece uses an incredible, "speaking" electronic layer, in individual fragments situated in different relationships to the choir. In this context, the poems seem to be meditations on the nature of time, experienced in a place of isolation.

Wolfgang Rihm (1952–2024) was a German composer associated primarily with breaking the taboo of expression in post-war music. He attended the same class as Saariaho, run by Klaus Huber in Freiburg (although he added musicology to composition), and was also a student of Stockhausen. During the Darmstadt summer courses, he managed to make a big impression as early as 1974 with the composition *Morphonie*, in which he used a type of expression that was unimaginable in the world of abstract rules. Later, he "settled down" in a clearer style. Rihm is known for his wide portfolio of over five hundred compositions (he shares an interest in musical theatre with Saariaho). In his work, he used various styles and compositional techniques, which is why he was labelled with terms such as Neo-Romanticism or Expressionism, and in particular he was seen as a representative of the "new simplicity". Yet it seems justified to call Rihm a syntheticist. *Astralis* comes from 2001 and belongs to the *Über die Linie* cycle of compositions. The text of the piece was taken from the novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* by Novalis – one of the pioneers of Romanticism. It is a fragment of a poetic vision in which the world and dream and other extremes interpenetrate each other. Rihm has made the text into a meditation in which there is no escaping the precise, cosmic sequence of words. The timpani and cello add a ceremonial dimension to the composition, and the choir floats over the words slowly, like clouds in the sky.

Szymon Atys

18.05

Sunday, 8 pm
NFM, Black Hall**CONCERT OF POLISH COMPOSERS' UNION**
CONCERT OF THE WROCŁAW BRANCH OF POLISH
COMPOSERS' UNION**PERFORMERS****Modern Trio Ostrava:****Ewa Barciok** – cello**Kamil Barciok** – trumpet**Marcela Kysová Halmová** – accordion**Adrian Foltyn** – electronic piano**Agata Zemla, Katarzyna Dziewiątkowska, Adam****Porębski, Magdalena Gorwa, Paweł Hendrich** –
electronicsIn partnership with
Polish Composers' Union Wrocław Branch80
LATIn partnership with
PWM Edition, the publisher
of Paweł Hendrich's works

PROGRAMME

Adam Porębski *Muzyka jednorazowa* for trumpet, cello, accordion and electronics (2025)* [7']

Katarzyna Dziwiątkowska *01/03* for trumpet, cello, accordion and electronics (2025)* [10']

Magdalena Gorwa (...)„!;?!/!!!-(?)”... for trumpet, cello, accordion and electronics (2025)* [7']

Paweł Hendrich *Hills and Valleys of the Uncanny* for trumpet, cello, accordion and electronics (2025)* [10']

Adrian Foltyn *Multi-headed p-attention* for trumpet, cello, electronic piano and computer (2025)* [12']

Agata Zemla *Coup de grâce* for trumpet, cello, accordion and electronics (2025)* [10']

Jagoda Olczyk: One of the festival highlights is the Polish Composers' Union concert. As Chairman of the Wrocław branch, how do you think belonging to the association impacts the preparations for a joint performance?

Mateusz Ryczek: I think that the issue of community is key here. Of course, each and every composer has absolute freedom in their craft, but we are united by a common goal – in this case, preparing a piece for a specific ensemble for a specific concert. The motivation that performing at a festival provides is significant, but the thought of presenting ourselves as a community seems important as well. The small gestures of team spirit and mutual support are also appreciated – such as sharing equipment, which helps with logistics and technicalities.

J.O.: What would you like the audience to take away from this edition of the festival?

M.R.: A sense that they participated in something unique, valuable, and interesting. I hope it fosters an inner need to seek out good music and fascinating sounds, including the music of Wrocław composers.

J.O.: What does it mean to be present?

M.R.: Being open and attentive to those around you, or it might even mean empathy and offering yourself to others.

21.05

Wednesday, 9 pm
NFM, ORLEN Main Hall**L'ÊTRE CONTRE LE VENT**
CONCERT**PERFORMERS**

Matthias Krüger – electronic organ control and live acoustic processing

Tobias Tobit Hagedorn – physical organ control

Mira Boczniowicz – live video

PROGRAMME

Matthias Krüger *L'Être contre le vent* for computer-controlled organ and real-time acoustic processing (2024)

with live video:

Mira Boczniowicz ...*SOMETHING...* (2025)*

A fragment of *La jeune Parque* by Paul Valéry read by Constance de Bock.

Partner
21st Media Art Biennale
WRO 2025 Qualia



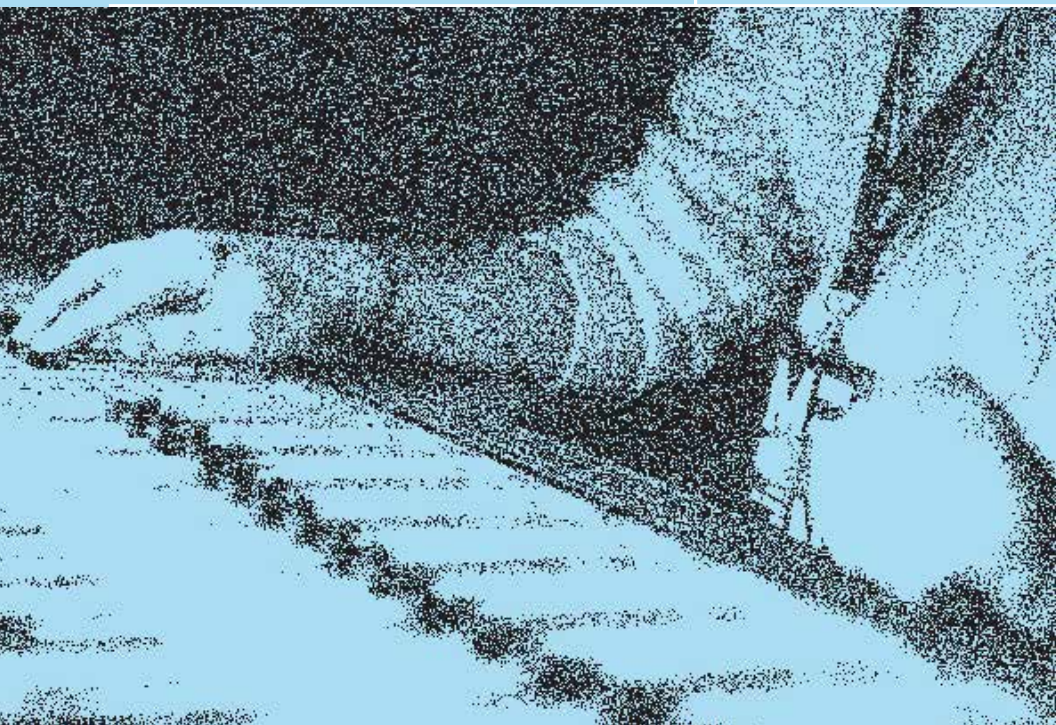
... So then—vain farewells if I live—did I only
Dream?... If I come in windswept garments
To this edge, unafraid, inhaling the high foam,
My eyes drinking the immense salt laughter
My being into the wind, in the keenest air
Receiving the sea's challenge on my face;
If the intense soul snuffs and furious swells
The sheer on the shattered wave, and if the headland
Breaker thunders, immolating a snowy monster
Come from the open sea to vomit the deeps
Over this rock, whence leaps to my very thought
A dazzling burst of icy sparks, and over
All my skin, stung awake by the harsh shock,
Then, even against my will, I must, oh Sun,
Worship this heart where you seek to know yourself,
Strong, sweet renewal of birth's own ecstasy,

Fire to which a virgin of blood uplifts herself
Beneath the gold coinage of a grateful breast !

Fragment of the poem *The Young Fate* [*La jeune Parque*]
by Paul Valéry translated by David Paul,
Source: P. Valéry, *Poems*, trans. D. Paul, Princeton 1971.

22.05 Thursday, 6 pm
NFM, foyer -3

**YOUNG COMPOSERS
CONCERT**



PERFORMERS

Szymon Bywalec – conductor

**Undergraduates and graduates of Polish academies
of music:**

Zofia Dutkiewicz – flute

Wiktoria Jancz – clarinet

Stefania Grabiec – violin

Dorota Malmor – viola

Hanna Wereda – cello

**Szymon Bywalec, Cezary Duchnowski, Marta Śniady,
Jarosław Mamczarski** – artistic supervisors

In partnership with
Karol Lipiński Academy of
Music in Wrocław, Karol
Szymanowski Academy of
Music in Katowice



AKADEMIA MUZYCZNA
im. Karola Lipińskiego we Wrocławiu



Akademia Muzyczna
im. Karola Szymanowskiego
w Katowicach

PROGRAMME

Alina Dzieciot** *Paragnomen* for flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello and electronics (2025)* [10']

Julia Łabowska** *Miraż* for flute, clarinet, violin, viola and cello (2025)* [9']

Dawid Grenda** *długa podróż dnia ku nocy* for flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello and electronics (2025)* [10']

Paweł Kruczek*** *404 Not Found* for flute, clarinet, violin, viola and cello (2025)* [10']

Maja Polak*** *Tkwący* for flute, clarinet, tape and video (2025)* [6']

Milan Rabij*** *Paths* for solo flute and tape (2025)* [10']

** students of the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in Wrocław

*** students of the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice

22.05 Thursday, 7.30 pm
NFM, Black Hall

23.05 Friday, 5 pm
NFM, Black Hall

GREETING THE SUN

IMMERSIVE CONTEMPORARY ARTS PLACI



PROGRAMME

Przemysław Scheller *Greeting the Sun* –
multi-channel sound emission (2024) [40']

Jagoda Olczyk: this year's edition of the festival, we'll hear your multi-channel soundscape titled *Greeting the Sun*. How does the practice of listening to and recording the sounds of nature affect you both as a person and a composer?

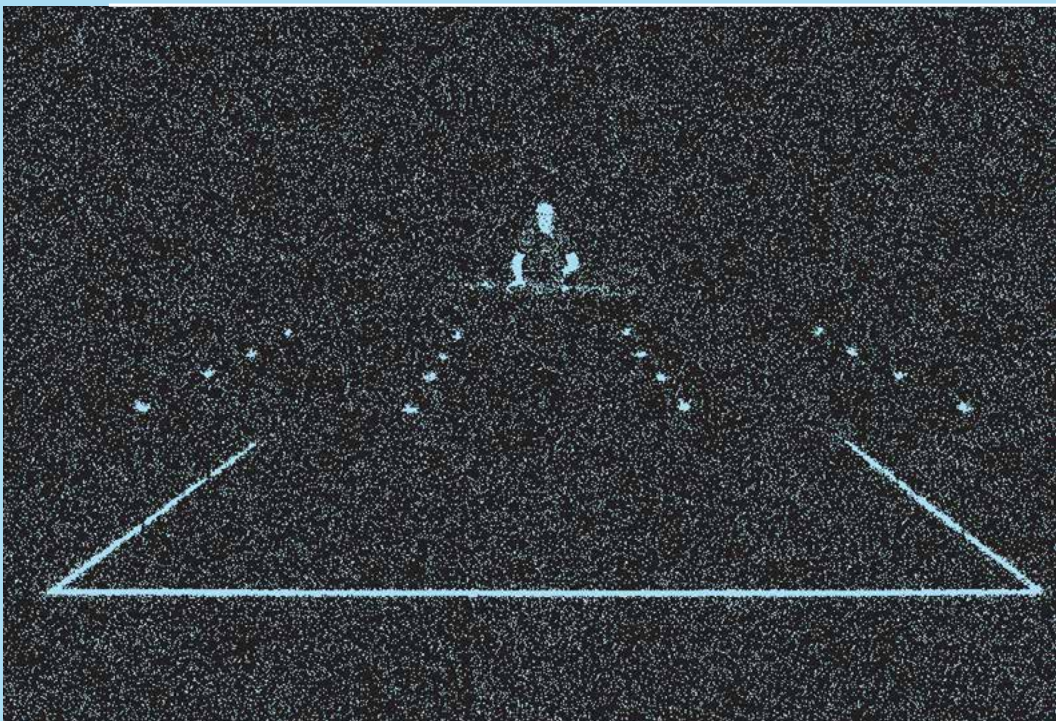
Przemysław Scheller: Conscious, intentional focus on sounds is, for me, the best way to practice mindfulness. It helps me anchor myself in the present and let go of analysis, thanks to which natural curiosity and calm can surface. Another practice involves becoming aware of intrusive noises that can disrupt the ability to deal with difficult tasks. And how does this affect my work? As a composer, I listen. I would be someone else if I didn't listen.

J.O.: What would your ideal morning before sunrise look like?

P.S.: My own bed, at home with my loving family, everyone in good health, and food on the table... and knowing that this is enough. In the context of *Greeting the Sun*, it is the unfettered choir of birds and the solo aria from my favourite – the golden oriole. And the feeling of oneness when I synchronise with the breath of nature – to the rhythm of gusts of winds and the rustling of leaves alternating with bursts of chirps, trills, and tweets.

J.O.: What does it mean to be present?

P.S.: To turn off the voice-over to hear the soundtrack.

22.05Thursday, 9 pm
NFM, Red Hall**DES ÉCLATS**
PERFORMANCE

Hervé Birolini *Des Éclats* – performance for electronics, lights and electric arcs (2025)* [45']

During the performance electric discharges will be used. Entry is not recommended for people with epilepsy, and sensitive to electromagnetic phenomena, forbidden to people with pacemakers.

in present-day Croatia as a Serbian, he emigrated to USA in 1884. Before he received messages from Mars and took part in the victory in the “war of currents” over Thomas Edison and his direct current

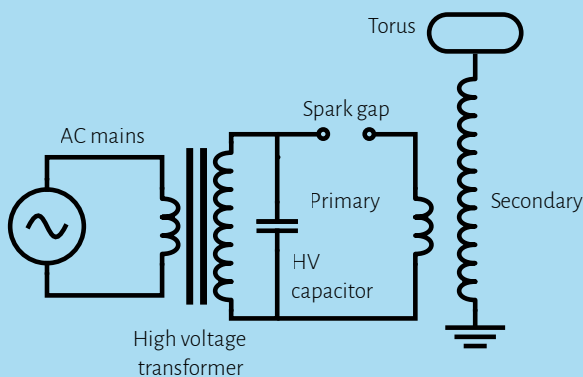
had substantial experience with electric arcs (that is, with the current “passing through” air), which he used in the lighting technology. Trying to obtain a high-voltage alternative current with a frequency corresponding to radio waves

The coil consists of two circuits, between which a resonance occurs. Within the first a voltage on the order of kilovolts is obtained by means of a transformer. It is enough to makes the current within the circuit oscillate. The effect is an oscillation within the second, particular circuit, in which a “capacitor”, consisting of an effectively looking solid shape (the more regular, the bigger the voltage generated) and Earth. Between these two surfaces

on the order of megavolts. Look at these 19th-century figures depicting webs of lightning! However the “visible” current is very low, so human exposure to this current is often inaccurately

thunderbolts, as continuous as they appear, consist of current fluctuation with a frequency of milliseconds. Today, the device is mainly used for making impression, both visually and audially. After all, the inaudible oscillations accompanying the discharge can be the carrier for an audible “rectangular”

Szymon Atys



Joanna Kwapień

THE BODY AS...

The human body is not a prerequisite for producing sounds. We need only listen to the sounds of the world around us, as nature buzzes, roars, murmurs, and flutters. Sound waves do not carry in outer space, but we still ponder what planets sound like, and NASA provides recordings of sonified galaxies¹. A world devoid of humans would not be silent. However, the sounds that would exist without our presence could not be called music. There would be no one to try to understand or develop it, or impose limits onto it. Rather, it would remain as it is, untamed and pure. But the music we do know is deeply intertwined with the body. Playing an instrument, singing, dancing – each of these originates in corporeality. The very structure of music is grounded in the principles of physics – sound is a mechanical wave that is produced by vibrating objects, propagating through a medium as a series of pressure variations. While we hear sound with our ears, we also perceive it through our entire bodies – in the form of vibrations. Therefore, both the performance of music and its reception rely on physical sensations.

¹ <https://science.nasa.gov/mission/hubble/multimedia/sonifications/>.

Yet it's possible to envision a return to the roots of music even with the presence of humans and their role in shaping this art form. If we were to adopt a completely purist approach to producing music, we might question the validity of performing it on a musical instrument. Instruments create a barrier between sound and the body, even when they serve as extensions of its physical form. They are a product of human hands that then require those hands to set them into vibration, whether they are traditional wind instruments or mechanical playing devices (such as Paweł Romańczuk's *Humanoids*). The only truly pure form of music – closest to nature – remains song.

However, given that we, as humanity, have unanimously agreed on the inseparable role of instruments in the musical arts, why does the prospect of music produced by a computer – that is, without direct contact with the body – frighten us so much? The acceptability of musical instruments is aided by the fact that learning to play requires years of practice – meaning a long-term interaction between the body and its “extension”; being the result of a conscious decision. In contrast, current technology allows for the complete abandonment of this learning process in favour of simply entering the appropriate command into a generator, such as Suno AI. One can create a catchy song without even leaving the couch, signing it with their name. Perhaps the aforementioned fear is also a matter of the uncanny valley effect, the discomfort we feel when a robot, drawing, or computer animation too closely (yet imperfectly) resembles a human. The standardization of music, especially popular genres, has advanced so far that it is often difficult to distinguish between works created by humans and those produced by AI. Naturally, this raises many questions about the replaceability of the human mind,

and challenges the myth of the genius endowed with innate talent – that genius is now Artificial Intelligence, a collective consciousness that surpasses every human, regardless of the predispositions they may have.

The presence of humans in the world of music is a change that did not happen overnight. Mechanical instruments, self-playing once set in motion, have been known for centuries – such as musical clocks, player pianos, or even the water-powered organs invented in the 9th century by the Banū Mūsā brothers. For hundreds of years, the Holy Grail of sound control was the idea of “freezing” sounds, making it possible to listen to them again after some time. By the end of the 19th century, the necessity of live performers began to wane. This was the era of recordings – it was enough to perform a piece once to then be able to listen to that same version millions of times. We now listen to voices that have long since ceased to physically exist, and even death is no longer an obstacle to artistic experience. The phonograph was advertised as a tool capable of preserving the voices of the deceased². We can imagine an infinite number of ways to play W.A. Mozart when relying solely on the written word – but the performances of artists from the phonograph era are forever locked in the minds of listeners in their recorded forms. Today, it is not only about capturing sound in time but also about refining and beautifying it, bringing it to a version that would not be possible in a live performance. Artists are well aware that it is the recordings that will define their technical capabilities – and they meticulously care for the quality of production.

2 Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, Duke University Press, Durham-London 2003; cited in: R. Sirko, *Historia i prehistoria technicznego zapośredniczenia dźwięku. Perspektywa medologiczna i antropologiczna* [History and Prehistory of Technical Mediation of Sound: A Mediological and Anthropological Perspective], “*Glissando*” 23, 2014, pp. 8–13.

... audience

In the era of technocapitalism, we have furthered the process of separating performers and audiences. It is now possible to go through life without ever attending a concert, while still having access to any song from anywhere on Earth. Sound systems – or, with certain limitations, high-quality headphones – can imitate vibrations. During the pandemic, online broadcasting gained popularity, allowing participation in events from the comfort of home. Being present at a live performance without amplification – yet another intermediary between humans and their natural listening abilities – can feel unsatisfactory. Even when we do attend concerts, we often find ourselves somewhat separated from the people on stage: enclosed in a dimly lit space, focused on the artists while simultaneously acutely aware of our bodily reactions (as anyone who has experienced a coughing fit in such a situation can attest). For some reason, we have come to believe that in a concert hall, the audience should primarily listen with their ears, pretending not to have a physical form at that moment – all to avoid disrupting the carefully crafted experience.

That said, the bodies of the audience are increasingly being cared for and enveloped during performances. Some contemporary music concerts can be experienced while lying on poufs or mattresses, as seen in various iterations of the **Canti Spazializzati** and MEN's signature Akusma Forum series. This enhances the perception of the haptic and spatial qualities of compositions created for multi-channel sound systems. In the summer, many musical events take place outdoors, with sunloungers instead of chairs. Another type of organised event are sound walks, which integrate movements in nature with auditory experiences. The **W brzask [At Dawn]** concert series offers outdoor concerts

at dawn, combining the process of waking up with musical experiences. During such events, there's a visible sense of relaxation and spontaneous acting upon it – attendees lie down, dance, walk, engage in interactions, or even practice yoga.

... reaction

Contemporary artists have recognised how problematic the separation from one's own body is, and have decided to confront the audience with this issue. Examples include Ying-Hseuh Chen's *And* and \emptyset , in which the artist explores the possibilities of human breath. I intentionally pair the two compositions – in *And*, breath is an instrument, while in \emptyset , string instruments imitate the sounds people make during different stages of sleep (such as wheezing, snoring, and shallow or deep breathing). Both works compel listeners to synchronise their breathing with these sounds, and listening to \emptyset can even lead them to fall asleep. Thus, among the strategies that incorporate the body into composition are also those that induce physiological reactions.

An extreme example of engaging the body in musical experience is found in the danger music genre, especially in the work of Dick Higgins. His compositions involve real bodily risk for the performers, such as in *Danger Music Number Seventeen*, where the score consists of the word "Scream!" repeated six times – the performers scream until they temporarily lose their voices. In *Danger Music Number Two*, performers are instructed to shave their heads on stage. Some of the scores left behind by Higgins could potentially lead to irreversible harm or even to death; fortunately, they remain concepts and have never been performed. The genre also includes pieces that impact the audience's bodies, such as those using noise levels that can cause hearing loss.

During this year's Musica Electronica Nova, Filippos Sakagian will present the experience of collective hypnosis in his piece *KTVC [hypnos]*. The audio-visual performance aims to push the boundaries of musical experience and lull listeners into a ritualistic trance, allowing them to immerse themselves in the liminal space of their subconscious. Participants will experience a shared hallucination that blurs the lines between what is conscious and what is hidden in the mind.

... instrument

The body as an artistic medium is now understood not only as an autonomous instrument but also as a conduit between composer and technology. Agata Zubel experiments with extended vocal techniques in her work, emphasizing the effort involved not only in the creative process but also in the performance of her compositions. In her piece *Outside the Realm of Time* for hologram-soloist and orchestra, two dimensions come together: the technical possibilities of using a recording of her own voice and performance, alongside the silent absence of the actual vocalist. In this work, she assumes a triple role – as composer, performer, and listener, who, while seated in the audience, gazes at her holographic projection. Cezary Duchnowski, Paweł Hendrich, and Sławomir Kupczak have been using technology that coexists with the body for years as part of the Phonos ek Mechanes group. Their work is part of a unique genre of improvised electronic music, which they call human-electronics, as computers are controlled by acoustic instruments. Similar approaches can be found in projects by Aleksandra Słyż – in 2021, the artist participated in the creation of the multimedia performance *Primal Rituals*, during which dancers used motion sensors to generate sounds and visualise them in real-time. Motion

controllers are also increasingly being made available to the audience, allowing them to compose their own pieces.

... theme

The body is not only an instrument but also a message. In *The Love Letters*, Daniel Zea explores the theme of virtual romantic relationships. The bodies of the performers are contrasted with their projections from online webcams. The performers' facial expressions merge with computer glitches, calling into question the realism of online connections. This work features more than just acting and the symbolic dimension of the body – the performers' computers run algorithms that track their faces.

In *La Forme de l'âme*, the body serves as both a means of expression and the central theme of the composition. The forms taken by performers are given meaning through sound, elevated to a symbolic level. Together with light and the body, sound creates the titular form, or shape of the soul. Collectively these elements constitute a basis for reflections on the limitations of human existence. The reflections of Jean-Luc Nancy, who also “appears” in the piece through voice recordings, act as a keynote. Nancy passed away in 2021, five years after the premiere of the performance. Thus, current performances of this work offer an opportunity to reflect on the use of the human voice after death, giving the spoken words new context. As the philosopher noted, sound builds its own “sonorous presence” in time and space, which can be experienced but never fully grasped³. Nancy viewed listening as more than just a passive reception of sounds, but rather suggested it should be seen as an active existential event. In listening,

3 K. Sierzputowski, *Ciała w dźwięku. Wydarzenie muzyczne w perspektywie somatoestetycznej* [Bodies in Sound: Musical Event from a Somatoesthetic Perspective], *Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica* 20(2), 2019, pp 70–82.

we open ourselves to otherness, to the presence of the other, and to something that cannot be fully captured. In his writings, he also discusses the difference between sound and word, the former being a pre-logical experience, perceived in a primal way. One does not need to understand music to participate in it; one does not even need to know musical notation to perform or compose music on an instinctual level.

During last year's edition of *Musica Polonica Nova*, Marta Śniady also took up the theme of corporeality in her piece *Body X Ultra – Glass Edition*. Kalina Bańka-Kulka designed glass instruments for each of the performers. The work raises questions about the degree of integration of machines into the body, and the consequences of such actions; it also reflects on dehumanisation and the monitoring of the human form in terms of perfection. In this year's edition of the MEN festival, another instalment of this project will be presented: *Body X Ultra – Under the Skin* for flute, baritone saxophone, electric guitar, MIDI keyboard, percussion set, objects, video, and four-channel electronics.

... inspiration

We have reached a point where bodies need not even appear on stage during a concert. Instead, there are holograms, projections, recordings, films. Until recently, the human element was absolutely necessary – somebody had to create the aforementioned media. Now, human presence can be limited to entering a command into Artificial Intelligence tools, which draw the appropriate means of expression from the collective consciousness and deliver a finished product. However, Artificial Intelligence lacks an autonomous need to listen to music or to experience the emotions and memories associated with it. And so, the focus shifts from artist to audience. Even if there

are fewer bodies on stage, technology and sound systems allow for more bodies in the audience. After all, we owe our ability to listen to music more frequently than ever in history to the accessibility of portable music players.

Although it is difficult to adapt to the rapid changes brought about by technological advancement, the body remains present and needed – albeit under new conditions. Technology amplifies its natural abilities, both to perform, and to listen closely and attentively. This creates a sort of deception, one not naturally possible for a performing ensemble – yet we accept it without much resistance.

For years, we have lamented the lack of “a breath of fresh air” in the post-modern critical discourse. Meanwhile, technology brings us newer and newer compositional techniques, evolving right before our eyes. Perhaps, behind the scenes, we won't find evil robots intent on eliminating our presence, but – say – new instruments. After all, even the saxophone, to which we are now very much accustomed, was at first considered “devilish”. It is important to keep in mind that as recipients, we are not helpless; we have the right to choose the content that interests us – we do not have to support music created by AI.

The disappearance, or even absence of bodies is not overlooked – quite the opposite. In contemporary music, this phenomenon has become a source of inspiration, ready to be used to its full potential. One can live in fear of novelty, or one can adopt a completely different strategy and take pleasure in the diversity of techniques, instruments, and creative responses to the pressing question of our place in the modern world. Surely, we are not the first generation to deal with such uncertainties.

23.05

Friday, 6.30 pm
NFM, Black HallAKUSMA FORUM – FRANCE, CANADA
ELECTROACOUSTIC CONCERT

PERFORMER

Hervé Birolini – performer, curator

PROGRAMME

Léa Boudreau *Quatre machines pour sauver le monde* (2019) [12']**Mélanie Frisoli** *Le Chant de la machine* (2020) [13']**Nicolas Bernier** *Aluminium* (2023) [9']**Jean-Marc Duchenne** *Construction* (2020) [11']**François Donato** *Quatre allégories d'amour* – excerpt (1996) [10']Programming in
collaboration with
Distorsions Studio

Hervé Birolini: What does the creation of an acousmatic piece represent for you today?

Nicolas Bernier: Acousmatic music allows one to focus on sound, and only on sound. It is a noble, even purist stance (which I don't see as pejorative). However, I must say that, as a music lover, I'm no longer interested in acousmatic concerts. I'm still interested in acousmatic listening at home, at a time of my choosing, with the setup that suits me. That said, the interest in creating the piece *Aluminium* was in the *ACT OF MAKING*. I feel that, by extension, the interest in listening to this piece is in hearing this *ACT OF MAKING* develop, in sensing the human play. This is also true for the majority of my acousmatic production.

Léa Boudreau: In the last few years, my artistic practice has shifted to include electronics and visual arts in general while always keeping space for sound. I realised that sound is essential for my projects as it highlights their affective aspect, as well as for the sensation of vitality it confers.

Jean-Marc Duchenne: Allowing humans to immerse themselves in full listening, to discover or deepen what sounds can tell us and do to us, to experience the power of the real virtuality of loud-speaker spaces.

Mélanie Frisoli: Acousmatic creation represents a suspended moment outside of the temporality imposed by modern society, whether from the point of view of production or from that of listening. Composing acousmatic music is about taking time, exploring, getting lost, and offering the exact same thing to the brave people who dare to listen. It is also a nihilistic, anti-capitalist experience, somewhat unconscious, but terribly exciting.

François Donato (1963-2024)

My friend François Donato passed away before he could answer my questions. In our last conversations, I told him about my wish to program his music in this evening of acousmatic pieces at the *Musica Electronica Nova* festival in Wroclaw (Poland). He told me about this piece, which I was unfamiliar with: *Four Allegories of Love*. With his agreement, I chose to perform one of the four movements in this Franco-Canadian selection.

Hervé Birolini

Read interviews with the composers:

Nicolas Bernier, Léa Boudreau,

Mélanie Frisoli and

Jean-Marc Duchenne prepared by

Distortions Studio.

23.05Friday, 9.00 pm
NFM, Black Hall**KTVC [HYPNOS]**AN EXPERIMENTAL PERFORMANCE INVOLVING
THE AUDIENCE**PERFORMERS****Filippos Sakagian** – concept, direction, sound spatialisation, light, performance (necrotrance)**Dafin Antoniadou** – choreography, performance (scar)**Amélie Nilles** – performers' coordinator, performance (light)**Mar Sala Romagosa, Maksymilian Termin, Aldona Karska,****Justyna Piechota, Jacek Lis** – performance (light)**PROGRAMME****Filippos Sakagian** *KTVC [hypnos]* – collective hypnosis
experience (2025)*

The performance includes nudity, low-frequency sounds and strobe lights. The event will be run in English, and immediately before its beginning, the audience members can get individual protection (ear plugs, eye masks). The project is for adults only. Latecomers will not be admitted.

Jagoda Olczyk: Intense, spatially-oriented sound, flickering lights. For me personally, the preview of your *KTVC [hypnos]* hypnosis experience evokes a techno party, where everyone is a lone dancer but participates in a “common ritual”. Do you want your art to be a supraindividual experience?

Filippos Sakagian: We are nowhere near a techno party – not in form, not in intention. *KTVC [hypnos]* is a descent, not into a nightclub, but into the night of the subconscious cave. It is a collective hypnosis experience where light and spatial sound become forces that infiltrate, distort perception, and pull the audience under. The intensity I seek forces you into spaces inside yourself from which you cannot hide. And you're right – we are alone, always, dancing in our own corners of existence. But we're also bound to each other. Isolation and connection are two sides of the same state within this context.

I create a window – nothing more, nothing less. What happens beyond that is up to the audience. Take it in as something happening only to you, or let it become something shared. On May 23rd, you might feel completely alone or you might realise that even in front of a mirror, you are never truly alone, for better or for worse.

J.O.: After an intense sensory stimulation, you could rest up. How do you recharge?

F.S.: Why recharge? I'm not joking, take it as it is. Being pushed into this state of existential acuity is a reminder that escape is a privilege not everyone has. If someone feels the need to recharge after this, I'd say: “come back, step in again, let it work on you”. The alternative? DEEP SLEEP.

J.O.: What's “being present” for you?

F.S.: Having nowhere else to be – it's no escape, no distraction, no filter.

24.05

Saturday, 11 am, 12 pm
NFM, Black Hall

MINI AKUSMA FORUM

ELECTROACOUSTIC CONCERT FOR KIDS



Mariusz Gradowski – host
[40']

Concert cofinanced from the Creativity
Support Fund of Society of Authors ZAiKS

za'ks
inspiring imagination

23.05

Saturday, 5 pm
NFM, Black Hall

AKUSMA FORUM – GREECE



PERFORMER

Filippou Sakagian
—electronics, curator

PROGRAMME

Maria Pelekanou *Nach der Stille A* (2022) [5']
Constantine Skourlis *Theme_02* (2024) [8']
Dionysios Papanikolaou *Mais la conséquence fût...* (2017) [4']
Filippou Sakagian *In Digital Ecstasy* (2020) [16']
Panayiotis Kokoras *Qualia* (2017) [10']
Nikos Stavropoulos *Khemenu* (2022) [8']

In curating the **Akusma Forum – Greece** event, I aimed to reflect the current landscape of electronic music in Greece – a landscape where chaos is not the enemy, but a raw force confronting raw forces. This concert brings together six distinct sonic voices, each offering a personal approach to listening. From sound art to cinematic soundscapes, from acousmatic explorations to genre fusion and bold experimentation, their work reveals sound's presence and the intricate relationships it embodies. Yet what makes this programme even more relevant is how each composer carves their own path, navigating both local and international scenes, moving through the fractures of our time – not to escape chaos, but to listen closely.

Filippou Sakagian

24.05Saturday, 6.30 pm
NFM, Chamber Hall**LA FORME DE L'ÂME**

DANCE, VIDEO & ELECTRONICS

**PERFORMERS****Elena Boillat**—dance**Pietro Luca Congedo**—electronics**Fabrizio Rosso**—direction**PROGRAMME**

Nadir Vassena (music, sound design), **Elena Boillat** (choreography), **Fabrizio Rosso** (direction) *La Forme de l'âme*—interdisciplinary performance (2016) [50']

Performance inspired by writings of Jean-Luc Nancy. Fragments of Jean-Luc Nancy's voice recordings and texts were used in the project.

Co-financed by

swiss arts council

prohelvetia

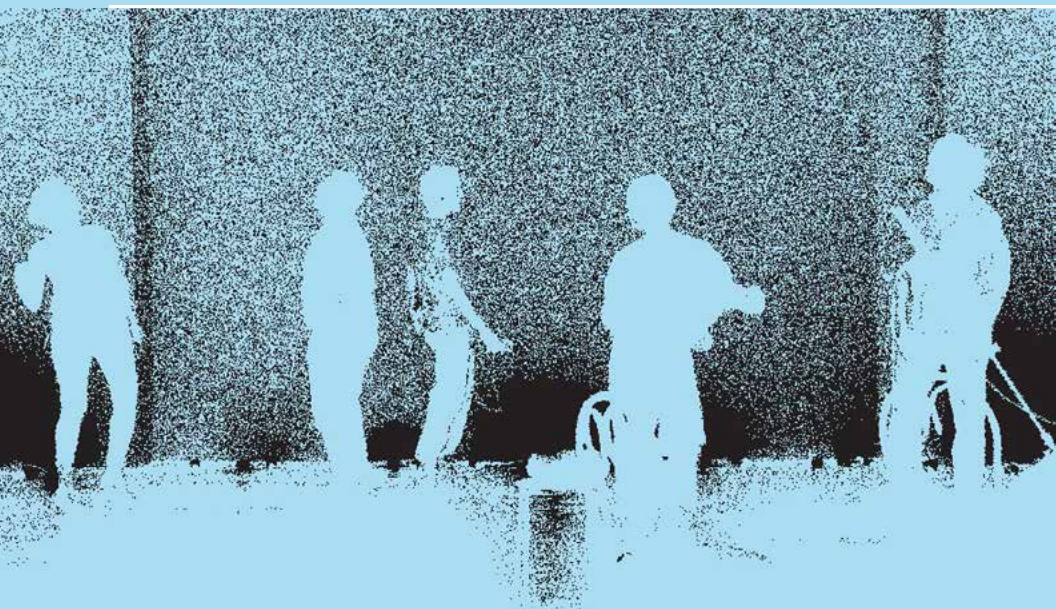
The performance includes nudity and flickering lights.

This event is for adults only.

A body touched, touching, fragile, vulnerable, always changing, fleeing, ungraspable, evanescent under a caress or a blow, a body without a husk, a poor skin stretched over the cave where our shadow floats ... I'm seated on my body, a child or a dwarf riding on a blind man's shoulders. My body's sitting on me, crushing me with its weight. The body, the skin: the rest is anatomical, physiological, and medical literature. Muscles, tendons, nerves and bones, humors, glands, and organs are cognitive fictions. They are functionalist formalisms. But the truth is skin. Truth is in the skin, it makes skin: an authentic extension exposed, entirely turned outside while also enveloping the inside, a sack crammed with rumblings and musty odors. Skin touches and lets itself be touched. Skin caresses and flatters, gets wounded, flayed, and scratched. It's irritable and excitable. It absorbs sunshine, cold and heat, wind, rain; it inscribes marks from within-wrinkles, spots, warts, peelings – and marks from the outside, which are sometimes the same, or else cracks, scars, burns, slashes. A body is also a prison for the soul. In it, the soul pays for a very serious crime whose nature is hard to discern. Which is why the body's so heavy and awkward for the soul. It has to digest, sleep, excrete, sweat, be defiled, be hurt, fall ill. The body's simply a soul. A soul, wrinkled, fat or dry, hairy or callous, rough, supple, cracking, gracious, flatulent, iridescent, pearly, daubed with paint, wrapped in muslin or camouflaged in khaki, multicoloured, covered with grease, wounds, warts. The soul is an accordion, a trumpet, the belly of a viola. The body keeps its secret, this nothing, this spirit that isn't lodged in it but spread out, expanded, extended all across it, so much so that the secret has no hiding place, no intimate fold where it might some day be discovered. The body keeps nothing: it keeps itself as secret. That's why the body dies and is borne away, concealed, into the grave. Of its passage, hardly a few indices remain.

Fragments of *Fifty-eight Indices on the Body* by Jean-Luc Nancy,
translated by Richard A. Rand

Source: J.-L. Nancy, *Corpus*, New York, Fordham University Press 2008.

24.05Saturday, 8.30 pm
NFM, Red Hall**ENSEMBLE VORTEX**
CONCERT**PERFORMERS****Ensemble Vortex:****Christopher Moy** – electric guitar**Rada Hadjikostova** – violin, performance**Aurélien Ferrette** – cello**Benoît Morel** – viola, prepared snare drum**Anne Gillot** – bass-clarinet, saxophone, performance**Arturo Corrales** – electronics**Daniel Zea** – electronics, choreography, video

PROGRAMME

Daniel Zea *The Love Letters?* for two performers, two webcams, two computers running face tracking algorithms, video and electronics (2018) [25']

Fernando Garnero *Contraccolpo* for prepared snare drum, wind instrument and electroacoustic set-up (2020) [7']

Monika Szpyrka *Ghost-like* for string trio, bass-clarinet, electric guitar and electronics (2025)* [10-12']

Arturo Corrales *Alfaque Rojo* for violin, viola, cello, bass clarinet, electric guitar and electronics (2022) [15']

Ghost-like for string trio, bass-clarinet, electric guitar and electronics by Monika Szpyrka was co-financed from the funds of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage coming from the Culture Promotion Fund, as part of the "Composing Commissions" programme realised by the National Institute of Music and Dance.



Ministerstwo Kultury
i Dziedzictwa Narodowego

Jagoda Olczyk: While composing your festival piece *Ghost-like* you were visited by a “pulsating energy, constantly present, yet sometimes slipping from attention”. How did this energy materialise in (solitary?) work with a computer, and how did it manifest in your interactions with people – for example with Ensemble Vortex?

Monika Szpyrka: This energy has been a recurring idea in my creative process for a long time, finding partial release in this work. It was a very transformative, metamorphic sound concept, and I still question whether it was fully realised. The pulsating energy symbolises certain creative hopes – ever-changing, elusive, and extremely difficult to articulate. Formulating it in collaboration with others is challenging since it is understood individually and within oneself, as a quality rooted in sonic intuition.

J.O.: What distracts you the most when working on your piece on a computer? Social media, news, shopping sites? An ever-growing number of tabs filled with creative ideas?

M.Sz.: Surprisingly, I have to admit that the screen and other artefacts of online life are not that distracting for me. What interferes the most with my composing are the racing thoughts and the millions of threads that often carry emotional weight, vying for attention in moments that require concentration. The awareness that we can never entirely disconnect and devote ourselves fully to creative work doesn't help either.

J.O.: What does it mean to be present?

M.Sz.: To nurture active listening.

Szymon Atys

AT PRESENT

What do human presence and contemporary electronic music have in common? Or rather, can contemporary music even exist without human presence? Much has changed in this regard in recent years, and it seems we have yet to tell this story together. The idea of non-human, mechanical agents creating and perceiving music is not only possible; it is becoming increasingly unsettling. Perhaps this unease comes from depriving each other of the very things that make communication with another human authentic?

How does musical communication work? The European music tradition emerged through the rivalry of wealthy patrons in a quest for beauty. It then evolved into the world known for “classical music” of the contemplation of something serious by a wide range of social groups. While the starting point for musical communication, as articulated by Krzysztof Moraczewski¹, was an imitative model that is still very much alive today (for example, the imitation of emotions), the role of communication based on specific forms of cultural capital has increased significantly over the centuries. Beginning with linguistic expression (musical rhetoric), it then moved to contextual communication (program music), and ultimately developed into an autonomous model, where music communicates its own artistry – understood only by a select few.

Within the realm of philharmonic contemplation, both the audience and the performers don their finest clothes in order to embody or uphold certain values. For some, it is about the sublime moments that pierce the heart with awe, allowing for a brief silencing of reason; for others, it is about a curated definition of beauty and a sense of control over the heart. Together, they form a community focused around an ideal that distances them from the inevitability of death. After experiencing the music, life continues: conversations spark, new connections are forged among fellow music lovers, basking in the brilliant foyers.

Listening to music in the philharmonic is inherently tied to inter-human encounters, yet we have managed to override this nuisance, so to speak. As Joanna Kwapien writes in this very book, by recording music, we have

¹ K. Moraczewski, *Komunikacja muzyczna – krótki przegląd historyczny* [Musical Communication: brief historical overview], in: “Kultura Współczesna. Teoria, Interpretacje, Praktyka” 4(30), 2001, https://nck.pl/upload/archiwum_kw_files/artykuly/2_krzysztof_moraczewski_-_komunikacja_muzyczna_-_krotki_przegląd_historyczny.pdf.

brought it into the private space of our homes. And then into our very own ears. A symphony is no longer savoured by a collective of people but by a contemplating individual. The relationship with music becomes dual; thus, the Lacanian triangle that constructs the symbolic space disappears, and music—devoid, in particular, of discourse—becomes a mirror reflecting the listener's ideal self.

This is where we stand. Music is equated to a “medium”, like water, and is as omnipresent as light. The exploitation of artists' works by streaming services is far from fair. Our behavioural dependency on readily accessible music has gone too far for change to be possible. Some of us cannot bear the absence of our favourite tracks, as their presence helps contain accumulated negative emotions. Some use music to create soundtracks for their daily simulacra. On the way to work and on the way back, we listen; working out, strolling through shops, or vengefully drowning out the noise of the city and the music that seeps in from beyond these four walls; maximising our productivity, minimising it, boosting our confidence before a job interview, and finally, building a safe haven at home after a dreadful day. And often we concede to others directing the spectacle: in dining establishments, where music attempts to recreate the cultural ideal of a meal in a restaurant, or on a beach pretending to be the Canaries, where splendid drinks are accompanied by golden oldies. Anger may arise: it's too loud, too quiet, not this again. But here we are, alone in a terrible house of mirrors.

Just like the content curated by social media feed(ers), music has no end. Algorithms deliver it directly to our ears. Like devices attached to our brains, they gather information about our preferences and behaviour patterns, observed while using appropriately expensive devices constructed from

rare materials mined in disregard for the values we hold dear—it is these devices that not only confine us to bubbles of individual listening (next to us on the bus sits someone we could chat with, say, about the weather, if only they weren't already listening to something else), but also to bubbles of music created in a feedback loop. Our preferred content leads to even more familiar copy-pastes of the pleasure of listening already felt². These so-called bubbles are prison cells. What good is music without communication? And should I mention who profits from all of this? Am I losing the reader who relies on music to cope daily? Wait, don't go!

Perhaps we should talk about coping. Who among us could truly manage without music? The phrase “everyone around is busy” from the well-known song *Mój kraj znika* [*How My Country Disappears*] by Fisz Emade Tworzywo can be understood as a story about support groups. When they're lacking, we can turn to the mirror of music for solace. To reference Narcissus, that key figure in psychoanalysis, just as social media images remind us of the basic version of his story, we can describe our reality as one of Narcissus-like listening. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it can become addictive. When I'm feeling sad, I choose a sad song to accompany me, and the world around me takes on a hue of bleak sorrow. I feel a direct connection with the artist; they sing to me and about me. Even though there is likely at least one person on the bus who would readily comfort a stranger and is genuinely present, we choose our mirrored image over genuine communication. The reasons may involve mental health issues that require medical intervention—or they may not. When it comes to burn-out, overwhelm, and fatigue—how about we ostentatiously let it be for today?

Being a “melomaniac” is tied to a certain capital of free time. Not everyone has the (head)space to go to a symphonic concert on a Friday, let alone a week-long contemporary music festival. Putting aside the fact that, too often, the habitus of a “serious music” fan involves symbolic power, let us note that comparing different renditions of a piece requires not only education in the subject but also a library of recordings (or an account on an as-ethical-as-possible streaming service), and leisure time free from worries about one's livelihood, housing, the future (especially in light of the recent political and climate crises), or one's own health. As Ziemowit Socha claims³, a familiar social group with which one can communicate is necessary for this type of engagement. The alternative is to trust the algorithm, onto which we can project the image of that somewhat intimidating friend who knows better. However, this is merely an illusion. In reality, we may soon want to conserve time and start listening mindlessly, just to have something playing, or conversely—we will have the same thing on repeat because comfort comes from a certain tune. Like a broken record, the needle drops, Narcissus' face sends a ripple and fades.

Some of the neologisms related to music in Polish carry a sense of gravity. To “play” music in Polish is to “let go” or “release” it, evoking the image of shedding a burden. A near equivalent in English might be that we “put on” or “blast” music, rolling with it straight into the abyss of never-ending content generated by the internet; its *raison d'être* being to show us ads and make a killing off our inertia.

The present day has so much to offer. In fact, to gain some time, it suffices to swat away the swarms of numbers and

not get lost in the thicket of new research, dialogue boxes, conversations, recommended for today, made for you, threads, Stories, podcasts, filters and features. Among the phenomena included in her own broadened concept of noise, Małgorzata Halber identifies—alongside acoustic noise, among other things—informational noise: the sheer volume of information, the constant pressure to make choices among countless goods, tree felling, self-service checkouts, parent WhatsApp groups, notifications, mobile authorizations, chronic fatigue, and the overall number of cars⁴. The author summarizes: “There is information that acts as if it itself demands to be engaged with”. There is no way to find each other in such a world.

What I mean to say is, it's better in the philharmonic. Human presence in this institution may just be about satisfying one's conscience or having the opportunity to exchange a few in-the-know remarks, or being in awe of the virtuoso's artistic capital, or the long-awaited emotional response to a beautiful phrase, or the coughing, or the irritation at coughing, or at applause between movements, or the accumulation of experiences and knowledge of art that arose in times when colonialism, patriarchy, and slavery were the norm. The philharmonic is, as Liszt proposed, a museum—a museum where the exhibitions consist of people performing an extraordinary spectacle based on the creations of others, often long deceased. May we remain aware that the directors of our emotion are artists from eras when women did not have the vote, their imposed role was to care for offspring and maintain the household, when children were raised using violence, when there was no expressway S8 to Warsaw, nor even Intercity trains, when you couldn't go dancing in March, when Native Ameri-

3 Z. Socha, *Muzyka jako wspólnota. Echa wspólnotowości algorytmów* [Music as Community. Echoes of Algorithmic Community], “Ruch Muzyczny”, <https://ruchmuzyczny.pl/article/811>.

4 M. Halber, *Hałas* [Noise], Wydawnictwo Cyranika, Warszawa 2024, pp. 48–49.

cans were being murdered, when education and the opportunity to listen to a symphony were privileges reserved for a small segment of society, when young men died on the battlefronts, and the fate of an individual was decided by their family; when for 99% of the time, there was no music, and going to a concert was an exceptional event. While the musical works from these times may still hold appeal, isn't it a pity not to listen to the sounds of our own era?

What constitutes an interpersonal sound event nowadays? Well, it seems to exclusively be the upside-down, the topsy-turvy: the shared listening of silence, the breaking of the opposition between audience and artist, musical request concerts, field recording bird-song, subverting the canon, humans engaging with machines, musical meditations, conversations, ostentatious triads, performing the inhuman, nurturing respect for one another, discussing crises, releasing oxytocin—all of this with the awareness of how sensitive and ephemeral these practices are. We gather for unique events that celebrate the present moment, which can never be fully recorded or commodified. I borrow this idea from Michał Libera, who, it must be said, ironically warned against the snobbery that threatens such a culture of listening⁵.

However, it is precisely these events that we need at present, where musicians who once performed spectacles of values, now play of ruins. Yet these ruins provide the peace of mind we so desperately need today. A musician tangled in cables or enmeshed in radio waves can validate their humanity through these bonds, of which we are also a part. When the composer tries to control them entirely, they can express the human need for freedom: a twitch of a muscle sends a twitch of

sound. They can play with playfulness, decimating seriousness, the type of which is currently merely a burden. They can critique these values with seriousness, creating spaces of anger and resistance, weaving new narratives for those who have been voiceless till now. They can talk to us, because why not? They can hand over their instruments, revealing how complicated and worthy of respect a profession it is, to subordinate one's own body to playing an instrument. Perhaps we'll begin to notice how we lose touch with our own bodies, the bodies of musicians removed from the frame of perception. Musicians can use playback, perhaps to depict our lives subordinated to a digital regime. They can decide not to play beautiful melodies, questioning the ideals governing us, but that are not ours. And if they do play those beautiful melodies, won't we start to wonder: well, wouldn't it be better to replace this with a digitally enhanced, top-tier recording from the most well-funded orchestra in the world? To do such things to the ones we love.

Let's talk plainly about new music... baggy clothing, baseball caps?... not bad, but you know, —yeah, that was sick... Too loud. ... what are they up to, do I hear sound processing?— I guess; ... I dunno... But the electronics are doing the work... You've got mad skills. I'm jealous — no need, but thanks. I'm a bit cold. How are they clicking so fast? Are they... naked?! ... Can I ask for some quiet? It's not my thing. It's, like, spectral music, you know. ... I'm done here. Yeah, that was moving, I cried—yeah, like—slay. I still have no clue how they did that.

ACCOMPANYING EVENTS

14.05–15.06 NFM

21ST MEDIA ART BIENNALE WRO 2025 QUALIA



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16–24.05

Krupa Art Foundation

RANDOM CHECK 7: TIME CRYSTALS

Marcin Rupociński – Author of the Artistic Concept and Project Curator
Cezary Duchnowski, Marcin Rupociński, Maja Wolińska – Artistic Supervisors

PROGRAMME

~~[]~~

music: Maciej Michaluk, video:
 radzikows (Bartosz Radzikowski)

Cryotune

music: Cezary Duchnowski, video:
 Laura Adel

Deep into the Mind

music: Dominik Łabuda, video:
 Jakub Marszałek

Echoes of Becoming

music: Karolina Brągiel, video:
 Adela Górna

Genesis

music: Krystian Kiełb, video:
 Wojciech Pukocz, voices: Ewelina
 Ciszewska, Piotr Regdos

Heliosfera

music: Hanna Rupocińska, video:
 Zuzanna Klara Bardian

In the Middle of Nowhere

muzyka: Karolina Kułaga, video:
 Maciej Proćków

Network of Existence

music: Dawid Grenda, video:
 Jagoda Golińska

Tenebrilis

music: Paweł Hendrich, video:
 Barnaba Mikułowski

Time Crystals

music: Marcin Rupociński, video:
 Maja Wolińska

Singularity

music: Dominik Łabuda, video:
 Weronika Kowalczyk

Still, We Dance in Loops

music: Oleś Kulczewicz, video:
 Bogna Korabiewska

Random Check is a cyclical arts project realised by two universities, brought to life thanks to the creative collaborations of students, doctoral students, and teachers of the K. Lipiński Academy of Music and the E. Geppert Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław. Between 2020 and 2024, the consecutive editions of the Random Check project were hosted by numerous contemporary music and media art festivals: Sacrum Profanum, Audio Art, Musica Polonica Nova, Media Art Biennale WRO, Warsaw Autumn, and in the form of a multimedia installation also in the Four Domes Pavilion of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Wrocław. A special highlight of this edition of the project, emphasising its academic dimension, is the participation, as creators, of Their Magnificences Rectors of both collaborating universities: Prof Krystian Kiełb and Prof Wojciech Pukocz. Dr Ewelina Ciszewska has also participated in the composition authored by both gentlemen. Ewelina Ciszewska is Deputy Rector for the Wrocław Division of the Stanisław Wyspiański Academy of Theatre Arts.

Random Check 7: Time Crystals draws inspiration from the fascinating concept of time crystals developed by Frank Wilczek. These are unique physical structures that challenge traditional ideas about the stability of matter in time. These systems, being in a state of minimal energy, are simultaneously in periodic motion, which means that their properties change in cycles over time without an external energy supply.

The multimedia installation *Time Crystals* invites viewers to enter an immersive space where sound, image and light coexist in constant motion, and twelve audiovisual compositions co-create a dynamic, modular system.

More information

16.05

Friday, 11 pm
House Tęczowa, ul. Tęczowa 79/81

SOMETHING OUT OF APOCALYPSE



PERFORMER

Rafał Łuc – accordion

More information

In partnership with
21st Media Art Biennale WRO 2025 Qualia



Partner
Fundacja Dysharmonia

PROGRAMME

Matthias Kranebitter *96bit music* for accordion and playback (2014) [9']

Oxana Omelchuk *5 Widmungen an die verborgenen Empfänger* for accordion and tape (2013) [11']

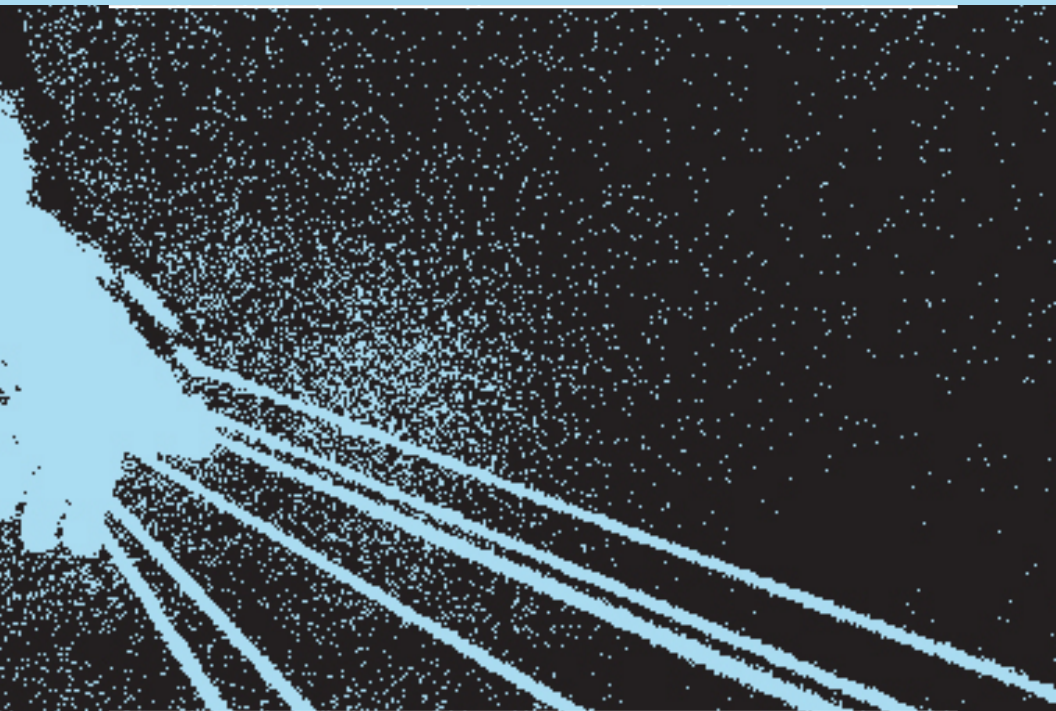
Pierre Jodlowski *Something out of Apocalypse* for accordion and soundtrack (2012) [18']

23.05

Friday, 11 pm
Klubokawiarnia Receptja, ul. Ruska 46

LIVE ACT

Hanna Rupocińska, Olgierd Żemojtel, Szymon Wantuła

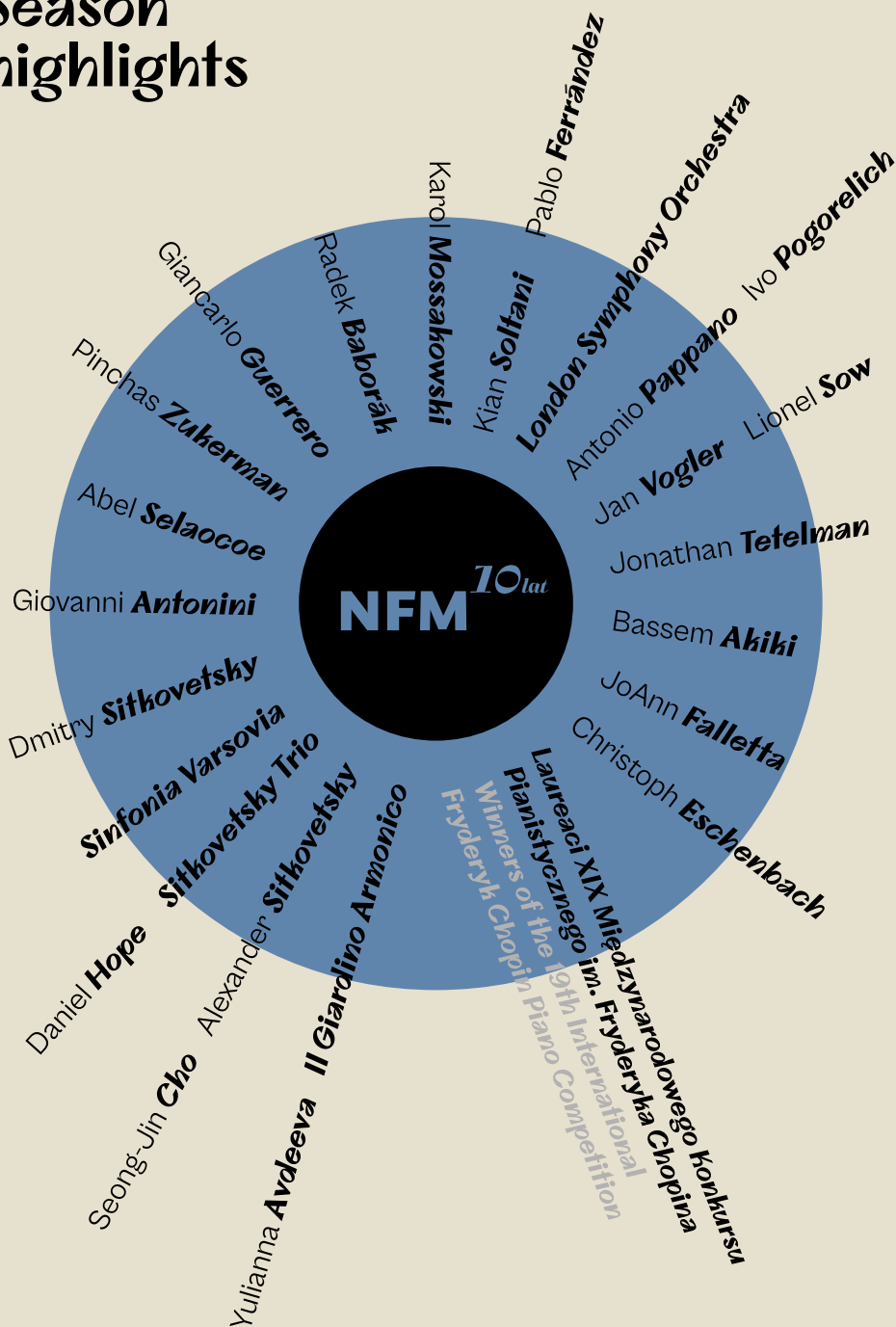


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2025/26

Season highlights

[MENU](#)



..... 2025

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NFM ORGAN CINEMA

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IMPROWIZOWANĄ NA ŻYWO**

SILENT FILMS WITH MUSIC IMPROVISED LIVE

.....

NFM, SALA GŁÓWNA ORLEN ORLEN MAIN HALL

25.07 ■ PIĄTEK FRIDAY, 19.00 7 PM

PORTIER Z HOTELU ATLANTIC DER LETZTE MANN

REŻ. DIR. FRIEDRICH WILHELM MURNAU (1924)

TOMASZ GŁUCHOWSKI – ORGANY ORGAN

MICHAŁ MACIEWICZ – DJ

SEBASTIAN SMOLIŃSKI – WPROWADZENIE INTRODUCTORY TALK



Wydarzenie towarzyszące 25. MFF BNP Paribas Nowe Horyzonty

Accompanying event of the 25th International Film Festival BNP Paribas New Horizons

Film ze zbiorów Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung (www.murnau-stiftung.de) w Wiesbaden

A film from the holdings of the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung (www.murnau-stiftung.de) in Wiesbaden



8.08 ■ PIĄTEK FRIDAY, 19.00 7 PM

UPIÓR W OPERZE THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

REŻ. DIR. RUPERT JULIAN, EDWARD SEDGWICK, ERNST LAEMMLE, LON CHANEY (1925)

PAUL GOUSSOT – ORGANY ORGAN

RAFAŁ JĘCZMYK – WPROWADZENIE INTRODUCTORY TALK



22.08 ■ PIĄTEK FRIDAY, 19.00 7 PM

ROZKOSZE GOŚCINNOŚCI OUR HOSPITALITY

REŻ. DIR. BUSTER KEATON, JOHN G. BLYSTONE (1923)

VINCENT THÉVENAZ – ORGANY ORGAN

POLA MORAWETZ – WPROWADZENIE INTRODUCTORY TALK

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