



NATIONAL
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CULTURE
POLAND

7th International ——— Music Festival
of Central and Eastern ——— Europe

eufonie

Afterglows & Afterimages

Masks: Szymanowski /
Bacewicz / Bacevičius



Warsaw ——— 22 November 2025
Łódź ——— 23 November 2025
Krakow ——— 24 November 2025

Masks: Szymanowski / Bacewicz / Bacevičius

22 November (Saturday) ——— 6.00 pm

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

23 November (Sunday) ——— 6.00 pm

Academy of Music in Łódź – Palace
32 Gdańska Street, Room 12
Łódź

24 November (Monday) ——— 7.00 pm

Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology
Multifunctional Auditorium
26 Konopnickiej Street
Krakow

Honorary patronage: His Excellency Valdemaras Sarapinas,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic
of Lithuania to the Republic of Poland

Concert programme

Karol Szymanowski
(1882–1937)

Schéhérazade
from the cycle *Masques*,
Op. 34 No. 1
(1916)

Tantris le bouffon
from the cycle *Masques*,
Op. 34 No. 2
(1916)

Grażyna Bacewicz
(1909–1969)
Three Grotesques
(1935)

Vytautas Bacevičius
(1905–1970)
Mistinė poema (Poème mystique),
Op. 6
(1927)

Suite No. 3, Op. 60
(1956)

Allegretto
Allegro moderato
Lento
Presto

Meditacija (Méditation), Op. 29
(1937)

Šeštas žodis (Sixième mot), Op. 72
(1963)

Trys muzikinės mintys
(*Trois pensées musicales*), Op. 75
(1966)

Allegro moderato
Adagio
Vivace

Performer:

Yusuke Ishii
piano

Masks: Szymanowski / Bacewicz / Bacevičius

For the generation of Polish-Lithuanian siblings, Vytautas Bacevičius (1905–1970) and Grażyna Bacewicz (1909–1969), Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937) was an icon of new music – open to dialogue and various sources of inspiration.

In the Poetics of the Mask

In the piano triptych *Masques*, Op. 34 (1915–1916) Szymanowski referred to literary characters embedded in culture, depicted in carnival or clown costumes. The extra-musical connotations are related to the poetics of the title *Mask*, with its hidden meanings and complex metaphor. In the first movement of the cycle, the evocation of the figure of Scheherazade from the Arabic collection of tales *One Thousand and One Nights* corresponded to the composer's interests in Oriental culture and Sufism. In the second movement, Szymanowski recalled Tristan from a tale based on Ernst Hardt's drama *Tantris der Narr*. The protagonist, disguised as a jester, sneaked into the castle of his beloved, but she did not recognise him. The motif of recognising the subject of love and personal identity, which was one of the key topoi in the composer's novel *Ephebos* and in the opera *King Roger*, is shown here in ironic and grotesque distortion. *Masques* are a texturally advanced composition, belonging to the Impressionist/Expressionist phase in Szymanowski's oeuvre. The pieces reveal the composer's sensual approach to the nature of sound, although he himself would often emphasise that his works originated from melodic ideas.

Two Colours

Grażyna Bacewicz and Vytautas Bacevičius grew up in an atmosphere of love for their dual homeland, Poland and Lithuania, surrounded by music and inspired by the musical interests of their parents: Polish, Maria *née* Modlińska, and Lithuanian, Vincas Bacevičius. Bacewicz was known as a violinist and neoclassical composer, and in her late oeuvre – as a colourist (pre-sonorist). Three Grotesques (1935) fit into the trend of comic and playful vitalism, characterised by parody and wit.

Unlike his sister, Bacevičius – a composer and pianist – does not yet have his own distinct position in culture. He took a conscious decision to spend many years in Lithuania, in Kaunas (from 1926), during which he developed his creative personality. In 1939, the artist undertook a concert tour in South America, during which he received news about the outbreak of World War II. He chose the fate of an emigrant; he went to the USA where he lived (in New York and Bridgeport, Connecticut) until his death in 1970. To him, living in exile meant a difficult fight for survival – both as a human being (he faced deportation for many years) and an artist. The composer had a clear worldview, supported by a spiritual and moral foundation, which he implemented in his work. His oeuvre evolved towards cosmic music, represented, for example, by his last opus – *Trois pensées musicales* for piano, Op. 75 (1966). The cosmological trend was embodied by the sources of inspiration including parapsychological and occult experiments and yoga, which resulted in the initial artistic concepts being graphically “recorded” in the form of a visualised “film/score”. On long pieces of paper, Bacevičius “registered” his first ideas in the shape of charts, which, according to him, secured the thought arising in the artist's imagination and opened the way to a new constructivism in music. *Poème mystique*, Op. 6 (1926) and *Méditation*, Op. 29 (1936–1937) – composed in the Kaunas, modernist and avant-garde years – anticipate these cosmic ideas. The Piano Suite No. 3, Op. 60 (1956) culminates the classicist phase, consisting in a creative compromise and practising the “communicative” style with the recipient. In turn, *Sixième mot*, Op. 72 (1963) belongs to a collection of seven original and personal pieces: a word conveyed through sounds – distinct and “eloquently” expressive music, but not in the programmatic sense.

Bacevičius' music is – in accordance with his assumptions – atonal (or “semi-atonal”), athematic and absolute. The music flow is structured on the basis of various sound segments and piano texture patterns in a creatively shaped dramaturgy of tension and relaxation. “Every sound is an emotion, not an effect,” the composer used to say. He also emphasised that music without philosophy, without going deeply into one's own universe – through meditation – has no purpose. And it is meant to symbolise the light of wisdom.



Yusuke Ishii – piano

A Japanese pianist, composer and musicologist. Born in Tokyo, he began his musical education at the Kunitachi College of Music, where he studied composition. He moved to France to study at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris (CNSM). There, he studied music theory and vocal accompaniment, completing a second DFS in 2010. In parallel, he pursued piano studies at the Conservatory of Boulogne-Billancourt. Through his multifaceted career, Ishii exemplifies the artist-scholar model: a pianist whose virtuosity and vision are matched by intellectual depth and cultural curiosity. His work continues to illuminate underrepresented corners of modern musical history.

Organisers

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Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
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