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**62nd “Warsaw Autumn” International Contemporary Music Festival**

**20–28 September 2019**

**PNEUMA – EXPANDED REALITY // air / space / time / matter / nature / vitality / body mystique / animated world / artificial intelligence / incredibility / modern sacrum? / paradox and contestation // music theatre and sound theatre / rituals and celebrations / operas and post-operas / concerts / improvisations / performances / intermedia / installations / open space actions / meetings / composer’s workshops // over 50 festival events / 19 first performances / 17 composers debut at Warsaw Autumn // Swiss and Icelandic female composers / Marco Blaauw / Mario Caroli / Arne Deforce / Joanna Freszel / Łukasz Długosz / Zygmunt Krauze / Marcin Zdunik / IRCAM / Basel Sinfonietta / SCENATET / Plus-Minus Ensemble / 4 orchestras / 2 choirs / 4 ensembles / several dozen soloists // Warsaw Autumn Hits the Club / Little Warsaw Autumn / festival radio / 10 venues / fringe events.**

**Pneuma—expanded reality: contemporary music versus transcendence and the experience of mystery and the extraordinary. The notion of “pneuma” has several meanings depending on the period of reference. It is also related to air and its movements, leading to further symbols and metaphors such as breathing, motion, the wind of history.**

**Air as the centre of sound, where sound is born and through which it moves. Air exists in song, speech, organs, portatives, accordions, other wind instruments and objectophones.** This year’s Warsaw Autumn will feature a lot of music “from the air.” Both because of aerophone sound sources and aerial, spatial, and naturalistic connotations. From the opening concerts, which will feature Thurídur Jónsdóttir’s air-drenched *Flutter*, to the final concert with the windy final of Jonathan Harvey’s *…towards a pure land*.

But air is also the “centre of spirit”—the sphere of life that aims at grasping the world as a coherent, sensible whole, fed by a nostalgia for a harmonious fullness, which is experienced as “numinosum”: the extraordinary, touching the transcendence.

This touch comes in the endless space (see Iannis Xenakis’s *Jonchaies* at this year’s final concert), time with its processuality (in the works of Richard Barrett, Niels Rønsholdt, Cathy van Eck, Sofia Gubaidulina, Cassandra Miller, and Tadeusz Wielecki), the shape of matter and shapes of nature (listen to the music of Thurídur Jónsdóttir, Alvin Lucier, Tristan Murail, and Jonathan Harvey), vitality (as heard in Bruno Mantovani, Raphaël Cendo, and again Iannis Xenakis), the mystique of the body and the animated world (Rebecca Saunders and Agnieszka Stulgińska), or paradox and strangeness (Cathy van Eck, Simon Løffler). The issue of man taking up the competence of the creator, as in the biblical legend of the Golem, is another stage of transcending reality into the “work of creation” of artificial life—a topic that has long intrigued Georges Aperghis. We shall hear his *Thinking Things*, a work of “robotic theatre,” the last part of his triptych focusing on artificial intelligence.

This and other aspects of the “incredible” can be found in other compositions to be heard at this year’s Festival. Some will also be polemic towards the issue of spirituality. Nothing reinforces the sacrum more than being tested by the profanum. Negation, paradox, and irony feed it. They can give life to some sort of “modern sacrum,” live and unregulated: see Trond Reinholdtsen’s *13 Music Theatre Pieces*, Jacek Sotomski’s *Credopol*, Niels Rønsholdt’s *Gaze for Gaze.*

At this year’s Warsaw Autumn, music theatre will often enter into relationships with performative art and concert situations. Apart from the above-mentioned three large musical shows: Aperghis’s *Thinking Things* presented by IRCAM; and Rønsholdt’s *Gaze for Gaze* celebrated by the Danish ensemble SCENATET and the VRC choir, we shall also feature works by Jacek Sotomski—a sharp linguistic rebuke to “high speech”—and Agnieszka Stulgińska, who authors an understated, private music theatre focusing on life’s subtleties.

One of the Festival’s threads will be the music of Swiss female composers: Cécile Marti and Katharina Rosenberger, featured in a spectacular concert of the Basel Sinfonietta, as well as Icelandic female composers: Thurídur Jónsdóttir and Bára Gísladóttir, whose works are included in the opening and final concert.

Lots will be going on at the Theatre Institute, which we hope will become a daily hub for our audience through the Festival’s duration. With our Warsaw Autumn Contexts series, organised in cooperation with PWM Edition and TVP Kultura, we shall premiere films about Zygmunt Krauze and footage of works by Agata Zubel and Andrej Krzanowski, performed at last year’s Warsaw Autumn. We will also revive concerts and musical shows from past editions of Warsaw Autumn from the archives of Polish TV, as well as some recently premiered theatre plays where contemporary music plays an important role.

Also at the Theatre Institute, there will be daily meetings with the public at Warsaw Autumn Hits the Club. Little Warsaw Autumn shall feature a performance, installation in the Królikarnia Sculpture Park, a concert at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music, and a musical walk through the Museum of Warsaw. The Austrian Cultural Forum will feature meetings with artists, protagonists of Warsaw Autumn events, as well as workshops for your composers, in cooperation with the Youth Circle of the Polish Composers’ Union. Each day of the Festival, our internet Festival Radio will be edited by Monika Pasiecznik and Tomasz Biernacki. As usual, there will be a rich programme of fringe events.

The main thread of the Festival will feature eleven first performances of works by Monika Dalach, Magdalena Długosz, Paweł Hendrich, Zygmunt Krauze, Cécile Marti, Adrian Mocanu, Piotr Roemer, Agnieszka Stulgińska, Piotr Tabakiernik, Tadeusz Wielecki, and Sławomir Wojciechowski. Further premieres will be featured at Warsaw Autumn Hits the Club and Little Warsaw Autumn.

There will also be first Warsaw Autumn appearances by Paul Craenen, Monika Dalach, Cathy van Eck, Bára Gísladóttir, Thurídur Jónsdóttir, Steffen Krebber, Thomas Lehn, Simon Løffler, Cécile Marti, Cassandra Miller, Adrian Mocanu, Dariusz Przybylski, Jerzy Rogiewicz, Katharina Rosenberger, Tomasz Skweres, Agnieszka Stulgińska, and Zach Thomas.

Soloists will notably include flutist Mario Caroli; pianist Zygmunt Krauze with percussionists playing on VEME, huge metallophones; flutists Łukasz Długosz; cellist Arne Deforce; trumpeter Marco Blaauw; cellist Marcin Zdunik; at Warsaw Autumn Hits the Club: percussionist Jerzy Rogiewicz; Thomas Lehn on the synthesizer; and flutist Dominik Strycharski; while Little Warsaw Autumn will feature vocalist Joanna Freszel; cellist Tomasz Skweres; flutist Katarzyna Gacek-Duda; and Dariusz Przybylski on the organ and portative organ.

Other featured artists include conductors Wilson Hermanto, Ryan Bancroft, Baldur Brönnimann, Szymon Bywalec, Anna Szostak, Rüdiger Bohn, and Maciej Koczur; ensembles including IRCAM, Plus-Minus Ensemble, SCENATET, and Kompopolex; orchestras such as the Warsaw Philharmonic, Basel Sinfonietta, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra of Katowice, Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera, and European Workshop for Contemporary Music, as well as the Camerata Silesia and VRC choirs.

The 62nd Warsaw Autumn includes over 50 events, including 29 in the main thread, two within Warsaw Autumn Hits the Club, seven at Little Warsaw Autumn, and a dozen fringe events.

Our events will take place in ten venues: the Warsaw Philharmonic, Witold Lutosławski Polish Radio Concert Studio, Fryderyk Chopin University of Music, ATM Studio, IMKA Theatre, Nowy Teatr, Theatre Institute, Austrian Cultural Forum, Sculpture Park in Królikarnia, and the Museum of Warsaw.

This year’s Warsaw Autumn concludes a specific triptych of ideas that inspired our programmes between 2017 and 2019. 2017’s “Trans/avant-garde” addressed musical radicalism and various avant-garde movements with their social agendas. 208’s “Res Publica” tackled different aspects of identity, shaping our consciousness, including national and social. 2019’s “Pneuma” nurtures the nature of the undefined. Bear in mind that regardless of its themes, Warsaw Autumn is primarily an overview of new music from recent years, with references to twentieth-century music. And it will continue as such—if the spirit of times allows.

*Jerzy Kornowicz*

*Director of the Festival*