

The keyboard is    a matrix  
                         an interface  
                         a game  
                         a code  
                         an installation  
                         is touchable  
                         is concrete  
                         is intimate  
                         is open  
                         is a paradox

The main topic of the 53rd International Festival of Contemporary Music – Warsaw Autumn – is the keyboard in its broad sense. The festival will feature a number of works for various keyboard instruments, –keyboards– of percussion instruments, as well as computer keyboards. Among them, works for non-traditional keyboards, with cross-tuning, prepared sounds, electronics, installations, and conceptual works.

With our –keyboard– topic, we symbolically adhere to the 200th anniversary of Fryderyk Chopin and the ongoing Chopin Year. We do so more directly with the spectacular multimedia installations *Where is Chopin?* by Jarosław **Kapu ci ski**, *Mapping Chopin* by Paweł **Janicki** and *Attention: Light! 2.0* by Józef Robakowski, as well as the *Chopin Chord* installation prepared by Gordon **Monahan** in the urban space of Warsaw.

The inaugural concert of the festival will feature the first performance of a new work by Zygmunt **Krauze** for four pianos and orchestra. The same scoring is used by Tomasz **Sikorski** in his *Omaggio (in memoriam Jorge Louis Borges)*. The *Omaggio* will precede Krauze's work and serve as its motto. On the same evening, Louis **Andriessen**'s *Haags Hakkûh* for two pianos and orchestra will also be performed.

The new approach to the keyboard is also exemplified by the compositions of Johannes Maria **Staud** (*One Movement and Five Miniatures* for electronically processed harpsichord and ensemble), Sam **Hayden** (*Emergence* for solo accordion, ensemble and live electronics), Beat **Furrer** (*Concerto for piano and ensemble*) and Martijn **Padding** (*First Harmonium Concerto*).

The spacious hall at 25, Mińska St will host Rytis **Mafulis**'s *Monad* and *Clavier of Pure Reason*. These compositions for multiple pianos and harpsichords are so utopian in their premises that they can practically be performed only with the use of electronics. We will also witness the first performance of a new work commissioned for the occasion from Mafulis. Another new commission for

Paweł **Szymański** came from the Adam Mickiewicz Institute on the occasion of its tenth anniversary; the resulting work is scored for piano and 8 harps. Warsaw Autumn Festival will feature this work's first performance during the Institute's gala concert at the National Philharmonic, on the eve of the festival's opening.

Percussion and keyboards will be used during a concert by Les Percussions de Strasbourg featuring a new composition by Włodzisław **Kotoński**, as well as works by Philippe **Manoury** and Françoise B. **Mâche**, while keyboards of pianos and percussions will make their appearance in Wojciech Ziemowit **Zych**'s monumental cycle *Differance* and Carlos **Sánchez-Gutiérrez**'s *í Ex Machina* for piano and marimba with orchestral accompaniment. This concert will feature the Sinfonia Iuventus ensemble; another work to be performed that evening is Misato **Mochizuki**'s *Homeobox* for another duo: violin and piano.

An electronic concert organised in cooperation with NOTAM (Oslo) and University of Music in Warsaw will feature works mostly for computer keyboards and disklavier type pianos, including by Krzysztof **Czaja**, Natasha **Barret**, Clarence **Barlow**, Lidia **Zielińska** and Rolf **Wallin**. On the occasion of NOTAM's visit to Warsaw, Norwegian noisy electronic music will also be presented with the contribution of Maja **Ratkje**, among others.

Tension will increase until the final concert and the explosion (on video) of a piano in the hourlong composition *Karkas* by Cornelis **de Bondt**. This work is scored for a large and unusual orchestra that includes 6 trumpets, 6 trombones, 6 percussions, 8 electric guitars, two Hammond organs and 4 pianos. According to music critic Andrzej Chępecki, *Karkas* is "a trance-like, hypnotic work in an aggressively repetitive style, a kind of modern Ravel Bolero, but different".

As a counterpoint to our main topic, the festival will also feature works for vocals (i.e., the most non-keyboard instruments, where sounds are generated and shaped directly) with ensemble orchestra. Among them, Maurizio **Kagel**'s last work, completed just before the composer's death: *In der Matratzengruft*, as well as Claude **Vivier**'s *Hiérophanie*, written in 1972, but first performed in April 2010 (compositions performed by musikFabrik). Among other major events, the first Polish performance of *Le livre de vie: Préface*, an ecstatic orchestra work by the modernist composer Nikolai **Obukhov**, written in the early 1920s (vocal part to be performed by countertenor Andrew Watts).

Installations and a special show by performer Arthur Tajber will announce the theme of next year's Warsaw Autumn Festival: music as a comment to reality.

The 53rd Warsaw Autumn Festival will also feature first world performances of compositions by Gordon Monahan, Zygmunt Krauze, Paweł **Szymański**, Maja

Ratkje, Ørjan **Matre**, Eivind **Buene**, Christian **Eggen**, Włodzimierz Kotoński, Rytis Mažulis, Marcin **Bortnowski**, Doina **Rotaru**, Marcin **Stachczyk**, Jarosław Kapuciński, Agata **Zubel**, Hanna **Kulenty**, Lidia Zielińska, Wojciech Ziemowit Zych, Jerzy **Kornowicz**, Cristian **Lolea**.

The majority of these works are Warsaw Autumn commissions. Performers will include the orchestras of the National Philharmonic, the Sinfonia Iuventus and Sinfonia Varsovia as well as chamber orchestras and ensembles such as Österreichisches Ensemble für Neue Musik, Oslo Sinfonietta, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Aukso Tychy City Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Nickel, European Workshop for Contemporary Music, Kwadrofonik, De Erepijs, musikFabrik.

Conductors will include Reinbert de Leeuw, Christian Eggen, Marek Moś, Rüdiger Bohn, René Gulikers, Emilio Pomarico, Étienne Siebens, among others.

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*The keyboard and -keyboardness are taken as equivocal metaphor, on one hand crossing into the area of advanced musical and multimedia techniques, and on the other, with many centuries of outstanding artistic achievements behind it.*

*A keyboard key opens ó encourages ó offers ó suggests ó generates and organises. It intermediates, but also breaks free; it serves ó but not everyone; it lends itself but also requires.*

*If is defined but remains definable. It is explicit but useless to the uninitiated. It can be a code:*

*you never know what will happen after you strike the blue button.*

*As every medium, the keyboard is located between. Between action and result. Through this, it shakes off its subordinated position and the illusion of innocent transparency. It acts as a*

*suggestive transmitter leading to special musical genres, evoking the notions of piano or harpsichord texture. It becomes the interface of musical activity. Consequently, music becomes tangible: more so than in the case of other instruments. Yet keyboardness is also the most mechanical of instrumental approaches.*

*Keys and keyboards have become popular interfaces for innumerable uses: from simple switches to complex electronic control boards. A key can generate any effect: sound, vision, motion, light. One of the most ancient inventions of musical technology becomes involved in the cutting-edge digital devices of modern times.*

*A keyboard medium is multimedial but also programmable. This characteristic opens infinite possibilities. It also inexorably moves us from the domain of technology to that of axiology. The metamorphoses of keyboardness inspire awe but also confusion: what is authentic and what is only apparent? Is the musical and visual effect that of virtuosity or manipulation? Is the artistic effect engendered by the performance of a musician improvising with the use of electronic interfaces only the result of spontaneous action, or a deftly directed mystification? Our modern dilemmas are the same as those of ancient times: keyboard instruments could essentially be percussion ones (piano), brass (accordion) or plucked (harpsichord). Today, an electronic button is connected both to everydayness and emergency.*

*Krzysztof Sz wajgier*