

ContraPianoDuet

Dr. Dariusz Bator – Bassoon and Contrabassoon
Dr. Gracjan Szymczak – Piano

Members of the *ContraPianoDuet* are: Bassoonist and Contrabassoonist – Dr. Dariusz Bator (Soloist of the Wrocław Opera Orchestra, Poland) and Pianist – Dr. hab. Gracjan Szymczak. Both artists are Lecturers at the Karol Lipinski Academy of Music in Wrocław. The ensemble was formed in 2020 by Dr. Dariusz Bator, and its inspiration was promotion of chamber music, with particular emphasis on those performed on a rare instrument in a solo role – Contrabassoon. Apart from contemporary music, the *ContraPianoDuet* repertoire includes various eras pieces.

Dr. Dariusz Bator



He was born on November 1974 in Lublin (Poland), where he started his music education. In 1994 he graduated from Joseph Elsner High School of Music in Warsaw. In 1994 and 1999 he studied at The Fryderyk Chopin University of Music with Professor Bogumil Gadawski. In May 1999 he First Place Award for Academic Bassoonist in Poland. The same year in August he left Poland to study at The Boston Conservatory (USA). During the time in Boston he studied Bassoon with Suzanne Nelson (Boston Symphony Orchestra) and Chamber Music with David Ohanian (Boston Symphony Orchestra and Canadian Brass).

As a student of the third year, he passed the audition to the Polish Radio Orchestra in Warsaw and for the next six years he worked as a Bassoon and Contrabassoon player. From 1997 to 2002 he cooperated with National Philharmonic in Warsaw, Chopin Academy Orchestra and Polish Chamber Philharmonic.

As an orchestral musician he has made a lot of recordings for Polish Radio Co. He have worked with such conductors as: Michel Camen, Agnieszka Duczmal, Walter Gugerbauer, Chikara Imamura, Maurice Jarre, Jacek Kaspszyk, Kazimierz Kord, Jan Krenz, Enio Morricone, Grzegorz Nowak, Marek Pijarowski, Wojciech Rajski, Antoni Wit, Tadeusz Wojciechowski. He has had concerts with the following musicians: Alexander Bunin, Nelson Goerner, Krzysztof Jakowicz, Konstanty Andrzej Kulka, Aleksandra Kurzak, Piotr Paleczny, Isabelle Moretti, and Daniel Muller-Scott. He has played in almost every the biggest concert halls in Europe, including: Philharmonic in Athens, Barcelona, Birmingham, Colon, Copenhagen, Dublin, Düsseldorf, Istanbul, Kiev, Nuremberg, Stockholm, Vilnius and *Ton Halle* in Zurich, *Royal Albert Hall* in London.

Since 2002 he has been working as a Principal Bassoonist at the Wroclaw Opera Orchestra, and since 2004 he has been working as a Senior Lecturer at The Wroclaw Academy of Music.

In 2005 he completed Postgraduate Study led by Professor Czeslaw Klonowski at The Karol Lipinski Academy of Music in Wroclaw where since 2017 until 2019 he has been Deputy Dean of the Instrumental Department.

At September 2019 he became Doctor of Arts. His Dissertation Work Theme is: Similarities and differences in German System Bassoon and Contrabassoon playing techniques.

He is the founder of the ContraPianoDuet and Polish Bassoon Quartet, whose artistic activity was inaugurated with a chamber concert at the National Forum of Music in Wroclaw (Poland) in October 2020.

Dr. Gracjan Szymczak



He was born in 1986 in Wrocław (Poland). He graduated from the Karol Lipinski Academy of Music in Wrocław in the following classes: Professor Grzegorz Kurzynski (Piano), Professor Lidia Grzanka-Urbaniak (Cello) and Professor Marek Pijarowski (Conducting) receiving a diploma with distinction in each specialty. In 2012, he obtained a Doctoral degree, and in 2019 a postdoctoral degree in musical arts.

He is a laureate of over 40 national and international Piano competitions. He received, among others: the Special Award "for a pianist distinguished by his musicality" at the 15th Fryderyk Chopin International Competition in Warsaw (2005); Grand Prix at the 13th International Piano Competition M. Magina (Paris 2009) and III Prize at the International Chopin Competition (Canberra, Australia 2011).

He is also a laureate of several dozen national music festivals. He has received numerous scholarships from the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, the President of Wrocław Scholarship and the Piotr Kler Foundation Scholarship. He recorded for Polish Radio and Television. He has six solo CDs in his artistic output. He conducts lively concert activities – he has performed in Poland, Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Turkey, China and Australia.

In 2012, he started working at Wrocław Academy of Music. As a teacher, he is often invited to conduct Piano courses, as well as to sit on the jury in Piano competitions. In 2019, he was awarded the Bronze Cross of Merit. From 2020, he is the Deputy Dean of the Instrumental Department at the Karol Lipinski Academy of Music in Wrocław.