



**Bard
Music West**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bard Music West Presents Its Third Festival, “The World of Grażyna Bacewicz”

The World of Grażyna Bacewicz

October 18-19, 2019

Noe Valley Ministry

1021 Sanchez St., San Francisco

7:30pm, Friday, October 18 | Program One: A Rising Star

3pm, Saturday, October 19 | Film Screening: *The World Only Sees My Cheerful Face*

4pm, Saturday, October 19 | Program Two: From War to Warsaw Autumn

8pm, Saturday, October 19 | Program Three: Evolution and Persistence – Bacewicz and Her Legacy

September 10, 2019 - San Francisco, CA – Bard Music West announced today details of its third festival, **The World of Grażyna Bacewicz**. Three concerts and a film screening on October 18 and 19 interweave narrative and music to offer an immersion into the work, influences, contemporaries, and legacy of Polish composer and virtuosic violinist Grażyna Bacewicz (1909-1969). In the fiftieth year since her death, the festival makes history as the first American festival dedicated to this great and overlooked Polish composer.

About the Festival – The World of Grażyna Bacewicz

Poland is celebrating Grażyna Bacewicz’s double anniversary this year: the 110th year of her birth and 50th of her death. But her music is still rarely heard in the United States. “The World of Grażyna Bacewicz” will be the first American festival dedicated to her music.

The festival’s three concerts take us on a journey from the early days of Bacewicz’s staggeringly prolific career to her last years before her early death at age sixty, and reach beyond her life to explore her legacy. Through possibly the most tumultuous and tragic period in Polish history, Bacewicz absorbed the influences of neoclassicism, serialism, folk music, and the avant-garde, and forged her own distinctive style, inspiring a generation of Polish composers and in many ways opening the door for women in composition. Bard Music West also continues its tradition of commissioning a new work, this year premiering a string trio by composer and violinist Mélanie Clapiès.

Artistic directors, pianist Allegra Chapman and cellist Laura Gaynon, say that this year's festival is particularly near and dear to their hearts. They discovered Bacewicz's music while creating a program in 2017 on the legacy of Fryderyk Chopin for the Bard Music Festival in New York's Hudson Valley. While researching contemporary Polish composers, they stumbled across her name and quickly became engrossed with her music. After diving deeply into her life, music, and contemporaries with the help of the Polish Music Center at the University of Southern California, Chapman and Gaynon firmly believe that Bacewicz is one of the most significant and moving composers of the 20th century. "Often, composers from the past are 'undiscovered' for good reason," says **Gaynon**. "Either their music is of inconsistent quality, they have a small body of work, or they are simply not very good, even if they were celebrated in their day. Bacewicz is one of the rare composers who has been truly overlooked." **Chapman** adds, "we hope our audience will fall in love with Grażyna Bacewicz as much as we have and join us after the festival in sharing her music and story with others."

The festival's journey begins in **program one** with Bacewicz as a young Polish composer/violinist and rising-star studying in Paris as a student of Nadia Boulanger. The program explores Bacewicz's formative influences with beautiful piano miniatures by her Polish predecessors Paderewski and Szymanowski; a dive into the world of **Nadia Boulanger's** studio in Paris with piano etudes of **Debussy**, **Stravinsky's** neoclassical Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet, and **Monteverdi** madrigals; and Bacewicz's String Quartet No. 1 and great Piano Quintet No. 1, written slightly later but undeniably influenced by neoclassicism.

In a **special event**, Bard Music West will screen *The World Only Sees My Cheerful Face (Dla Ludzi Mam Zawsze Twarz Pogodną)*, a 1999 documentary film about Grażyna Bacewicz's fascinating and tumultuous life. Produced by Telewizja Polska (Polish Television) and directed by Dariusz Pawelec, the film features rare footage of Bacewicz, clips from her chamber and orchestral works, and interviews with her family and friends. The film will be shown for the first time here with English subtitles.

In **program two**, we follow Bacewicz back to Warsaw, through the horrors of World War II and the repressive Polish communist regime that isolated Poland's artists from the Western world until the Thaw of 1956. Listeners will experience wartime **patriotic songs**, a popular song written by Witold **Lutoslawski** under the penname, Derwid, and beautiful **folk-inspired** songs by Bacewicz's friend Tadeusz **Baird** and Lutoslawski's piano four hands partner Andrzej **Panufnik**. Bacewicz's works on the program include her virtuosic Piano Sonata No. 2 and stirring String Quartet No. 4 which closes the program on a hopeful note.

Program two also includes the world premiere of a Bard Music West **commission** from emerging composer **Mélanie Clapiès**. Born in Paris and now living and working in San Francisco, Clapiès is also a violinist—and one of relatively few 21st-century classical performers who also compose. In addition to sharing an instrument with Bacewicz, Clapiès taught at the École Normale de Musique, where Bacewicz once studied, and like Bacewicz has been known to write fiction in addition to music. For this trio, Clapiès says she drew on "memories, war, and a mother's mourning for her child."

Program three investigates Bacewicz’s musical evolution in her later years, her exploration of but ultimate dislike of serialism, and her insistence on finding her own path. It also explores her musical legacy and influence on Polish women composers of today. **Alban Berg**’s Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano represent the influence of serialism on Bacewicz’s writing—she explored it in her String Quartet No. 4, and then personally rejected serialism, despite admiring it in Berg’s music. Listeners will hear several of Bacewicz’s stunning, exploratory late compositions including the Quartet for Four Cellos, and meet an array of brilliant living Polish women composers including **Hanna Kulenty**, **Marta Ptaszynska**, and **Agata Zubel**, in compositions for piano four hands, percussion, and electronics.

In this festival, Bard Music West adds a new **storytelling** element to better tell the narrative of this astonishing composer, her times, and legacy. Cellist, Fulbright scholar, and concert experience designer, Mosa Tsay, emcees, and the programs interweave music and recorded excerpts from Bacewicz’s letters, writings, and memoir (translated specially for Bard Music West by Marek Zebrowski of USC’s Polish Music Center).

Artists

Festival artists this year include new and returning top talent from around the country. Artists and ensembles new to Bard Music West include the award-winning **Tesla Quartet** from New York City, praised by Gramophone for their “tautness of focus and refinement of detail,” contemporary specialist and member of Alarm Will Sound clarinetist **Bill Kalinkos**, and pianist **Jeffrey LaDeur**. Returning to Bard Music West from recent triumphs are violinist and violist **Luosha Fang**, winner of the 2018 Tokyo International Viola Competition and the viola section of the 2019 Viola Classic Strings competition, and soprano **Sara LeMesh** who starred this summer to rave reviews in the critically-acclaimed West Coast premiere of Missy Mazzoli’s *Breaking the Waves* at West Edge Opera.

For a complete list of artists and biographical information, please visit www.bardmusicwest.org/2019-artists.

Featured artists include:

Jessica Chang, viola

Allegra Chapman, piano

Mélanie Clapies, violin

Elizabeth Dorman, piano

EQV vocal quintet

Emanuel Evans, cello

Luosha Fang, violin

Laura Gaynon, cello

Bill Kalinkos, clarinet

YuEun Kim, violin

Michelle Kwon, cello

Jeffrey LaDeur, piano

Sara LeMesh, soprano

Mika Nakamura, percussion

Brian Shank, percussion
Michael Smith, piano
Tesla Quartet
Mosa Tsay, cello

About Grażyna Bacewicz

Through the fire of war and political oppression, Polish composer Grażyna Bacewicz (1909–69) composed more than two hundred works of music for soloists and ensembles of all sizes. Critics of her time called her “the first lady of music.” She was a virtuosic violinist and pianist, author of murder mysteries, host of underground concerts during World War II, and a witty and indefatigable personality. She absorbed the influences of neoclassicism, serialism, folk music, and the avant-garde, and forged her own distinctive style, inspiring a generation of Polish composers.

Born in Poland, she studied composition in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, and violin with André Touret and Carl Flesch. She was concertmaster of the Polish Radio Orchestra in the 1930s and in 1935, she took Honorable Mention in the Wieniawski International Violin Competition (David Oistrakh took second). During World War II, she continued to compose, giving secret underground concerts in Warsaw. In 1954, she nearly died in a serious automobile accident, and following her recovery, spent the last fifteen years of her life devoted solely to composition.

Bacewicz wrote that she possessed “a tiny, invisible motor,” an image which only begins to explain her incredibly prolific career. Though she lived through one of the most tumultuous and horrific times in history and died at sixty, her oeuvre is staggering. Her catalogue of over two hundred works holds many large-scale pieces for orchestra (including seven violin concerti), pieces for chamber orchestra and large ensemble, chamber music, virtuosic showpieces for solo violin and piano, art songs, an unfinished ballet based on a play by Pablo Picasso, and several comic operas for radio.

Bacewicz deftly navigated Polish communist politics and the massive early 20th-century upheavals in composition, always staying true somehow to her own voice. A perfect example is her fourth string quartet. Though written in 1951, well before the uprisings of 1956 signaled the “Thaw” in the Polish government’s control over its artists, Bacewicz’s fourth string quartet won first prize in the 1951 International Composers’ Competition in Liège. It was then performed at the first Warsaw Autumn festival in 1956 which established Poland as an international center of contemporary music. Bacewicz was the only woman composer featured in the first six Warsaw Autumn festivals.

After the working-class uprisings of June 1956, the Polish communist government relinquished some of its restrictions on Polish artists, allowing the creation of the Warsaw Autumn festival, and ending the isolation of Polish musicians. Many Polish composers heard the works of serialist and avant-garde composers (including Schoenberg, Berg, Messiaen, Stockhausen, and Boulez) for the very first time. Bacewicz, who had been allowed some limited travel abroad for concerts, found a way to incorporate some of these influences into her music even before the Thaw. After

the Thaw, she also explored the avant-garde ideas coming from Western Europe and digested those as well, finding a new style in her compositions.

She wrote “I disagree with those who maintain that once a composer develops her own style, she should stick to it. I find such an opinion totally alien; it impedes further development and growth. Every composition completed today will belong to the past tomorrow. A progressive composer should not repeat herself. A composer should not only deepen her creation and improve upon it, but should also expand its scope.”

Ticket Information

Single

\$50 premium (first 3 rows), \$30 general, \$20 student

Packages (buy multiple programs and save)

Full Festival (all programs): \$135/\$80/\$50

Marathon Saturday (all Saturday programs): \$90/\$55/\$30

Enjoy drinks during the show with your ticket purchase. Buy tickets at bardmusicwest.org/tickets.

All events at Noe Valley Ministry (1021 Sanchez St., San Francisco).

Program Details

Program One: A Rising Star

7:30pm, Friday, October 18

As a young virtuoso violinist and rising star, Bacewicz moved to Paris to learn, explore, and create. In this program, hear Bacewicz’s brilliant early works and get to know her formative influences including her Polish predecessors; neoclassicism; and her teacher, the great Nadia Boulanger.

Grażyna Bacewicz (1909–69): String Quartet No. 1 (1938)

Igor Stravinsky (1882—1971): Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet (1918)

Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979): *Vers la vie nouvelle* (Toward the new life) (1917)

Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937): Mazurkas, Op. 50 (1924–25) (selections)

Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941): Nocturne in B-flat Major (1890–91)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918): Études for Piano (1915) (selections)

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643): Nine Madrigals (selections)

Bacewicz: Piano Quintet No. 1 (1952)

Special Event: Film Screening of *The World Only Sees My Cheerful Face*

3pm, Saturday, October 19

Join us for a unique screening of *The World Only Sees My Cheerful Face*, a Polish film about Grażyna Bacewicz's fascinating and tumultuous life. The film features rare footage of Bacewicz, clips from her chamber and orchestral works, and interviews with her family and friends. The film will be shown for the first time with English subtitles.

Dla Ludzi Mam Zawsze Twarz Pogodną (The World Only Sees My Cheerful Face) by Dariusz Pawelec. Produced by Telewizja Polska (Polish Television). English translation and subtitles by Anna Samborska.

Program Two: From War to Warsaw Autumn

4pm, Saturday, October 19

Follow Bacewicz through the horrors of World War II and the repressive Polish communist regime that isolated Poland's artists from the Western world. Experience wartime patriotic songs and beautiful folk-inspired pieces written during the early communist years. Also, discover the moving work of composer and violinist, Mélanie Clapiès, as she premieres her new string trio, commissioned by Bard Music West. The award-winning Tesla Quartet closes the program on a hopeful note with Bacewicz's stirring fourth string quartet, a centerpiece of the first Warsaw Autumn festival when Polish musicians welcomed the world back in.

Mélanie Clapiès: String Trio world premiere of commissioned work (2019)

Tadeusz Baird (1928-81): *Suita Liryczna* (Lyric Suite) (Julian Tuwim) (1953) (selections)

Andrzej Panufnik (1914-91): *Warszawskie dzieci* (Children of Warsaw) (1944)

Panufnik: *Hommage à Chopin – Five Vocalises* for Soprano and Piano (1955) (selections)

Grażyna Bacewicz: selected songs for soprano and piano (1955-1956)

Bacewicz: Partita for violin and piano (1955)

Bacewicz: *Polish Capriccio* (1949)

Bacewicz: Piano Sonata No. 2 (1953)

Bacewicz: String Quartet No. 4 (1951)

Program Three Evolution and Persistence: Bacewicz and Her Legacy

8pm, Saturday, October 19

Hear Bacewicz's most groundbreaking work written at the end of her life, including her Quartet for Four Cellos and her spectacularly virtuosic Four Caprices performed by Luosha Fang, recent winner of the Tokyo International Viola Competition. Then trace Bacewicz's legacy as an inspiration for a generation of Polish women composers, reaching into the future to meet Marta Ptaszyńska, Agata Zubel, and other leading Polish women composers of today.

Witold Lutosławski (1913-94): *Dance Preludes for Clarinet and Piano* (1954)

Agata Zubel (b. 1978): *Cadenza* (2013-14) for solo violin

Alban Berg (1885-1935): *Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 5* (1913)

Marta Ptaszyńska (b.1943): *Katarynka* for glockenspiel (2007)

Witold Lutosławski (“Derwid”) “I don’t expect anyone today” for soprano and piano (interpretation inspired by Agata Zubel’s improvisation)

Grażyna Bacewicz: *Quartet for Four Cellos*

Bacewicz: *String Quartet No. 7* (1965)

Hanna Kulenty (b.1961): *Van* for Piano Four Hands (2014)

Lidia Zielinska (b.1953): *Expandata* for Snare Drum and Tape (1997)

Bacewicz: *Four Caprices for Violin* (arranged for viola) (1968)

About Bard Music West

“Stunning and moving”—*San Francisco Classical Voice*

Founded in 2016 by pianist Allegra Chapman and cellist Laura Gaynon, Bard Music West presents immersive and playful concert experiences that reveal the relationship between 20th-century and contemporary composers and our world. Every concert of Bard Music West is designed to inspire a deep connection to the composers and their work. Bard Music West is an independently operated branch of the critically acclaimed Bard Music Festival in New York’s Hudson Valley.

Now in its third season, Bard Music West’s central offering is an annual festival that delves into the life, work, and inspirations of one composer from the past one hundred years, creating an immersion into the composer’s world. Concerts, talks, and related events range across time, genre, and artistic media as they follow the boundary-defying work and inspirations of each composer. Bard Music West has presented more than sixty world-class artists from the Bay Area and beyond in two festivals exploring the worlds of György Ligeti (2017) and Henry Cowell (2018). The 2019 festival explores the world of Grażyna Bacewicz.

Bard Music West Plays is Bard Music West’s pop-up chamber music series. The Plays series launched in 2019 with “Games and Revolutions,” a program exploring the music and influences of emerging composers Danny Clay and Gabriella Smith.

Artistic Directors



Kevin Fryer

Allegra Chapman
Artistic Codirector and Executive Director

Described as "brilliant" by the San Francisco Classical Voice, San Francisco-based pianist Allegra Chapman is dedicated to connecting with new audiences as performer, presenter, and educator. Allegra has performed as soloist and chamber musician at prestigious venues throughout the United States, Europe, and China, including Alice Tully Hall, the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series, the Bard Music Festival, the Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum in Budapest, SFJazz Center, and Xi'an Concert Hall in Xi'an, China. Her performances have been broadcast on WQXR New York, WFMT Chicago, and KALW San Francisco.

An avid chamber musician, Allegra performs regularly with UC Berkeley's Eco Ensemble, Illume Ensemble, Left Coast Ensemble, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and in Chordless, a duo with soprano Sara LeMesh. She has collaborated with members of International Contemporary Ensemble and the Eusebius, Orion, and Telegraph String Quartets.

Allegra is a passionate advocate for contemporary music. She is founding artistic codirector and executive director of Bard Music West, a new San Francisco music festival that explores the worlds of contemporary and 20th-century composers. From 2019-2021, she serves as a resident curator at the Center for New Music in San Francisco. Allegra has worked with composers Joan Tower and Charles Wuorinen and premiered the works of many young composers. In 2012, Allegra's unusual collaboration with Yamaha Disklavier and The Juilliard School's Center for Innovation in the Arts was the subject of a feature article and video in the Wall Street Journal.

As an educator, Allegra has coached chamber music ensembles at many institutions, including San Francisco State University and Xi'an Conservatory of Music. Her student ensembles have received top prizes in regional and national competitions. Allegra is currently on faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Pre-College division and MTSY Studio in Xi'an China.

Allegra received her MM from The Juilliard School as a recipient of the Larson, Goldberg, and Rosenman scholarships. She graduated in the inaugural class of the Bard Conservatory of Music's double-degree program with degrees in history and piano performance. Allegra owes much to her many wonderful teachers who include Joseph Bloom, Jeremy Denk, Seymour Lipkin, Sharon Mann, Julian Martin, John McCarthy, and Peter Serkin.



Carlin Ma

About Laura Gaynon
Artistic Codirector and Associate Director

Cellist **Laura Gaynon** has performed on her modern and baroque cellos in concert halls across the United States, Europe, Canada, and China. Based in San Francisco, Laura plays with the American Bach Soloists, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, Opera Parallèle, Ensemble Illume, and the baroque chamber ensemble MUSA. She has toured nationally with Pop Up Magazine and the Magik*Magik Orchestra and recently performed Philip Glass' opera *In the Penal Colony* with Opera Parallèle at the 2018 Days and Nights Festival in Carmel, California. Other recent festival appearances include performances at the Taos School of Music, American Bach Soloists Academy, Valley of the Moon Music Festival, Oregon Bach Festival, Toronto Summer Music Festival, and the International Piatigorsky Cello Masterclasses at USC.

Laura is a passionate advocate for new music and has helped to commission over a dozen new works of chamber music. As cellist with MUSA, she spearheaded its three-year Art Inspiring Art commissioning project and as a performer, she has premiered music by composers including Daniel Temkin, Matthias McIntire, Andrew McIntosh, and many others.

As an educator, Laura believes in the power of chamber music as a medium for teaching high level musicianship as well as crucial interpersonal skills. She founded and directs the String Quartet Program at Thomas Hart Middle School in Pleasanton, California, and is a faculty artist at Chamber Music by the Bay and the Pacific Crest Music Festival. Additionally, Laura enjoys teaching an active studio of private cello students in San Francisco.

Laura holds degrees from Yale University and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she graduated with an M.M. in cello performance, an Artist Certificate in chamber music, and an emphasis in Historical Performance Practice as a student of Jennifer Culp and Elisabeth Reed.

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