

Cracow Duo

Kalinowski, Szlezer - cello & piano duo

www.cracowduo.com

The prestigious magazine *The Strad* wrote about the Cracow Duo: “Kalinowski and Szlezer, friends since childhood, have a wonderfully natural rapport and there is an arresting quality to their playing that gives life to the music.” They studied together in Cracow and Paris. Musicians started to perform together as Cracow Duo almost ten years ago. Since that time they had received a high critical acclaim in Poland and abroad and gained sympathy of listeners. Positive reviews of their performances in media such as Polish National Radio, Slovenski Rozhlas, Radio Sueddeutsche Rundfunk and prestigious musical magazines and web sites as *ClassiqueInfo*, *Classical Music Review*, *Res Musica*, *American Record Guide*, *Ruch Muzyczny*, *Twoja Muza* and others proof that fact.

They started working together in 2001, their first piece being Chopin’s Sonata in G minor, Op. 65, and subsequently built an extensive repertoire. In 2003 they started performing as the Cracow Duo. They had performed in most prestigious concert venues in Europe and Asia. A tour of the Middle East in 2006 and Lutosławski in the Caucasus project developed by them in 2013 in occasion of composers’ birth centenary year proved both to be highly interesting experiences. In 2010 they represented their town on the Days of Krakow in Nanjing (China).

The shared fascination with Polish music has made the Cracow Duo its committed promoters at home and abroad, where they have presented works for cello and piano by such composers as Aleksander Tansman, Zygmunt Stojowski, Ludomir Rożycki and Tadeusz Majerski, as well as works by contemporary Polish and foreign composers written specially for them. In these days DUX recording producers will issue a special CD devoted to the works dedicated to Jan Kalinowski and Marek Szlezer.

Their recording of works for piano and cello by Alexander Tansman (2009) was awarded the *La Clef de ResMusica* and nominated to Polish Music Awards. Published in 2010 recording of Chopin chamber works has also received the prize of *La Clef de ResMusica* and nomination to the Polish Phonographic Fryderyk Award 2011.

A similar understanding of music and common artistic vision coupled with an excellent command of the instrument and a high degree of experience on the concert platform have produced interpretations that are emotional, sincere and spontaneous.



Marek Szlezer – fortepian

Jan Kalinowski – wiolonczela

Jan Kalinowski (born 1982) studied in Cracow, Paris and Stuttgart with Witold Herman, Paul Julien and Peter Buck. He has also taken part in master classes given by David Geringas, Ivan Monighetti and Arto Noras. He has held grants from Polish and foreign foundations, as well as the City of Cracow and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. He has received awards and favourable reviews at numerous competitions and festivals. He has recorded for radio and television, including the cello concertos by Witold Lutosławski (Lebanese National Orchestra, Azerbaijan State Philharmonic) and Marek Stachowski (Beethoven Academy Orchestra). At present he focuses on the cello works by Chopin, Tansman, Rozycki, Stojowski, Lutosławski and Penderecki.



He holds his own cello class at the Music Academy in Cracow, where he gained a doctorate in music in 2009. He has led courses in Bremen, Karlsruhe, Fermo and Tbilisi within the framework of an international academic exchange programme. At the end of 2013 DUX recording producers will publish a cd with his artistic project containing 8 works by Polish composers for cello ensembles from one to eight instruments.

Marek Szlezer (born 1981) is one of the most sought-after Polish pianists of his generation. His career started with the Grand Prix at the International Piano Competition in Rome at the age of 12. He has studied at the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris, the Music Academy in Cracow and the Chapelle Musicale Reine Elisabeth in Belgium with Ewa Bukojemska, Abdel Rahman El Bach, Dmitri Bashkirov and Marcella Crudeli. He has held grants from Polish and foreign foundations, as well as the City of Cracow and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. He is a prizewinner of many prestigious competitions in Poland and abroad. Many of his awards are for the interpretation of Chopin's music. One of his recitals was on a historic piano once owned by the composer. He has performed with leading orchestras, including the English Chamber Orchestra and the National Polish Radio SO, and at such venues as the Palais des Beaux Arts, Salle Cortot, the Wigmore Hall and St.Martin-in-the-fields. At present he concentrates on the music of Polish composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He discovered the piano music of Jadwiga Sarnecka and recorded a selection of her compositions for DUX. He also prepared them for publication by the Polish Music Publishers PWM. He holds his own piano class at the Music Academy in Cracow, where he gained a doctorate in music in 2009.



MAIN REPERTOIRE:

Ludwig van Beethoven	Complete Cello Sonatas
Johannes Brahms	Sonata in e minor op. 38 Sonata In F major op. 99
Max Bruch	Kol Nidrei op. 47
Zbigniew Bujarski	Kalszlez (2010)* Ornifania
Bartosz Chajdecki	Three Glimpses (2007)*
Fryderyk Chopin	Introduction and Polonaise op. 3 Grand Duo Concertant Sonata in g minor op. 65
Marcel Chyrzyński	Farewell (2013)*
Claude Debussy	Sonata (1915)
Antonin Dvorak	Klid
Cesar Franck	Sonata in A major
Maciej Jabłoński	Unfortunately, it's over ... (2006)*
Zoltan Kodaly	Adagio Sonatina Romance lirique
Witold Lutosławski	Grave
Tadeusz Majerski	Sonata (1949)
Bohuslav Martinu	Sonata nr 1 Variations on a Theme of Rossini
Krzysztof Meyer	Sonata op.62 Cazona op. 56
Maurycy Moszkowski	Three Pieces op.29
Piotr Moss	Polonaise dramatique
Andrzej Panufnik	Dreamscape
Astor Piazzolla	Adios Nonino Le Grand Tango
Jarosław Płonka	Croon (2009) *
Sergei Prokofiev	Sonata in C major op.119
Sergei Rachmaninov	Sonata in g minor op. 19
Ludomir Rogowski	Arietta
Ludomir Różycki	Sonata in a minor op. 10 Deux Mélodies op.5 Deux Nocturnes op. 30
Robert Schumann	Adagio and Allegro op. 70 Fantasiestücke op.73
Marek Stachowski	Recitativo e la preghiera

	Adagio ricordamente
Zygmunt Stojowski	Sonata in A major op. 18
Richard Strauss	Sonata in F major op.6
Igor Strawinski	Italian Suite
Dmitri Schostakovitch	Sonata in d minor op. 40
Karol Szymanowski	Sonata In d minor op. 9
Alexander Tansman	Sonata nr 2 (1930)
	Fantaisie (1936)
	Deux pièces (1931)
	Partita (1955)
Wojciech Widłak	All my anger (2013)*

*) compositions dedicated to Jan Kalinowski and Marek Szlezer

REVIEWS

Sonata in G minor, that held has filled up the first part of the evening was a true eruption of virtuosity of two young artists - Jan Kalinowski and Marek Szlezer.

Virtuosos had fully completed and understood each other – Kalinowski seen as a subtle melodic player and Szlezer, more fascinated by the harmonical complexity.

Particularly the finale with its broad-flowing theme and large number of secondary melodic ideas was full of an incredible energy. In Trio elegiaque, those two outstanding virtuoso were joined by an as well talented Anna Majcherczyk – and again musicians had show us a mature chamber playing, not lacking of its juvenile enthusiasm. A very good concert, the great instrumentalists and an unforgettable evening.

Adrianna Ginał, Gazeta Krakowska, 4th of April 2003

The Ministry of Culture, Dar Al-Assad for Culture and Arts, in cooperation with The Polish Embassy in Damascus, invited music lovers to a concert given by the Cracow Duo: Mr. Jan Kalinowski, Cello, and Mr. Marek Szlezer, Piano.

[...] The young artists concluded their fine concert by playing A. Piazzolla's Le Grand Tango. This is a grand concert piece of great vitality, bravura emotional ebullience and of virtuosity. It made a great climax. The audience gave a high ovation. Roses were presented to the artists. Thus ended one of the finest concerts in this season [...]

dr Sadek Pharaon, Syria Times, 12th of April 2006

The big event of a festival was a final concert by Cracow Duo, Jan Kalinowski (cello) and Marek Szlezer (piano).

Daniel Cichy, Ruch Muzyczny, July 2006

Cracow Duo, that is Jan Kalinowski cellist and Marek Szlezer pianist, assistant professors in Cracow Academy of Music, have played Sonatas by Ludomir Różycki, Karol Szymanowski (transcription of Violin Sonata) and Zygmunt Stojowski. I have made it in time to listen the Sonata in A major by Stojowski, composer that has turned out to be completely forgotten in our country. Young musicians are one of the few to reach for the polish music of XIX/XX century with a success, showing to all of us that we have really nothing to be ashamed of. The Sonata by Stojowski, well composed, interesting in its melodical and harmonical aspects, is moving for a listener and very demanding for both performers. It deserves to stay in our all to day concert repertory.

Jan Kalinowski and Marek Szlezer are two, completely different musical personalities that are outstandingly complementary. Rarely one can hear and observe such good cooperation onstage, such mutual understanding of a music performed. As an encore young artists have added also unknown to us, brilliant Fantaisie of Alexandre Tansman, and finished this beautiful evening with a touching interpretation of Largo from Chopin's Cello Sonata op.65.

Anna Woźniakowska, Dziennik Polski, March 2007

[...] Marek Szlezer is performing oftenly with cellist Jan Kalinowski. Both gentlemen has already managed to present together quite a lot of fine artistic creations. During this concert [...] they have very accurately and clearly showed to public the composers ideas, without omitting an individual touch in their interpretation [...]

Maciej Jabłoński, Dziennik Polski, 12th of May 2008

[...] Interpretation of Partita for cello and piano (1955) had full rights to be named an artistic creation. Tansman's music, dense and full of dramatic expression has found its ideal performers in Jan Kalinowski and Marek Szlezer.

Anna Woźniakowska, Ruch Muzyczny, January 2008

[...] The final act of the evening was Frederic Chopin's Sonata in G minor. The remarkably beautiful and surprisingly mature performance was delivered by two young musicians from Cracow, performing under the name of Cracow Duo: cellist Jan Kalinowski and pianist Marek Szlezer. The rendition of the Sonata was not only technically superb, as its exceptional musicality and depth have brought out romantic melancholy and "eternal longing", which were especially prominent in the second movement.

Marek Brzeźniak, Silesia No 61, April 2009

[...] Jan Kalinowski and Marek Szlezer, friends since childhood, have a wonderfully natural rapport and there is an arresting quality to their playing that gives life to the music, even when its content is less than inspiring.

Janet Banks, The Strad, January 2010

[...] But it is a Sonata for piano and cello that allows better to appreciate both performers. In this mature oeuvre, that exposures cello the most, the two musicians are giving their mastery not in a service of loud demonstration of virtuosity but contrary using it to leave space for each other. It is the principal valor of this duo, because it is much easier to shine then to let to forget. Or better, Szlezer and Kalinowski are having a subtle respect for each other. It is an art of discrecy that besides a fact that it renders justice to Chopin intentions brings us an intelligent and reflective reading of that Sonata. “

Bertrand Saint-Etienne, ResMusica , march 2011

Artists play beautifully, I think they have in common understanding of the music and share a vision of their art. Moreover they are excellent virtuosos of their instruments, phenomenal mutual fitting of the musicians impressed me with precision.

Beata Górecka-Młyńczak, Hi Fi i Muzyka, sierpień2011

Marek Szlezer and Jan Kalinowski duo has presented itself formidably. Both gentlemen had caused listeners to enter in the preternatural state of mind, allowing them to forget about time and space, transferring them into the land of wonderful sounds, deep cello tone with fascinating light and pure sound, outstanding „pianos”, in other words into the world of Music written with really majuscular M. Jan Kalinowski had masterfully harmonized himself with his instrument, emitting from it the sound of outstanding beauty and touching bloom, and very melodious repertory had widely shown the artists’ capabilities. Marek Szlezer, the pianist, was not even a step behind a cellist – incredibly flexible, soft passages of the accompagnament were creating a unique, glamorous aura. Arietta by Ludomir Rogowski had particularly caught my attention with its lyricism and finesse, perfectly presented by that duo.

Marzena Pikulska, Polska Muza, marzec 2012

Each following composition – by Zygmunt Stojowski, Władysław Zeleński, Henryk Pachulski, Dezyderiusz Danczowski, Maurycy Moszkowski, Ludomir Rogowski and arrangement of Prelude op.1 n.1 of Karol Szymanowski done by Grażyna Bacewicz – was coming closer to the goal. The program composed of emotional contrasts, alternation between lyrical and energetic vivacity, was stunning in two ways. Rarely we may hear the music of composers which were mentioned above. The Cracow Duo’s effort was not only scoped on perfect, spectacular and above-average emotional execution of these selected compositions but, first and foremost, it was an enterprise taken to interpret the pieces which have no registration which could serve as a pattern to follow. Cracow Duo has taken in its absolute possession the public’s attention, living it in lack and with wild need for at least one little while more to spend with the ghosts from Szymanowski’s era.

Maria Peryt, fineLIFE, kwiecień 2012

I have to admit, that I had never heard something like that before, astonished with a discovery of expressiveness of Shostakovitsch’s music, admiring Marek Szlezer and Jan Kalinowski I entered with them in a complicated world of Dmitrij Schostakovitsch.

Walentyna Źdanowicz BELARUS N5, maj 2013

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