

## **TOMASZ JAKUB OPAŁKA, composer**

„All the signs point to the emergence of one of new music’s most creative and distinctive voices in a long while” - **The Gramophone**, about Tomasz Jakub Opałka’s music.

Tomasz Jakub Opałka (born 1983, Poland) is considered as one of the most original composers of his generation, and yet one of the few young artists with such extensive experience in writing orchestral music. After completing studies at The Chopin University of Music in Warsaw/Poland, he went to Los Angeles, where he gained experience in film music, cooperating with some of the top LA composers. He is an author of several film scores, presenting distinct and original voice. His artistic attitude gives vibrant results. He is focused on projects, where music can be heard, and is treated as an important part of the project. In classical music he quickly established his name, working with the most important orchestras, and soloists in Poland and abroad, such as: Arditi Quartet, Janusz Wawrowski, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic artists etc. His music was performed in The USA, Mexico, South Korea, Germany, Slovakia, China, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and others. Opałka is also an experienced music producer, working with diverse electronic tools and virtual instruments. He teaches film music composition and orchestration at The Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, and is considered as an expert in this field in his native country.

### **Music**

Vibrant narration, extraordinary sense of musical color, sophisticated orchestration ideas, and innovative explorations in harmonics (*DNA* – scales inspired by genetic code; *Event Horizon* – quartertone harmonics etc.) create unique sound, atmosphere and structure of Opałka’s music. The composer combines diverse influences and inspirations, yet he very strongly cut himself from both, conceptualism or postmodernism. He is declared opponent of pre-compositional concepts, if created just for themselves, deprived of the real basis in essence and substance of the piece. His daring explorations are going far beyond theoretical trends. The main foundation is the creative intuition, combined with confident composing technique, care for structure, form, and narration of the composition. In 2017 Warner Classics released album *EMERGE* containing Opałka’s four orchestral works.

### **Books about Opałka**

In her book *Sounds, Whispers, and Clashes* Agnieszka Lewandowska-Kąkol described Opałka as one of the 16 most outstanding living Polish composers (and the only such young one) in between legendary artists, such as: Krzysztof Penderecki, Wojciech Kilar or Jerzy Maksymiuk, to mention just a few.

### **Scholarships and awards**

Opałka won several times prestigious scholarship of Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, as well as many other scholarships. He is also a laureate of multiple competitions for composers. Between 2006-11 he studied composition under prof. Krzysztof Baculewski at The Frideric Chopin University of Music in Warsaw. In 2013 he got his DMA in Composition. After graduation from the University he was developing his skills in composition and orchestration in Los Angeles, working with the leading film music composers, such as Christopher Young and Marco Beltrami. Since 2012 he is dividing his activity on the field of both, concert and film music between Warsaw and Los Angeles.

He won multiple prizes. In 2010 the jury of *Wawel: Musica Festiva* chaired by Henryk Mikołaj Górecki awarded Opałka 1st Prize for his *Spaces* for large symphonic orchestra. Furthermore, young artist is a laure-

ate of International Alexander Moyzes Competition in Bratislava (2006, *Visions of Perfect Shapes*), Karol Szymanowski Competition in Warsaw (2007, *Quadra*), Grzegorz Fitelberg Competition in Katowice (2007, *Epiderma*) and many others. In 2008 he won 1st Prize at Polish National Television's competition for young artists *Creative Valley*, and in 2009 his *Event Horizon Symphony* was awarded at the International Grażyna Bacewicz Competition. The same year he got to the finals of Tadeusz Baird Competition (*Trans-Ist-One*), and in 2012 to the finals of Transatlantyk Film Music Competition. He repeated this achievement next year, winning also an honorable mention at International FMF Young Talent Composition Contest. In 2011 Opałka was chosen from 3000 candidates for Berlinale Talent Campus, and in 2014 he received *Best Music for Film Award on Be There!* festival in Greece.

### **Masterclasses**

The composer participated in several composition courses and master classes, learning from, and consulting his works with such artists, like: John Corigliano, Michael Nyman, Adriana Holszky, Christopher Young, Peter Golub, Jan A.P. Kaczmarek, Richard Bellis, Robert Elhai, Daniel Carlin and Dennis Sands.

### **Performances**

His compositions were performed at various festivals and concerts internationally (USA, Mexico, South Korea, Germany, Slovakia, China, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and others). He cooperated with such orchestras, as: The Polish Sinfonia Iuventus Orchestra under Krzysztof Słowiński, The Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice under Michał Klauza, The Polish Radio Symphonic Orchestra under Łukasz Borowicz, Wojciech Michniewski, Szymon Bywalec, The New Music Orchestra under Szymon Bywalec, Gorzow Philharmonic under Monika Wolińska, Waldemar Groń, Zygmunt Rychert, Oskar Kolberg Philharmonic in Kielce under Jacek Rogala, Mieczysław Gawroński, Lviv Virtuoso Orchestra under Roman Rewakowicz, The National Orchestra of Ukraine under Roman Rewakowicz, Sinfonietta Cracovia under Jurek Dybal, Slovak Radio Orchestra under Daniel Gazon, ensembles: Scontri Ensemble, Cracow Duo, ProModern, and soloists: Janusz Wawrowski, Maciej Frąckiewicz, Bartłomiej Duś, Jadwiga Czarkowska, and others.

### **Commissions**

His works were commissioned by such institutions, as: Deutsche Oper Berlin, Polish Royal Opera, Calgary Philharmonic/Morningside Music Bridge, The Witold Lutosławski Society, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, The Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Polish Composers' Union, The Royal Castle in Warsaw, The New Music Orchestra, etc. In 2013/14 Opałka was a composer in residence at The Gorzów Philharmonic.

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