



UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC



Music Alive

INTERNATIONAL PIANO
FESTIVAL

Music Alive

3rd International Conference

The Role of Music and Fine Arts in the Modern World



June 29, 2026

University of Silesia

Institute of Music in Cieszyn, Poland



musicalive.wsne@us.edu.pl



us.edu.pl/instytut/ismuz/en

Dear Colleagues, Friends, and Distinguished Guests,

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the 3rd MusicAlive International Conference: *The Role of Music and Fine Art in the Modern World*. We are delighted to gather once again for this growing international event, which for the third time brings together artists, scholars, educators, students, and music enthusiasts from around the world.

Over the years, MusicAlive has become more than a conference — it is a space for artistic dialogue, cultural exchange, and creative collaboration. This year's edition continues our shared mission of exploring how music and the fine arts influence contemporary society, inspire human connection, and contribute to intercultural understanding in an increasingly globalized world.

We are honored to welcome an exceptional group of performers, pedagogues, researchers, and scholars whose expertise and artistic vision will enrich this year's program. Their contributions promise to create a stimulating and inspiring atmosphere for all participants.

Whether you are joining us in person in Cieszyn or participating virtually from abroad, we warmly welcome you to MusicAlive 2026. We hope this conference will offer not only valuable academic and artistic experiences, but also opportunities for new friendships, collaborations, and inspiration.

With warm regards,



**Dr hab. Anna Kijanowska,
prof. UŚ**

Founder and Artistic Director
Institute of Music in Cieszyn
University of Silesia in Katowice



Agnieszka Lasko

Co-Founder and
Managing Director
DMA Candidate in Piano Pedagogy
School of Music,
University of South Carolina

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The Role of Music and Fine Arts in the Modern World

Conference Program

9:30–10:45 – SESSION I

Dr. Kinga Jendrysik (Poland)

Song Teaching Practices and the Development of Students' Vocal Competences in Early Primary Education – A Perspective from Own Research

Dr. Molly Thomas (USA), University of South Carolina

Everything I Wish Piano Teachers Knew About ADHD

Dr hab. Anna Kijanowska, prof. UŚ (Poland)

In the Shadow of Fame: The Remarkable Lives and Rediscovered Music of Natalia Janotha and Irène Régine Wieniawska

10:45–11:00 – BREAK

11:00–12:05 – SESSION II

Agnieszka Lasko (Poland/USA), DMA Candidate in Piano Pedagogy, University of South Carolina

Integrating Improvisation into Piano Lessons

Ricardo Sá Leão (Portugal)

Score Detox: Unlearning the Sheet Music to Explore One's Voice

Dr. Sławomir Dobrzański (USA/Poland), Kansas State University

Anton de Kontski (1816–1899) and His Piano Music

12:05–12:20 – BREAK

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Conference Program

12:20–13:30 – Session III

Dr. Ziyue Gao (China/USA), University of South Carolina

Unveiling the Mysteries of Movement: How Joints Shape Pianistic Freedom

Dr. Małgorzata Anna Mokrus (Poland), Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice

Given and Hidden Meanings of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Études-Tableaux

Nina Kumorek (Poland), Institute of Music in Cieszyn, University of Silesia in Katowice / Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music in Łódź

Changes in the Function and Context of Jazz Music: From Street Space to Concert Halls

13:30–14:45 – Lunch Break

14:45–15:55 – Session IV

Dr. Po Sim Head (USA/Hong Kong), Metropolitan Community College–Kansas City

The Fantasy of Little C: Student Repertoire from Hong Kong — A Melting Pot of East and West

Ísis Cardoso (Brazil/USA), DMA Candidate in Piano Pedagogy, University of South Carolina;

Elias Blake (USA), DMA Candidate in Piano Pedagogy, University of South Carolina

Echoes Across the Atlantic: African Roots in Brazilian and American Piano Music

Dr. Ana Luísa Paz (Portugal), University of Lisbon

Talent: The Emergence of a Historical Need

16:00–16:45 – Q&A Session and Closing Remarks



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Elias Blake

USA

ECHOES ACROSS THE ATLANTIC:
AFRICAN ROOTS IN BRAZILIAN AND AMERICAN PIANO MUSIC

Elias Blake is a DMA candidate in Piano Pedagogy at the University of South Carolina, studying with Scott Price. He earned a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance, summa cum laude, from Capital University in 2022, where he studied with Tianshu Wang, and a Master of Music in Piano Performance with distinction from California State University, Northridge in 2024. At CSUN, he studied piano performance with Dmitry Rachmanov and pedagogy with E. L. Lancaster and Gayle Kowalchyk. His master's thesis, A Pedagogical Analysis of Twelve Waltzes by Florence Price, explored their value for intermediate students.

His research interests include piano pedagogy, culturally inclusive repertoire, and applications of generative AI in teaching. He has presented at conferences such as NCKP, MTNA TEMPO, and SCMTA, and his work has appeared in California Music Teacher Magazine. He won the 2025 South Carolina MTNA Young Artist Piano Competition.



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Ísis Cardoso

BRAZIL/USA

**ECHOES ACROSS THE ATLANTIC:
AFRICAN ROOTS IN BRAZILIAN AND AMERICAN PIANO MUSIC**

Ísis Cardoso is a Brazilian pianist and doctoral student in Piano Pedagogy at the University of South Carolina, where she serves as a Graduate Teaching Assistant, teaching group piano and supporting admissions at the Center for Piano Studies. She holds a Master of Music in Piano Performance from Georgia State University and additional graduate and undergraduate degrees in music from leading Brazilian institutions.

Ísis has presented her research at conferences including MTNA, CMS, AMS-Southeast, and the Frances Clark Center, with work focusing on Brazilian piano repertoire, women composers, and pedagogy. Her scholarship has been published in journals such as Piano Magazine and Musica Theorica.

Her research interests center on Brazilian piano music and inclusive teaching practices, aiming to broaden representation and accessibility in piano education while fostering meaningful musical experiences for students of all backgrounds.



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Sławomir Dobrzański

POLAND/USA

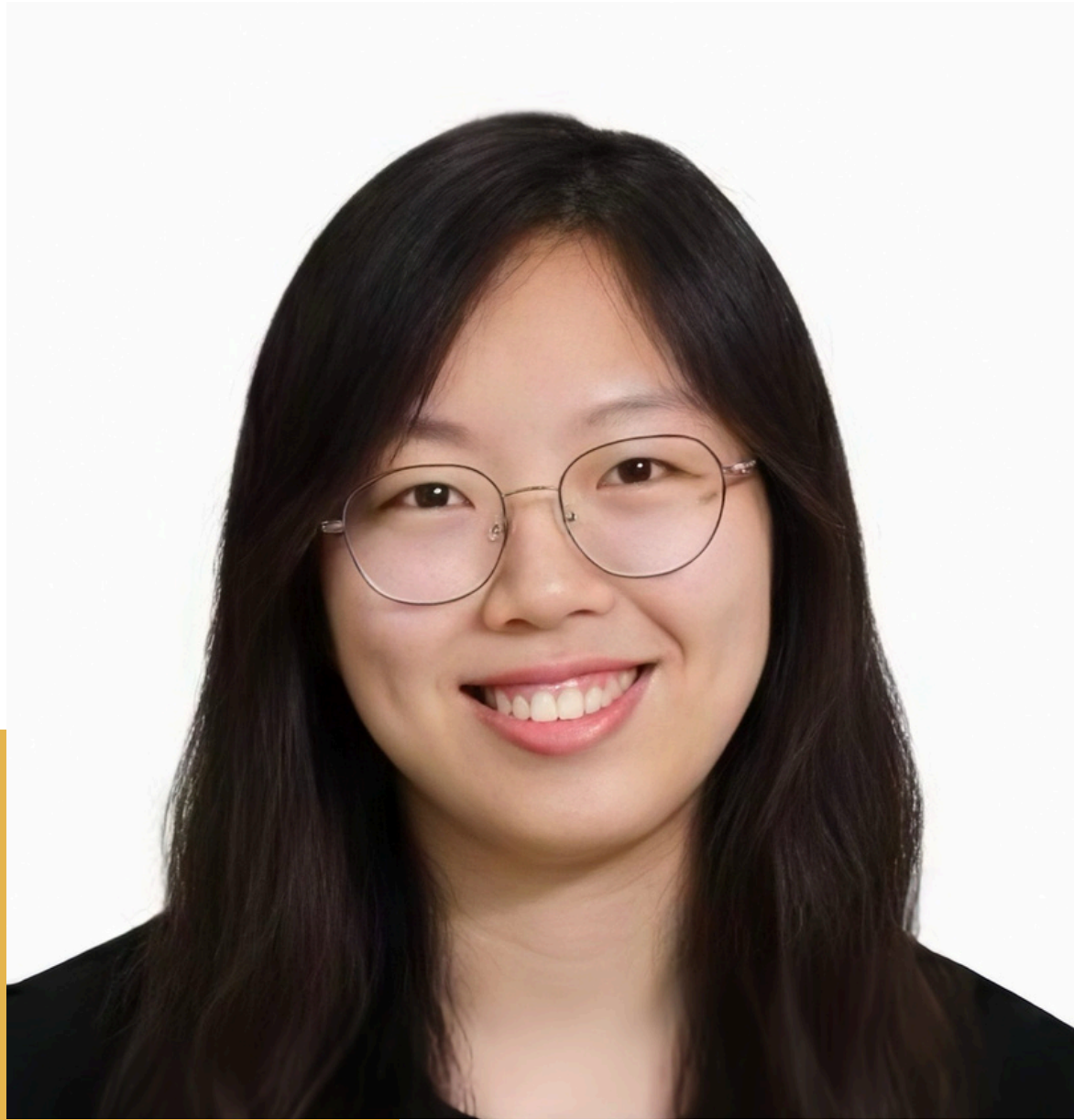
ANTON DE KONTSKI (1816-1899) AND HIS PIANO MUSIC

Praised by the Buenos Aires Herald as “one of the best Polish pianists”, Sławomir Dobrzański currently serves as Professor of Piano and Chair of Keyboard Division at the School of Music, Theatre and Dance at Kansas State University. Originally from Wrocław, Poland, he is a graduate of the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, Poland, and the University of Connecticut. Prior to joining K-State, Dr. Dobrzanski taught at the University of Rhode Island and Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota.

Dobrzański released several world-premiere recordings of piano music by Maria Szymanowska (1789-1831), Anton de Kontski (1816-1899), Wiktor Łabuński (1895-1974), Feliks Roderyk Łabuński (1892-1979), and Károly Aggházy (1855-1918), published by the London-based label Acte Préalable. He is also an author of the first biography of Maria Szymanowska in the English language.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Dr. Dobrzański performed in over twenty countries in Asia, Europe, North and South America. Recently, the pianist was honored with the title of “Meritorious for National Culture” by the Government of the Republic of Poland. He is an Honorary Member of the Kątski Family Association.

For more information, please visit:
www.dobrzanski.weebly.com



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Ziyue Gao

CHINA

UNVEILING THE MYSTERIES OF MOVEMENT:
HOW JOINTS SHAPE PIANISTIC FREEDOM

Ziyue Gao holds a doctoral degree in piano pedagogy from the University of South Carolina. Her research focuses on the physiological aspects of piano playing, particularly the relationship between anatomical structure and efficient technique development. Gao has presented at major conferences in the United States, including the MTNA Conference and the National Conference of Keyboard Pedagogy. Her work bridges scientific understanding and practical application in piano teaching, offering performers and educators strategies for healthy technique and injury prevention. Her recent topic includes Exploring the Human Body: How Do Arch Structures in the Hand, Foot, and Pelvis Function in Piano Playing.



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Po Sim Head

HONG-KONG/USA

THE FANTASY OF LITTLE C: STUDENT REPERTOIRE FROM
HONG KONG — A MELTING POT OF EAST AND WEST

Dr. Po Sim Head (Fanny) is a Hong Kong-born pianist and musicologist dedicated to promoting underrepresented composers, especially from Latin America. Her recordings feature works by Francisco Pulgar-Vidal and Blanca Layana Gómez, and she recently performed at the Musicantes II Festival in Lima, Peru. Fanny holds degrees in composition, performance, and musicology, including a doctorate from the University of Kansas under Dr. Scott McBride Smith. She teaches at Metropolitan Community College–Kansas City and maintains a private studio. She often presents at national conferences and publishes articles in academic journals and music platforms, including Interlude (www.interlude.hk).



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Kinga Jendrysik

POLAND

**SONG TEACHING PRACTICES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF
STUDENTS' VOCAL COMPETENCES IN EARLY PRIMARY
EDUCATION – A PERSPECTIVE FROM OWN RESEARCH**

Ph. D. of Arts in the field of musical arts, graduate of the Academy of Music in Katowice and the Doctoral School of the Academy of Music in Kraków. Her research interests focus on music pedagogy and psychology of music, with particular emphasis on the development of children's vocal competences and methods of teaching singing in preschool and early primary education.

She is the author of scientific publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals, including *Annales J*, *Wychowanie Muzyczne w Szkole*, and the *Bulletin of the International Kodály Society*. She has presented her research at numerous national and international conferences, including international Kodály symposia.

She is a member of the International Kodály Society and the Polish Kodály Society. She has participated in international pedagogical courses at the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét. She combines academic research with teaching practice as a school teacher and academic lecturer. In her work, she applies the concept of Zoltán Kodály, developing her own methodological approaches. She also conducts training sessions and workshops for teachers and actively promotes music education, particularly in the field of children's vocal development.



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Anna Kijanowska

POLAND/USA

IN THE SHADOW OF FAME. THE REMARKABLE LIVES AND REDISCOVERED MUSIC OF NATALIA JANOTHA AND IRÈNE RÉGINE WIENIAWSKA (POLDOWSKI).

Anna Kijanowska has established herself as a multi faceted musician, smoothly transitioning among her roles as a performing and recording artist, pedagogue, coach, and advocate of contemporary classical music around the world. She has performed and taught in North and South America, Asia, Europe, New Zealand, Africa and Australia. As an internationally recognized music educator, Kijanowska has been invited to present master classes, recitals and lectures at leading universities and conservatories around the world, including the Central Conservatory and the the Chinese Conservatory in Beijing, Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music at the National University of Singapore, LaSalle College of Arts in Singapore, Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts in Germany, Liszt Academy in Budapest, the Sydney Konservatorium, New Zealand School of Music in New Zealand, Yale and Harvard University in Cambridge, among others. As an adjudicator, she was invited to join a number of national and international competitions, including the Washington International Competition and the Catholic University Concerto Competition in Washington, DC; the MTNA Competitions; and the Yamaha Piano Competition in Guangzhou, China.

Ms. Kijanowska holds a Doctorate and a Master of Music in Piano Performance from the Manhattan School of Music in New York, and Habilitation Degree from the Music Academy in Gdańsk, Poland. She is Associate Professor at the University of Silesia in Poland and is a former faculty member of The College of William and Mary.



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Nina Kumorek

POLAND

CHANGES IN THE FUNCTION AND CONTEXT OF JAZZ MUSIC – FROM STREET SPACE TO CONCERT HALLS

A 23-year-old resident of Bystra, vocalist. Laureate of numerous vocal competitions – awarded over 130 times at national and international level, including 1st place at the 25th National Review of Poetic Song in Olesno and a nomination for the 61st Student Song Festival in Kraków. In 2025, she received the Award of the Bielsk County Governor for Creators and Cultural Animators for her artistic achievements and musical activity. She is a recipient of the Rector's Scholarship of the University of Silesia and the scholarship of the Minister of Science and Higher Education.

In 2026, she was selected from among 105 university performers affiliated with Transform4Europe and invited to perform at Jean Monnet University in Saint-Étienne, France, where she will present a jazz concert. Co-author of the music and literary project „Słowa ubrane w piosenkę”, within which original compositions are created to texts by poets associated with the region, presented during concerts and festivals. Her works are also broadcast on the nationwide radio station Danielka.

She is a student at the Institute of Music of the University of Silesia and at the Academy of Music in Łódź, majoring in jazz and popular vocal studies. She develops her skills under the guidance of Prof. Bartosz Listwan, Beata Bednarz, and Katarzyna Godzisz, MA.



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Agnieszka Lasko

POLAND/USA

INTEGRATING IMPROVISATION INTO TRADITIONAL PIANO LESSONS

Agnieszka Lasko is an internationally recognized composer of pedagogical piano repertoire, pianist, and educator. She is the author of the trilingual piano method First Class Piano (English–German–Polish), which has become a bestseller in Poland and has been praised as “Excellent” by the Polish Chamber Musicians Association and “Warmly recommended” by EPTA Piano Professional. Her piano collection Little Stories has received international acclaim, described as “a sheer delight” by EPTA Piano Journal and “an outstanding collection” by Pianist Magazine.

Her compositions are included in the ABRSM Piano Syllabus. Lasko’s piece “Autumn” appears in the anthology 22 Nocturnes for Chopin (EVC, UK) and was featured in International Piano. Her piano works are performed internationally, including at the London Piano Festival, and have been recorded on Anna Kijanowska’s album 21st Mazurkas (DUX, Poland).

Lasko holds a master’s degree in Piano Performance from the Music Academy in Łódź, Poland, and a master’s degree in Piano Pedagogy from Kansas State University. She is currently a DMA candidate in Piano Pedagogy at the University of South Carolina. In 2019, she participated in the world premiere recording of Aleksander Tansman’s piano four-hands works with Elżbieta Tyszecka (Acte Préalable, UK). Agnieszka Lasko is a consultant for the Art Education Center under Poland’s Ministry of Culture and Art and serves on the U.S.-based Frances Clark Center’s Creative Music Making Committee.



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Ricardo Sá Leão

PORTUGAL

SCORE DETOX: UNLEARNING THE SHEET MUSIC TO EXPLORE
ONE'S VOICE

Ricardo Sá-Leão is a pianist, improviser, and piano teacher. He graduated from the Lisbon Higher School of Music and the Faculty of Music at the Utrecht School of the Arts in the Netherlands, and is currently a final-year PhD student in Music and Musicology, specializing in Performance, at the University of Évora, Portugal.

As a musician and educator, he is particularly interested in promoting a creative, individual and free artistic experience—namely through the comprehensive and integrated development of skills—thus seeking to revive a historical tradition of musical practice and pedagogy. To this end, he dedicates himself both to adapting, creating, and publishing educational materials and musical works (especially in the fields of practical musicianship and improvisation), as well as to participating in improvisation projects and leading workshops.



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Małgorzata Mokrus

POLAND

**GIVEN AND HIDDEN MEANINGS OF SERGEI RACHMANINOFF'S
ÉTUDES-TABLEAUX**

Małgorzata Anna Mokrus, PhD, is a concert pianist, artist-researcher, and lecturer at the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice. Her scholarly work focuses on the interdisciplinary synthesis of music, visual arts, and literature. She is the author of numerous scientific articles and the monograph *Illustrationism and Symbolism of Sergei Rachmaninoff's Études-Tableaux*, featuring a complete CD recording of the cycle. A recipient of the prestigious Elżbieta and Krzysztof Penderecki Artistic Award (2026) and the 'Young Poland' scholarship (2025), she has won top prizes and several Grand Prix at competitions across Poland, Lithuania, Italy, and Spain. As a soloist, she performs throughout Europe in recitals and concerts with orchestras, including the Silesian Philharmonic, the Polish Paderewski Symphony Orchestra, and the Lviv Chamber Orchestra. She hosts the video podcast *Musical Pictures with Chopin in the Background* on Polish Radio Chopin and explores the intersection of arts through her exhibitions such as *Miscellanea*.



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Ana Luísa Paz

PORTUGAL

TALENT: THE EMERGENCE OF AN HISTORICAL NEED

Ana Luísa Paz is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Education of the University of Lisbon and a researcher at UIDEF - Research & Development Unit in Education and Training. PhD in Education - History of Education by the same Institute of Education, she is also a Master in Sociology - Sociology of Education from Universidade Nova de Lisboa and holds a degree in History from the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa. Recently, she was a fellow by the Humboldt Foundation at the RPTU - University of Kaiserslautern-Landau, Institut für Allgemeine Erziehungswissenschaft. She has published on the history of education and artistic education and, in particular, on the trajectories of musicians. Her research interests are in the area of the higher education pedagogy and the arts education.



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Molly Thomas

USA

EVERYTHING I WISH PIANO TEACHERS KNEW ABOUT ADHD

Molly Thomas recently earned a D.M.A. in Piano Pedagogy at the University of South Carolina. She holds a Master of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Northern Iowa and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Montevallo. An active researcher and writer, Molly's work has explored teaching students with Autism, underprivileged communities, and nineteenth-century women composers. Her dissertation focuses on ADHD and piano study.

Thank You

Thank you for being part of the
3rd MusicAlive International Conference.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all
presenters, performers, participants, students, and
institutional partners whose contributions
made this event possible.

We hope the discussions, performances, and
collaborations initiated here will continue to inspire
future artistic and scholarly endeavors.

MusicAlive 2026

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Institute of Music in Cieszyn

Poland



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