

**The Polish Chamber Choir Schola Cantorum Gedanensis** is an outstanding, fully professional ensemble whose hallmarks are its unique sound, supreme technical skills and depth of feeling, as well as a truly broad repertoire. It has won acclaim not only in Poland's most renowned concert venues but also in many prestigious music centres across Europe, in North America and Asia. The ensemble was founded in 1978 in Gdańsk on the initiative of Ireneusz Łukaszewski, who became its first artistic director. In 1983, his duties were taken over by his brother Jan Łukaszewski. Over 140 singers have so far sung in this 24-strong ensemble.

The repertoire of the Polish Chamber Choir comprises works of diverse form and style, ranging from unaccompanied music to large-scale oratorios, operas, and symphonies, and spanning works from Renaissance and Baroque to Classical and Romantic periods. The Choir has also established a high reputation for its performances of contemporary music, having given world premieres of over 700 works, including those by such composers as Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Wojciech Kilar and Krzysztof Penderecki. Along with other Polish composers (Augustyn Bloch, Krzysztof Meyer, Edward Pallasz, Juliusz Łuciuk, Andrzej Koszewski and Paweł Łukaszewski) and several foreign composers, Kilar and Penderecki are among those who have dedicated their works to the ensemble. The composers who have entrusted their works to the Polish Chamber Choir have been unanimous in recognizing its high-calibre vocal skills: its unified sound, excellent intonation, the perfect rendition of both the text and musical score, as well as its ability to probe the depths of a composer's intentions.

Thanks to its excellent quality of sound and interpretation, and perfect command of the 'vocal instrument' in the most demanding of works, the Choir has been invited to perform with such leading orchestras as Sinfonia Varsovia, the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Academy of Ancient

Music, Divino Sospiro, Neue Düsseldorf Hofmusik, Concilium Musicum Wien, Sinfonia Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Venice Baroque Orchestra, and outstanding choral conductors such as Eric Ericson, Uwe Gronostay, and Stephen Layton. It has also been invited to numerous prestigious festivals, such as the Warsaw Autumn, Wratistlavia Cantans, Soundstreams, Music in Old Kraków, Poznań Musical Spring, the Gaude Mater International Festival of Sacred Music, the Bydgoszcz Music Festival and Warsaw Musical Encounters. Foreign tours have taken the Choir to three continents, from Japan, through Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Spain, to the United States and Canada.

The discography of the Polish Chamber Choir comprises over 80 CDs, about 20 of which have been nominated for the Fryderyk Award of the Polish recording industry and five of which have received this prestigious accolade. The Choir has also recorded for Polish and foreign radio and television stations, among them Polish Television (including a set of 68 offertories by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina) and abroad for Dutch Radio, Sender Freies Berlin, Westdeutscher Rundfunk and ZDF (Channel Two of German public television).

The recordings of the Polish Chamber Choir have demonstrated not only its perfection in meeting all the technical and musical demands of a score, but also its charming, instantly recognizable timbre, which is often compared to that of the finest violins or the most beautiful birdsong.

The Polish Chamber Choir under Jan Łukaszewski was the first choir in the world to have recorded Penderecki's entire output for unaccompanied choir. In 2010 and 2014, these albums received Orphée D'or awards from the French Academie du Disque Lyrique. The choir gave the world premiere of the second version of Penderecki's *Missa Brevis*, and performed many of his works in the composer's presence, including some under his baton. In 2013, the Polish Chamber Choir joined forces with the Swiss instrumental ensemble Musica

Fiorita, under Jan Łukaszewski, in a project featuring 55 extant motets by the Gdańsk composer Andreas Hakenberger (1574–1627). A 2-CD album with these works was released in 2018 on the Naxos label.

The Polish Chamber Choir is a cultural institution of the City of Gdańsk. A member of TENSO (the European Network for Professional Chamber Choirs), it is the driving force behind many major artistic projects in the local community, such as ‘Bach Days’ and an International Chopin Festival. Since 2006 the Choir has organized the ‘Mozartiana’ International Mozart Festival, being one of its featured ensembles.

The Polish Chamber Choir under Jan Łukaszewski is a unique artistic phenomenon on a world scale. In its quest for perfection, it tackles ever new ambitious tasks that enrich the choral music scene and chart aesthetic models for successive generations of conductors and singers.