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1st International Piano Competition 2020 Online

THE COMPETITION JURY

Anna Kijanowska - founder, artistic director - Poland/USA

Agnieszka Lasko - co-founder, organizing committee - Poland

Chantal Balestri - Italy/Switzerland

Sara Davis Buechner - USA

Mia Elezović - Croatia

Mirta Gómez - Cuba/USA

Aleksandra Hałat - Poland

Agata Hołdyk - Poland

János Kéry - Hungary

Agnieszka Kopińska - Poland

Grzegorz Niemczuk - Poland

Jay Pengjie Sun - USA/Taiwan

Jelena Simonović- Kovačević - Serbia

Ana Telles - Portugal

Maria Yefimova - Russia/USA



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Anna Kijanowska

FOUNDER/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
JURY MEMBER

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Anna Kijanowska, WPTA-Polska President, 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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Agnieszka Lasko

CO-FOUNDER
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
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Agnieszka Lasko is a pianist, composer, educator and author. Her trilingual piano method book - written in Polish, English and German - 'First Class Piano' (published by Euterpe) has received acclaim from piano pedagogues and is gaining worldwide recognition. Described as 'Excellent' in the Polish academic journal of the Polish Chamber Musicians' Association (Kraków 2017), it was also 'Warmly recommended' by the UK Magazine Piano Professional EPTA as a very good alternative to what's offered by America and the UK.

Agnieszka Lasko completed her studies with professor Cezary Sanecki at the Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Music Academy in Łódź (Poland). With a deep interest for playing ensemble music, in 2019 she participated alongside Elżbieta Tyszecka in the world premiere recording of Aleksander Tansman's Piano Four Hands Music (Acte Préalable). Her passion for music is reflected in her commitment to teaching piano, in which she has achieved no little success. Her students include laureates of numerous piano and chamber music competitions. In high demand as a piano pedagogy specialist, Agnieszka Lasko lectures on original methods for teaching children at the early stages of their piano education. Among her many presentations she was featured at the National Academic and Artistic Conference 'Partnership in Music' at the F. Chopin University of Music in Warsaw (Poland), at the 10th and 11th World Piano Conference in Serbia where she taught Special WPC Master Classes, at Hands-On Research Symposium at University of Aveiro, Portugal. Agnieszka Lasko works as a piano teacher at the A. Tansman Music School in Łódź, Poland. Her new piano solos 'Little Stories' (Euterpe) was praised by Andrew Eales of pianodao.com as "a natural winner" and "a truly essential addition to the childrens' pedagogic literature".



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Chantal Balestri

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Praised for her “confidence and sound technique” (South Florida Classical Review), Italian/Swiss pianist Chantal Balestri is a versatile classical musician active worldwide. She maintains a career as a soloist, chamber musician, répétiteur and orchestral pianist performing in Asia, Europe, North and South America at venues including Carnegie Hall (Weill and Stern), Miniaci Performing Art Center (Miami, USA), Wiener Saal (Austria), Sala Piatti (Bergamo, Italy), Harbin Concert Hall (China) just to mention some of them. She has presented premieres of solo and chamber music works in contemporary music festivals, including “Composers Now Festival” and “Mostly Modern Festival” where she has presented pieces for piano solo, and piano and recorded tape. She has collaborated with renowned composers, such as Barbara Jazwinski, Rodion Schedrin, Gilead Mishory, Annie Gosfield, Roberto Piana, Paolo Marchettini, Andrea Talmelli, David Winkler beside others. From 2015 to 2017, she was an adjunct faculty member in Piano Studies at the New York University, where she actually works as a pianist. Further, she maintains her piano private studio in New York City, where she lives since 2015. Chantal was appointed New York President of the World Piano Teachers Association (WPTA) in January 2019. Chantal has been invited as a guest artist to give masterclass and seminars at the Nashville Steinway Hall, the Conservatory of Music of Valdivia (Chile), the label SHEVA Collection agency (London), and the Scuola di Music Sinfonia in Lucca (Italy). Chantal is the co-founder and Artistic Director of the Lunigiana International Music Festival, now in its third edition.



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Sara Davis Buechner

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Pianist Sara Davis Buechner has been praised worldwide as a musician of intelligence, integrity and all-encompassing technical prowess" (New York Times); lauded for her "fascinating and astounding virtuosity" (Philippine Star), and her "thoughtful artistry in the full service of music" (Washington Post); and celebrated for her performances which are "never less than 100% committed and breathtaking" (Pianoforte Magazine, London).

In her twenties, Ms. Buechner was the winner of a bouquet of prizes at the world's première piano competitions -- Queen Elisabeth of Belgium, Leeds, Salzburg, Sydney and Vienna. She won the Gold Medal at the 1984 Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition, and was a Bronze Medalist of the 1986 Tchaikowsky International Piano Competition in Moscow.

With an active repertoire of more than 100 concertos ranging from A (Albeníz) to Z (Zimbalist), she has appeared as soloist with many of the world's prominent orchestras. Audiences throughout North and South America have applauded Ms. Buechner's recitals in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center and the Hollywood Bowl; and she enjoys wide success throughout Asia where she tours annually.

Sara Davis Buechner is Professor of Piano at the Boyer College of Music and Dance – Temple University in Philadelphia. She has given master classes and served on international competition juries around the globe, and has been a Yamaha artist for more than 30 years.



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Mia Elezović



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Mia Elezović studied piano with Zvezdana Bašić at the Academy of Music, University of Zagreb, where she graduated at the age of 19, and in 2001 did a master's thesis. She continued her piano studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna and at Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts with Herbert Seidl. She completed her second master's degree (Contemporary Performance Program) at the renowned Manhattan School of Music, New York. She gained additional ideas and stimulations in master classes by L. Hokanson, J. F. Antonioli, J. Perry, J. O'Connor und M. Suk. Ms Elezovic has been giving numerous piano recitals in Europe, Qatar, Japan, Mexico and the USA, but is very much sought after as a chamber musician appearing with different ensembles (Spanish National Ensemble for Contemporary Music; East Coast Contemporary Ensemble, Le Train Bleu, USA; Synchronos Ensemble, Alisios Camerata, Croatia). As a soloist, she appeared with a number of orchestras and conductors, e. g. Kazushi Ono, Pavle Dešpalj, Ralph Pascal, Aleksandar Kalajdžić and Luca Pfaff. Ms Elezovic is the laureate of national and international piano competitions. She is a recipient of the Dean's Award of the University of Zagreb and also received an award by the German Da-Ponte-Stiftung. Ms Elezovic was a faculty member of Kyoto University for Music and Art (Japan), Royal Conservatory of Liege (Belgium) and Arts Academy in Split (Croatia). Since 2016 she is an Assistant Professor for chamber music at Academy of Arts and Culture (University Strossmayer) in Osijek, Croatia.



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Mirta Gómez

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Mirta Gómez received her early piano training from her mother in her native Cuba. She continued her musical education at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in San Francisco, CA and the Juilliard School in New York City. Ms. Gómez' musical career has taken her to many countries / cities , performing in renowned Concert Halls. Her performances include recitals at the Leo S. Bing Auditorium at the Los Angeles County Museum in Los Angeles, Civic Center Auditorium in Monterey, CA. The Metropolitan Museum of Art , United Nations Concert Hall, Town Hall, Carnegie Recital Hall, and Merkin Hall in New York City .

Ms. Gómez' International tours have included performances at the Grand Theatre de Geneve, Switzerland, Hochschule fur Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin, Germany; Tel-Hai Festival in Israel a televised performance at the Conservatorio Nacional "Lopez Buchardo" in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and most recently at the World Piano Conference / Festival 2019 in Novi Sad, Serbia.

Additionally, Ms. Gomez played a private recital for Mayor and Mrs. Giuliani at Gracie Mansion in New York. Mirta Gomez has recently been a Visiting Professor at Universities in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Portland, Oregon, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Graduate Center City University of New York. As a lecturer, she was invited for a presentation on "La Tumba Francesa / French Drumming in Cuba, at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C.

Ms. Gómez is a Steinway Artist.



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Aleksandra Hałat



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Aleksandra Hałat is a passionate pedagogue and performing artist. She gave masterclasses and lectures in Eccola Superior de Música de Lisboa (Portugal), Catholic University in Ružomberok (Slovakia) and for Pro Corda (United Kingdom). She is a piano and chamber music teacher, the member of ECMTA European Chamber Music Teachers Association. She has performed solo and chamber repertoire both in Poland and abroad, including Austria, Turkey, Croatia, Italy and the Czech Republic, Scotland and Slovakia.

She is graduate of the Karol Szymanowski Music Academy in Katowice and the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Graz, Austria.. She is a two-time winner of the National Piano Chamber Competition in Toruń. She received a VIP (Vienna International Pianists) scholarship. In 2007 she became a scholarship holder at AIMS (American Institute for Musical Studies).

In 2010, she received a distinction together with Agata Hołdyk at the Concours Grieg International Piano Competition in Oslo, Norway, in the category of piano duos. In 2011, together with Agata Hołdyk, she was awarded the second prize at the Bradshaw & Buono International Piano Competition in New York.

Since 2009, together with Agata Hołdyk, she has been a co-creator of the unusual piano duet AHHA PIANO DUO. In 2017, she recorded very applauded two albums: "Our world of 4 hands" with Agata Hołdyk as Ahha Piano Duo and "The Ways" with chamber repertoire. In 2018 she defended her PhD . The subject of her dissertation was: "Transcription in chamber music as a space for pianistic interpretation based on selected works". Now she is working at applying this subject in education. She currently works as an assistant at the University of Silesia in Cieszyn.



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Agata Hołdyk

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Agata Hołdyk - PhD holder, adjunct of the Music Institute, Silesian University in Katowice. Prizewinner in many national and international competitions, among others: 5th place in the 21st International Piano Competition in Marsala (Sicily), 1st place in the 3rd Silesian Piano Competition in Zabrze and 2nd place in the 6th M. Magin International Piano Competition in Paris (France). A grant holder of the Minister's of Culture and Art Artistic Grant.

In 2009 she formed the AHHA PIANO DUO together with Alexandra Hałat. The pianists' artistic achievements include prizes won in international competitions: the second prize in the Bradshaw & Buono International Piano Competition in New York (records contest), an award in International Piano Competition "Concours Grieg" in Oslo (Norway). She began her piano lessons at the age of 9 at the Stanisław Moniuszko Primary School of Music and at the Karol Szymanowski Secondary School of Music she graduated with honours in the piano class of mgr. Maria Wróbel-Zegalska. She is a graduate of the Karol Szymanowski Music Academy in Katowice in the piano class of Professor Andrzej Jasiński. She made a practical course at the University for Music and Art (Graz, Austria). She finished postgraduate studies in piano class of professor Andrzej Jasinski.

Agata Hołdyk was also a member of Jury at International Piano Competition in Goerlitz and National Piano Duo Competition in Jelenia Gora. Continually she is playing concerts as a solo and chamber artist in Poland and abroad (Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Ukraine).



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János Kéry



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János Kéry was born in 1974 into a musical family. He started his piano and composition studies in Debrecen (Hungary) and continued in the USA at Boise State University, and later in the Piano Department of the Liszt Academy in Budapest where he graduated with honours. In 2000 he was awarded the Artisjus Prize, and became a member of the Hungarian Society for Music. He won Eötvös and DAAD scholarships for his postgraduate studies at the University of Music in Saarbrücken, Germany, where he gained two further Masters degrees in 2001 (Konzertreife) and 2015 (Solistenprüfung). He was awarded the degree of DLA (Doctor of Liberal Arts) in May 2015 by the Liszt Academy in Budapest. His teachers, whom to this day he remembers with fondness and gratitude, were in chronological order: Mrs Dr Tamás Irinyi, Erzsébet Helyes, Jenő Keuler, Attila Pless, Zsolt Molnár, Madeleine Forte, Wallis Bratt, James Cook, Alexander Peskanov, István Lantos, Edit Hambalkó, András Kemenes, Márta Gulyás, Dimitrij Baskirov, Klára Körmendi, Ferenc Rados, György Kurtág, Sándor Devich, Béla Bánfalvi, Kálmán Kostyál, Thomas Douis, Eduard Brunner, Florent Boffard, Vadim Suchanov, Péter Nagy, Ilona Prunyi. From 2004 to the present he has been teaching piano at the Liszt Academy in Budapest. He has given master classes in Quindao (China), Sankt Wendel (Germany) and the State Music Academy of Mexico. He has been juror at the Ignác Semmelweis Music Competition and the Zoltán Kodály Piano Competition in Budapest and the Angelica Morales National Piano Competition in Mexico City. He has given concerts with Boise State University Symphony, the BM Duna Symphony Orchestra, the Debrecen and the Szombathely Symphony Orchestras, and the Sándor Frigyes Chamber Orchestra. He is a frequent performer in the contemporary music Mini-Festival in Budapest. He has performed in the concert halls of the Liszt Academy, the Vigadó, the Palace of Arts in Budapest, in Yale and Boise Universities in the USA, the Bellas Artes concert center in Mexico City among others as well as in many different countries: Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Austria, Germany, France, Netherlands, UK, Spain, Finland, Italy, USA, Canada, and Mexico. He has made recordings for radio, and given live broadcasts on BSU Radio (USA), Bartók Radio (Budapest), and Saarbrücken Klassik Radio (SR2).



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Agnieszka Kopińska

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Agnieszka Kopińska - pianist, chamber musician, teacher. She completed her studies at the Academy of Music in Katowice, in the piano class of prof.

J. Stompel and prof. A. Maximov. She holds a doctoral degree from the Music Academy in Bydgoszcz. She is a three-time winner of the Chopin Scholarships Competition in Warsaw (1992, 1993, 1996). She regularly performs solo and chamber concerts in Poland and abroad (France, Germany, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Latvia) as well as performs as a soloist with the orchestras of the Jelenia Góra Philharmonic, Katowice, Warsaw.

She repeatedly participated in concerts and recordings of the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, i.a. under the direction of K. Penderecki and H.M. Górecki. Since 1996 she has been playing piano duet with her husband, Peter. In 2000, while in the US at the invitation of Central Washington University, she and her husband performed a recital and conducted piano workshops for students of this university.

In 2009-2012 she recorded a complete set of Witold Lutosławski's works for solo piano (with "Sonata" in 1934) and all compositions for piano in chamber composition. In 2013 - on the hundredth anniversary of the composer's birth - published a publication titled "Solo and chamber piano pieces in Witold Lutosławski's artistic work. The role of perceptual factors in musical performance". A particular area of her artistic and research interests is the performance of twentieth-century and contemporary music and the subject of musical perception in the theoretical and practical aspects..



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Grzegorz Niemczuk

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Grzegorz Niemczuk - Polish classical pianist. During the last 14 years of his career he has performed over 400 recitals and concerts in 33 different countries on all 6 continents. Admired for his sensitivity, poetry, beautiful sound and passionate virtuosity he became a favorite with audiences and critics alike particularly in Norway, Japan, China and Latin America. His solo debut performance in Tokyo in July 2017 was a spectacular success, described in the "Chopin Magazine" as the "performance with firm structure, and beautifully solid in expressing the essence of the story, virtuosity and agitation, transmitting the nuances of changing the light and shadow as well as the poetic tune of mind". He became a favorite of Japanese audience immediately, having been invited to another tours every year.

His Carnegie Hall debut (with Chopin's 2nd Piano Concerto) was described by The Epoch Times as "full of fluidity, extremely wide dynamic range – from resounding fortissimos to whisper-soft pianissimos, variety of tone colors, and dazzling virtuosity". Niemczuk's vast repertoire spans more than 200 solo pieces and 30 piano concerti ranging from the Baroque to the contemporary era. His particular specialty is the Romantic period.

Grzegorz Niemczuk is the prizewinner of many international piano competitions, he has received many honorable awards in his home country including from Prime Minister and the Ministry of Culture. In addition to his performing career he is also a dedicated pedagogue and currently serves on the piano faculty of the Silesian University in Katowice, His students are winners of many international piano competitions. He is also invited to present masterclasses and lectures in many music universities in Norway, China, Japan, Peru, Singapore, Ecuador, Costa Rica and United States.



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Jay Pengjie Sun

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Born in Taiwan and educated in the United States, Jay Pengjie Sun has firmly established himself as one of the premier pianists and pedagogues of the Asia region, with students taking prizes at major competitions such as Ettlingen, Sendai, Zhuhai Mozart, Beijing Chopin and others. He regularly tours in solo recital with past programs including Liszt's Complete Transcendental Etudes which Beijing Music Life described as a "marvelously stunning feat", as well as duo piano performances with his wife Vivian Li, frequent concerto performances and chamber music concerts with the Xinghai Piano Trio.

Sun is also a prolific writer with a monthly column in Piano Artistry magazine discussing the systematic training of young pianists and a journal in the newspaper Music Weekly chronicling his musings on life as a musician.

In addition to his current position on the faculty of Xinghai Conservatory Middle School, he is also a regular guest artist of the prestigious Morningside Music Bridge program. His principal teachers include Nancy Weems, Horacio Gutierrez, John Weems and Qi Li.



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Jelena Simonović- -Kovačević

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Jelena Simonović-Kovačević earned her Bachelor's degree in piano performance at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad, under the guidance of Mr. Kemal Gekić.

She completed her Master's degree at the Syracuse University under Dr. Wei-Yi Yang, where she held a teaching assistantship and was awarded the Irene Crooker Award for Excellence in Piano Performance. She has played in master classes for a number of internationally recognized musicians, among them Naum Shtarkman, Boris Berman, Kemal Gekic, Diane Andersen, Arbo Valdma, and Rita Kinka.

She excelled in many piano competitions, including the Missouri Music Teachers' Association, the International Piano Competition in Moncalieri, the Yugoslav Piano Competition in Niš, and the International Piano Competition in Vibo Valentia.

Mrs. Simonović-Kovačević has held positions in numerous music organizations: The Isidor Bajić Memorial, the Yale SMN, the Odyssey Chamber Music Series, and the KotorArt Festival. She has established a Complementary Piano category at the Isidor Bajić Festival, where she also served as a jury member. She began her professional career as a piano professor at the Isidor Bajić Music School.

She currently holds the position of the assistant professor and Head of the Cathedrae for Complementary Piano at the University of Novi Sad, Academy of Arts in Novi Sad. She has performed as a soloist across United States of America, Belgium, Italy, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Serbia. She regularly holds masterclasses and lectures. She is a member of the jury at several national and international competitions.

Ms. Simonović-Kovačević is a member of EPTA Voyvodina, EPTA Serbia, and WPTA among others, and she is a certified instructor for the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM.)



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Ana Telles

JURY MEMBER
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Portuguese pianist Ana Telles has pursued musical studies in Lisbon, New York and Paris, with Yvonne Loriod-Messiaen, Sara Buechner e Nina Svetlanova (Piano), among others. She has graduated from Escola Superior de Música de Lisboa («Bacharelato»), Manhattan School of Music (Bachelor's Degree in Piano Performance) and New York University (Master's Degree in Piano Performance).

She holds a doctoral degree in Music History and Musicology from the Paris IV University (Sorbonne) and the University of Évora (Portugal), where her research studies were directed by Danièle Pistone and Rui Nery; her thesis on Portuguese composer Luís de Freitas Branco's piano music was distinguished with the highest classification. Ana Telles has plays regularly in Portugal, Germany, France, Italy, Ireland, Spain, Poland, Cuba, Brazil, Taiwan, South Korea, Canada and the United States, as a soloist or integrated in chamber music groups.

She is Associate Professor with Habilitation at the University of Évora's Music Department and Dean of the School of Arts of the same university. She is a member of CESEM Music and Musicology Research Lab and develops research projects in the fields of Music of the 20th and 21st centuries, Portuguese modern and contemporary music, Piano music. She has authored a significant number of book chapters, papers in peer-reviewed journals and musical editions, including a critical edition of Luís de Freitas Branco's Piano Preludes (AvA Musical Editions); her discography includes sixteen published CD's.



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Maria Yefimova

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Hailed by critics as ‘highly artistic’, “brilliant”, and “truly outstanding”, internationally acclaimed pianist Maria Yefimova has toured throughout the US, Russia, and Europe, performing in such major venues as Carnegie Hall, Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory Hall, Lisinsky Hall (Croatia), Teatro Puccini (Italy), and Slovak Philharmonic Hall. She has been featured on Bravo TV network, Tele Monte Orlando (Italy), Paradise Radio (USVI), Slovak National Television, WCVE public radio, as well as on major TV art networks in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, and Chile. She is a featured artist in a film documentary Women of Music- a classical music series that presents performances and interviews with today’s top artists from around the world. Ms. Yefimova’s festival appearances include Virginia Arts Festival, Meranofest and Vello Music Festivals in Italy, Rachmaninoff Festival in Russia, Water Island Music Festival in USVI, Chamber Music Institute in VA, and Lake George Music Festival in NY. As an orchestral soloist she performed with Slovak Philharmonic, Tambov Philharmonic, and William and Mary Symphony Orchestras, in concertos by Mozart, Liszt, Brahms, Rachmaninoff, and Prokofiev. As an avid chamber musician, Maria has collaborated with such prominent artists as trumpet virtuoso Joe Burgstaller (Canadian Brass), violinist Dmitri Berlinsky (Paganini Gold medalist), cellist Eric Jacobsen (Brooklyn Rider Quartet, the Knights Orchestra), and world-renowned pianist and pedagogue Boris Slutsky. She is a founding member of the award winning Atlantic Chamber Ensemble. Educated at the Moscow Conservatory and the Manhattan School of Music, Dr. Yefimova is on the faculty of the College of William and Mary. She is the recipient of the “Best Teacher” Award from The X International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians (2017).