



## **Krzysztof Penderecki has passed away**

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**The outstanding Polish composer died on Sunday, March 29 at the age of 86.**

**Krzysztof Penderecki was born on 23 November 1933 in Dębica. He was one of the greatest contemporary composers and conductors. In 2013 he was awarded the title of Honorary Citizen of the Royal Capital City of Krakow.**

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Krzysztof Penderecki had a special bond with Krakow. It was here that he began to study composition under Franciszek Skołyszewski. He continued his studies at the Academy of Music in Kraków under Artur Malawski and Stanisław Wiechowicz. In 1958 he took up an assistant professorship in the Department of Composition at his alma mater, and in 1972 he was appointed its rector. He held this position until 1987. In 1987-1990 he was artistic director of the Krakow Philharmonic.

He began composing at the early age of 6 and was successful from the very beginning. He began his conducting career in the 1970s. Since then he has conducted the world's greatest orchestras, leading symphonic ensembles performing works by Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Shostakovich and his own.

Krzysztof Penderecki has won many prestigious awards. In 1959 he won first, second and third prizes at the Young Composers' Competition of the Polish Composers' Union for his anonymously submitted scores: *Stanzas*, *Emanations*, and *Psalms of David*. In 1961 the song *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima*, for which he received the UNESCO award in Paris, was broadcast by radio stations all over the world, and Penderecki became a leading representative of the musical avant-garde of those times.

In the years 1968-69 Penderecki wrote his first opera *The Devils of Loudun*, followed by *Paradise Lost*, *The Black Mask*, *Ubu Rex*.

He is honorary doctor of the Academy of Music in Krakow (1994), the Jagiellonian University (1998) and many art schools around the world. In 2005 he was awarded the Order of the White Eagle - the highest Polish decoration.

It must be mentioned that Sinfonietta Cracovia – the Orchestra of the Royal Capital City of Krakow - was founded thanks to the support of Krzysztof Penderecki. Today it is considered not only one of the best Polish chamber orchestras, but also one of the European leaders.

The most important musical events of 1998 in Krakow were held under the patronage of the composer himself and with his active involvement in the organisation of the Krzysztof Penderecki Festival. After UNESCO awarded Krakow the title of European Capital of Culture the most outstanding musicians from around the world came to Krakow at the invitation of Elżbieta and Krzysztof Penderecki to be part of the Krakow 2000 Festival.



**Magiczny  
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"Penderecki's work is a unique phenomenon in the history of music, not only Polish history", reads the explanatory memorandum to the resolution of the Council of the City of Krakow granting the title of Honorary Citizen of the Royal Capital City of Krakow to Professor Krzysztof Penderecki.

He lived in Lusławice near Tarnów where he opened the European Music Centre in 2013. In recent years, he has been an honorary guest of the Sacrum Profanum Festival, the Krakow Film Music Festival and the Misteria Paschalia Early Music Festival. In 2018 on the occasion of the composer's 85th birthday Mayor of Krakow Jacek Majchrowski officially named the Auditorium of the ICE Krakow Congress Centre after Krzysztof Penderecki.

On 2 April, Krzysztof Penderecki's funeral mass was held with his closest family. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ceremony was not open to the public. The urn with the Master's ashes was temporarily deposited in St. Florian's church. The ceremonial funeral of the outstanding Polish composer will take place in the church of St. Peter and Paul after the pandemic ends.