

Rafal Blechacz – Piano



In October 2005 emerged as unquestionable winner of the 15th Frédéric Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw, Poland (to underscore his distinguished performance among the remaining Competition participants the international jury decided not to award the 2nd prize). All the special prizes of the Competition went to him as well: **Polish Radio Prize for the best performance of the mazurkas, Frédéric Chopin Society Prize for the best performance of the polonaise, National Philharmonic of Poland Prize for the best performance of the concerto, and the Krystian Zimerman Prize for the best performance of the sonata. He also won the Audience Award.**

Born in 1985 in Nakło nad Notecią, Bydgoszcz province, Poland, he began his piano lessons at the age of five. He continued his piano education at the Artur Rubinstein State School of Music in Bydgoszcz. Next, he progressed to study at the Feliks Nowowiejski Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz, where he graduated in May 2007 from Katarzyna Popowa-Zydroń's piano class.

At the early stages of his career he took part in many music festivals and competitions that awarded him with prestigious prizes like the **1st Prize and Grand Prix at the 13th All-Poland Johann Sebastian Bach Competition in Gorzów Wielokpolski in 1996, and the 2nd Prize at the 5th International Young Pianists Competition "Artur Rubinstein in memoriam" in Bydgoszcz in 2002.** His progress continued the following year when he was named co-winner of the 5th Hamamatsu International Piano Competition in Japan.

The victory of 2005 in Warsaw opened for him the doors of the world's most renowned concert halls such as, **the Royal Festival Hall and Wigmore Hall in London, Berliner Philharmonie, Herkulessaal in Munich, Alte Oper in Frankfurt/Main, Liederhalle in Stuttgart, Konzerthaus in Vienna, Tonhalle in Zurich, Victoria Hall in Geneva, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Salle Pleyel in Paris, Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Avery Fisher Hall in New York, La Scala in Milan, Suntory Hall in Tokyo,** just to name a few. The most acclaimed music festivals, such as Salzburg in Austria, Verbier in Switzerland, La Roque-d'Anthéron in France, Klavier Festival Ruhr in Germany and Gilmore Festival in the United States keep inviting Rafał Blechacz to perform time and time again. His appearances generate admiration and enthusiasm from music critics and concert goers around the world. He performed with the best symphonic orchestras under the direction of such conductors as **Charles Dutoit, Valery Gergiev, Daniel Harding, Pavo Järvi, Fabio Luisi, Kent Nagano, Andris Nelsons, Viktor Pablo Perez, Trevor Pinnock, Mikhail Pletnev, Jerzy Semkow, John Storgards, Antoni Wit, i Dawid Zinman.** In July 2010 he received the prestigious **Premio Internazionale Accademia Musicale Chigiana** (Siena, Italy) awarded annually by the international jury of music critics to the young musicians for their superb artistic achievements. In recent seasons Blechacz's concerto appearances include **Beethoven's Piano Concerto no. 4 with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and Milan's Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala, Beethoven's Concerto no. 3 with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie and Concerto no. 2 with the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Schumann's Piano Concerto with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Chopin's Concerto no. 2 with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.**

In May 2006 he was invited to sign an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon becoming the second only Polish artist, after Krystian Zimerman, who had enlisted under this prestigious classical music label. His first Deutsche Grammophon CD with all the Preludes by Frédéric Chopin was released in Europe in October 2007 and attained the Platinum Record status in Poland as early as in the second week of sale. This CD won also other awards, such as the German Echo Klassik and French Diapason d'Or. His second Deutsche Grammophon CD with the sonatas by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven released a year later, in October 2008, won immediately a great praise from music critics and the listening public. Upon the big success of those two CDs he honored the Chopin Year 2010 by **recording Chopin's Concertos for the "Yellow Label" with the acclaimed Concertgebouw Orchestra** (listed in 2009 by the British music magazine "Gramophone" as world's No. 1) under the baton of Jerzy Semkow. Soon after, the Concertos CD was awarded **the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik**, a prestigious prize of the German music critics. After its release in Poland, it quickly reached the double Platinum Record status. His fourth Deutsche Grammophon CD entitled



“Debussy/Szymanowski” was released on February 1, 2012. It received a great international acclaim and amassed excellent reviews as well as a title of the Recording of the Month from the British “Gramophone” for May 2012. In July 2012 Deutsche Phono-Akademie awarded the Debussy/Szymanowski CD with its distinguished annual prize ECHO-Klassik in the category of Piano-Solo recording of the year (20th/21st century). On April 25, 2013, for the same album again, Fryderyk, the most prestigious prize in the field of music in Poland, was awarded to him in the category of the classical music best recording of the year. He returns to Chopin for his latest Deutsche Grammophon album, a recording of the composer’s Polonaises nos. 1-7, released on September 6, 2013.