# In Praise of Creation

**A *Concert Spirituel* by VoctEnsemble**
**inspired by St Francis of Assisi's *Laudes creaturarum*, known as the "Canticle of the Sun"**

*Pärt · Borkowski · Orff · Massenet · Ešenvalds · Vaughan Williams · Sykulski · Enescu · Dubra*

On 15 November at 7.00 pm, VoctEnsemble will make its Poznań debut. *In Praise of Creation* will take place at the Franciscan Church of St Anthony of Padua in Poznań's Old Town. It is the latest instalment in VoctEnsemble's original Spiritual Concerts series, inspired by the eighteenth-century French tradition of the *Concerts Spirituels*.

The concert takes its title from St Francis of Assisi's *Laudes creaturarum*, known as the "Canticle of the Sun". The programme brings together works spanning from the late nineteenth century to the present day, with a particular emphasis on the music of Marian Borkowski. It also features *Stoi lód na Prośnie* by Jacek Sykulski, a composer and conductor with longstanding ties to Poznań's choral tradition.

**"This is a concert about wonder at the created world and discovering the presence of God within it. It embraces the human experience of fragility, suffering and death, while also holding out the hope of eternal life."**
*— Florent de Bazelaire, conductor and artistic director of VoctEnsemble*

**One Canticle, an Entire Concert**

*Laudes creaturarum* is a hymn of praise to God through creation. Francis praises the Creator through the sun, the moon and the elements, before turning towards the human experience of suffering, forgiveness and death. This perspective shapes the dramaturgy of *In Praise of Creation*: the successive works develop themes contained in the canticle and lead towards questions of human fragility and hope.

At the centre of the programme is Carl Orff's *Laudes creaturarum*, an eight-part setting of the thirteenth-century canticle in its original, vernacular Italian (*volgare*). Between successive sections of the concert, Arvo Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel* returns as a musical thread connecting the programme.

**Polish Music Within the Programme**

Works by Polish composers are placed at different points in the programme, according to its dramaturgy. The concert opens with Marian Borkowski's *Gloria II* and *Lumen*, whose verbal material is limited respectively to the single words "Gloria" and "Lumen". This section also features Jacek Sykulski's *Stoi lód na Prośnie*. The work evokes a frozen river and a mill brought to a standstill, reflecting the fragility of the conditions on which human life depends. Almost at the end of the concert, Borkowski's music returns in *Dona eis requiem I*, based on the words "Pie Jesu, dona eis requiem" — a prayer for eternal rest.

The programme concludes with Rihards Dubra's *Stetit Angelus*, whose text is taken from the Book of Revelation: an angel stands beside the altar holding a censer, while the smoke of the incense rises before God together with the prayers of the saints.

**Voices, Violin and Organ**

The twelve-member VoctEnsemble performs works written for different vocal configurations, ranging from five to twelve parts. The vocal forces are joined by violin and organ, with the entire programme conducted by Florent de Bazelaire.

VoctEnsemble will be joined by Radu Ropotan, a Romanian violinist and graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London, and Jakub Kapała, an organist and prizewinner at international competitions who serves at the Jesuit Basilica in Kraków.

**Ahead of the Grand Prix of Polish Choral Music**

At the invitation of the Stefan Stuligrosz Grand Prix of Polish Choral Music Foundation, VoctEnsemble will perform in Poznań as part of the Choral Chamber Concerts series, ahead of this year's Grand Prix.

Established in 2018, the Grand Prix brings together the winners of six national choral competitions across Poland. Its year-round series of chamber concerts extends the event's scope beyond competition, presenting a range of performance practices and original approaches to concert programming.

*In Praise of Creation* demonstrates that the coherence of a concert programme need not rest on stylistic similarities between works, but can emerge from the

relationships between them: their sequence, contrasts and the meanings that unfold over the course of the performance. VoctEnsemble's chamber ensemble lends this approach another dimension. The individuality of each voice remains distinct, while the diversity of musical textures and compositional idioms contributes to a carefully shaped dramatic progression.

The concert will take place on 15 November at 7.00 pm, following the evening liturgy at the Franciscan Church of St Anthony of Padua, 2 Franciszkańska Street, Poznań. Admission is free.

***In Praise of Creation***
**Sunday, 15 November 2026 — 7 p.m.**
Franciscan Church of St Anthony of Padua
Poznań · 2 Franciszkańska Street
Choral Chamber Concerts · Grand Prix of Polish Choral Music
Free admission

**VoctEnsemble** vocal ensemble
**Florent de Bazelaire** conductor
**Radu Ropotan** violin
**Jakub Kapała** organ

**Organised by:** Stefan Stuligrosz Grand Prix of Polish Choral Music Foundation
**Co-organised by:** VoctFoundation and VoctEnsemble
**As part of:** the Choral Chamber Concerts series of the Grand Prix of Polish Choral Music

In partnership with the City of Poznań.

**More information**
In Praise of Creation — VoctEnsemble
Press information
https://gppch.pl/koncerty-kameralne/

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## About VoctEnsemble

VoctEnsemble is an independent professional vocal ensemble founded by Florent de Bazelaire in Kraków in 2024. It creates original Spiritual Concerts in which music, text, space and light form a coherent whole. Each project grows out of a particular idea, question or intention, around which the repertoire, its dramaturgy and mode of performance are developed. The ensemble's repertoire ranges from Renaissance polyphony to contemporary music, with a particular focus on sacred repertoire and music engaging with spiritual and existential themes. VoctEnsemble has performed in Kraków, Warsaw, Łódź, Rybnik, Szczawnica and Niedzica, and at festivals and other musical events across Poland.

## About VoctFoundation

Founded in 2026, VoctFoundation supports the realisation of artistic projects, bringing their creators and performers together with institutional partners and audiences. VoctEnsemble is the Foundation's resident ensemble and will present *In Praise of Creation* for the second time. This new performance is being produced in collaboration with the Stefan Stuligrosz Grand Prix of Polish Choral Music Foundation.

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## Media contact

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**Composers:** Arvo Pärt · Marian Borkowski · Carl Orff · Jules Massenet · Ēriks Ešenvalds · Ralph Vaughan Williams · Jacek Sykulski · George Enescu · Rihards Dubra
**Performers:** VoctEnsemble · Radu Ropotan · Jakub Kapała · Florent de Bazelaire
**Forces:** 5-, 7-, 8-, 9- and 12-part vocal ensemble · violin · organ
**Venue**: Franciscan Church of St Anthony of Padua, Poznań · Old Town
**As part of:** the Choral Chamber Concerts series of the Grand Prix of Polish Choral Music
**Keywords:** chamber choral music · polyphony · sacred music · contemporary music · contemporary Polish music · St Francis of Assisi · the Canticle of the Sun (*Laudes creaturarum*)