Warsaw, 1st Dec 2023
Press release

**40 years of Sinfonia Varsovia**

**– inauguration of anniversary celebrations**

**20th December 2023, 7:00 PM**

**Witold Lutosławski Concert Studio of Polish Radio, Warsaw**

**Sinfonia Varsovia will celebrate its 40th anniversary with a year–long birthday concert series. As part of the celebration, it will perform under the supervision of such artists as pianist Piotr Anderszewski and violinists Daniel Hope, Gordan Nikolić and Pinchas Zukerman. The anniversary will be inaugurated with a concert in Warsaw under the baton of Marek Janowski on December 20, 2023, with two symphonies in the program: Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Fifth* and *Sixth*.**

April 2024 marks the 40th anniversary of the historic concerts of the outstanding violinist **Yehudi Menuhin** with a symphony orchestra established for the occasion, built around the strings core from **Jerzy Maksymiuk’s Polish Chamber Orchestra**. After these concerts, managing directors **Waldemar Dąbrowski** and **Franciszek Wybrańczyk** made Menuhin an offer to direct the orchestra, performing since 1982 without a permanent conductor, to which he eagerly agreed. The ensemble soon began to perform under the name Sinfonia Varsovia, at the same time claiming as its founding act the three aforementioned concerts on April 27 and 28, 1984 at the Warsaw Philharmonic. Over the years, great personalities such as **Marc Minkowski, Nigel Kennedy** and **Krzysztof Penderecki**, who co-led Sinfonia Varsovia for nearly a quarter of a century as its music director and later as its artistic director, became associated with the orchestra.

**The concept of the jubilee**

For years, Sinfonia Varsovia celebrated this founding act with festive birthday concerts held in the spring at Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera, but decided to mark its 40th anniversary with a year-long birthday series. Over the course of more than a year, the orchestra has been scheduled to give concerts in Warsaw, Gdańsk and Szczecin, as well as abroad in France and the Czech Republic. The core will consist of events in Warsaw at Witold Lutosławski Concert Studio of Polish Radio and the Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera, where **Piotr Anderszewski** (March 11, 2024), **Daniel Hope** (December 9, 2024), **Marek Janowski** (December 20, 2023), **Gordan Nikolić** (February 25 and 28, 2024) and **Pinchas Zukerman** (April 22, 2024) will perform together with Sinfonia Varsovia.

Additionally, the orchestra will be present at numerous Polish and foreign festivals, such as the International Piano Festival of La Roque-d’Anthéron, the La Folle Journée Festival in Nantes and the Loire Country, the Leoš Janáček International Music Festival in Ostrava, the Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival, Eufonie Festival, the Chopin and His Europe Festival, as well as the festivals organized by the ensemble itself: Franciszek Wybrańczyk Sinfonia Varsovia to Its City Festival and the Crazy Days of Music Festival.

As part of the anniversary events, the orchestra will also perform with such important figures in its history as conductors **Jacek Kaspszyk, Marc Minkowski** and **Jerzy Maksymiuk**. With the latter, it will premiere the Piano Concerto, his latest composition (with **Janusz Olejniczak** in the soloist’s part). There will be no shortage of outstanding artists of younger generations whose relationship with Sinfonia Varsovia is shorter: conductors **Alejandro Cantalapiedra**, **Martijn Dendievel** and **Henrik Nánási**, violinists **Josef Špaček** and **Arabella Steinbacher**.

**Warsaw Civic Choir**

Another major event on the anniversary calendar will be a concert on **May 13, 2024** at the Teatr Wielki – Polish National Opera. Sinfonia Varsovia will celebrate the **bicentennial of the premiere of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9** (May 7, 1824), the **20th anniversary of Poland’s accession to the European Union** (May 1, 2004) and the **35th anniversary of Poland’s first partially free elections** (June 4, 1989). To mark the occasion, a civic choir of Warsaw residents is planned to be selected in auditions to participate in a performance of the final *Ode to Joy*. The performance will be conducted by Hungarian kapellmeister Henrik Nánási, associated with the Komische Oper in Berlin, Covent Garden in London and the MET in New York. The concert will simultaneously mark the inauguration of the 24th edition of the Franciszek Wybrańczyk Sinfonia Varsovia to Its City Festival.

**Inaugural concert**

Sinfonia Varsovia begins its anniversary in December 2023 with **Mark Janowski**, with whom it will perform two symphonies by Ludwig van Beethoven – **Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68 *Pastoral*** and **Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67**. It is around this composer’s symphonics that the orchestra’s regular meetings with the German conductor have been centered so far, referring to the legendary recording of the complete Beethoven symphonies by Sinfonia Varsovia conducted by Yehudi Menuhin in the 1990s (IMG Records 1995). The date and repertoire are not coincidental, as the event falls around the 215th anniversary of the concert that Beethoven considered the most important of his career (December 22, 1808). It was then that the composer premiered his two aforementioned symphonies.

Marek Janowski is one of the world’s leading contemporary opera and symphony conductors. He served as artistic director and chief conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic until 2023. Previously, he was, among others, music director of the Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg (1973–1975), music director of the Opernhaus Dortmund (1973–1979), music director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France (1984–2000), chief conductor of the Gürzenich-Orchester Köln (1986–1990), first guest conductor of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin (1997–1999), music director of the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra (2000–2005), chief conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic (2001–2003) and artistic director of the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra (Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, 2002–2016).

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More information about the inaugural concert of the series on December 20, 2023 with Marek Janowski and tickets for the inaugural concert (price PLN 40/60) are available on [Sinfonia Varsovia’s website](https://www.sinfoniavarsovia.org/wydarzenia/40-lat-sinfonii-varsovii-marek-janowski/).

The concert is partnered by Musethica and co-financed by the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation.

For more information about the anniversary concerts, visit [Sinfonia Varsovia’s website](https://www.sinfoniavarsovia.org/40-lat-sinfonia-varsovia/).