



## The Adam Mickiewicz Institute launch new 10-part podcast series exploring the life and legacy of composer Krzysztof Penderecki

[pendereckisgardenpodcasts.libsyn.com](https://pendereckisgardenpodcasts.libsyn.com)

On the 88<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the composer's birth, The Adam Mickiewicz Institute today [23 November 2021] launch **Penderecki's Garden Podcast**, a major new 10-part series exploring the life and legacy of the late Krzysztof Penderecki.

Written and presented by British journalists and broadcasters **Charlotte Gardner** and **Jack Pepper** who, in five episodes each, explore various aspects of the life and music of this towering cultural figure of the past 80 years.

Jack begins with an exploration of Penderecki's *Requiem* and how it charts the volatile history of the Polish nation: from trade union protests to sustaining religious faith under Communist rule, we discover how a composer can reflect wider issues of state, nationhood and identity.

In the second and third episodes, also released today, Jack investigates how the traumatic events of Penderecki's upbringing in Nazi-occupied Poland influenced his music and how being a commissioned composer for the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, where Penderecki first found an international stage, affected him.

Penderecki's famous score for a classic work of Polish cinema, *The Saragossa Manuscript*, is at the centre of Jack's penultimate episode, released on 7 December, which also explores how his work impacted the next generation of film composers, including a collaboration with Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood.

Jack's final episode charts the changing and varied music styles embraced by Penderecki across his career, using his symphonies as a starting point.

Charlotte Gardner begins with an exploration of Penderecki's *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima*, which has become one of his most well-known works thanks to its use in soundtracks of films by David Lynch, Wes Craven and Alfonso Cuarón. Charlotte takes us through its genesis, how its textures suggest an incomprehensible terror and sorrow, and its transition from abstraction to memorial.

Staying with painful themes of World War II, in the next episode, Charlotte returns to the impact of the Nazi occupation of the young Penderecki's home town of Dębica – with its majority Jewish population between 1939 and 1943 – when the boy composer witnessed the systematic intimidation, segregation and mass murder of Europe's Jews as it played out literally on his own doorstep. Twenty years later he took Leon Weliczker's Holocaust memoir, *Brigade of Death*, and constructed a work for narrator and electronics which is surveyed here.

*The Passion of St Luke*, Penderecki's landmark sacred choral work, is at the heart of an episode about the composer's faith and wide-ranging sacred music in Communist-era Poland, before Charlotte moves on to explore the composer's two chief operas, *The Devils of Loudun* and *Ubu Rex*, and where these highly contrasting work sit in the wider European operatic scene of their time.

The final episode, *Metamorphosen*, explores Penderecki's Second Violin Concerto, written for the German violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter between 1992 and 1995. Drawing on the contrasts between this work and the First Violin Concerto, which was premiered by Isaac Stern in 1977, and contextualising *Metamorphosen* with the Second Violin Sonata and *La Follia*, this episode explores a meeting of musical minds in one of the most striking works for violin and orchestra of the late twentieth century.

**Penderecki's Garden Podcast** is available from [pendereckisgardenpodcasts.libsyn.com](https://pendereckisgardenpodcasts.libsyn.com) as well as [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Google Podcasts](#) and [many other audio and podcast platforms](#). Three episodes are released today with subsequent episodes published every two weeks.

Created to complement [Penderecki's Garden](#), a virtual interactive home inspired by the composer's personal interest in gardening and horticulture created by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute to commemorate the composer's life and work following his death in March 2020. It provides a comprehensive overview of the composer, alongside sound, visual and audio-visual pieces which show the scale and significance of the cultural phenomenon of Penderecki's music which crosses over multiple genres including film, rock, jazz, classical and electronic.

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### **Editors' notes**

#### **Adam Mickiewicz Institute**

The Adam Mickiewicz Institute is a national cultural institute whose mission is to build and communicate the cultural dimension of the Poland brand through active participation in international cultural exchange. The Institute has carried out cultural projects in 70 countries on six continents, including in the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Israel, Germany, Turkey, the United States, Canada, Australia, Morocco, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, China, Japan, and Korea. Within the framework of its activities to date, the Institute has developed 38 strategic programmes seen by 60 million viewers.

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