

Largest new concert instrument in Europe to launch in Poland on 13 January

- **New organ – with more than 7000 pipes and measuring 13 meters high, 9 wide and 6 deep – to be launched on 13 January 2023 in Katowice, Poland**
- **World premiere of new Organ Concerto by Esa-Pekka Salonen to be performed by National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer himself in inaugural concert**
- **The launch of the new organ crowns the acclaimed new concert hall in Katowice, Poland, built on the site of a coal mine, opened in 2014**



The new Škrabl organ in the Concert Hall, Katowice, Poland © Jacek Poremba/NOSPR

One of the largest new instruments to be built in a European concert hall in recent times will be inaugurated in a special concert in Katowice, Poland, on Friday 13 January.

Finnish composer and conductor **Esa-Pekka Salonen** directs the **National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra** (NOSPR) and soloist **Iveta Apklana** in the world premiere of his new 25-minute Organ Concerto, co-commissioned by NOSPR, Berliner Philharmoniker Foundation, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonie de Paris, Los Angeles Philharmonic and NDR Elphilharmonie Orchestra. It is at the heart of a programme which also features Lutosławski's Fourth Symphony and Bartók's Suite

from *The Miraculous Mandarin* and launches a weekend of events to celebrate the monumental new organ.

The new instrument has over a million parts, more than 7000 pipes and 105 stops, measuring 13 meters high, 9 wide and 6 deep (a volume of 150m², equivalent to a single-story house). It has an integral console with four manuals and a dual electro-mechanical action, as well as a mobile console of five consoles which can be used alongside an orchestra anywhere on the stage.

Under construction since April 2017, and the largest instrument ever built by the Slovenian organ builders Škrabl, the new organ has cost 20.6m PLN, with 14.3m PLN coming from the City of Katowice and the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. It was built in consultation with NOSPR hall's architect Tomasz Konior, and the organist and organ builder Professor Julian Gemblaski.

Built in the French Symphonic style, Škrabl was inspired by both the instruments in Rouen Cathedral and Notre-Dâme de Paris. The basic modelling follows the broad concept of the pioneering and distinguished organ builder Cavaillé-Coll in the late 19th century. It is an extraordinary feat of engineering, which though largely mechanical, also features modern electromagnetic, electronic and fibre-optic systems making it one of the most technologically advanced organs built.

The new organ is the crowning glory of the highly acclaimed new 1800-seat NOSPR concert hall in Katowice, home to the National Radio Symphony Orchestra of Poland and has become widely regarded as one of the finest concert halls in Europe since its opening in 2014. It is the only Polish concert hall, and one of only two in Central and Eastern Europe, which have been admitted to ECHO, an international organisation which brings together 21 of the most prestigious concert halls in Europe.

The hall was designed by Katowice's own Konior Studio, alongside acoustician Yasuhisa Toyota of Nagata Acoustics — who helped design the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and the Philharmonie de Paris, among others. As well as the main hall, there is a chamber music hall and numerous workshop and educational spaces and it stages many hundreds of concerts by many of the world's leading orchestras and artists.

The modern brick-built building is on the site of a former coalmine, the new hall, together with its vibrant programme of concerts and events has made it a dynamic and popular symbol of the cultural renaissance of this once unloved Silesian industrial hub.

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IMAGES OF THE HALL AND THE ORGAN ARE AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

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