

## About the authors

**Nana AMOWEE DAWSON** is an ardent devotee of African music, entwined with the world of intercultural artistic exploration. Graduating from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, in 2015, where he earned a master's degree in music theory and composition, he now sets his sights higher with an ambitious pursuit of a Ph.D. in the same realm. Driven by a deep-seated commitment, his academic journey is guided by a profound mission—to celebrate and uplift the rich mosaic of African musical arts, transcending boundaries and empowering communities through enlightening scholarship. Drawing inspiration from the heart of Africa's cultural heritage, Nana Amowee is resolute in unearthing the intrinsic musical treasures ensconced within, fostering creativity, and nurturing knowledge-sharing from the grassroots upwards. As an esteemed music tutor at the illustrious Ghana National College, nestled within the historic Cape Coast, he imparts his vast expertise, igniting a musical fervour within his pupils and shaping a generation of harmonious visionaries. Fuelled by an insatiable thirst for musical excellence and an unwavering reverence for Africa's bountiful legacy, Nana Amowee Dawson emerges as a steadfast custodian and fervent advocate of its musical heritage. With each resounding note and soul-stirring composition, he leaves an indelible impression, captivating hearts and inspiring a profound appreciation for the richness of African musical expression.

**Marius BARANAUSKAS** (b. 1978) is a composer and Associate Professor of orchestration and composition at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. He studied composition with Prof. Rimantas Janeliauskas at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre from 1996 to 2002, continuing his postgraduate studies there in 2003–2005. In 2004–2005 he furthered his education at the Conservatoire National Supérieur Musique et Danse de Lyon (CNSMD de Lyon). He received his Doctor of Arts (D.A.) degree from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in 2020.

His music is performed and commissioned by major festivals worldwide. His works have been presented by orchestras and ensembles including Sinfonietta Leipzig (Germany), Ensemble *Les Temps Modernes* (France), Ensemble *Melos Ethos* (Slovakia), the Latvian Radio Choir, Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin, the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra, the Slovenian Radio and Television Orchestra, the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as numerous chamber ensembles and soloists.

Baranauskas has received multiple awards for his compositions. In 2004 he won 3rd Prize at the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award (Japan) for his symphonic work *Talking*. His electroacoustic piece *NUNC* was recognized as the best Lithuanian electroacoustic composition of 2003. *The Molten Thought* (for symphony orchestra) was awarded Best Lithuanian Orchestral Piece in 2006, and *Alrediph* (for tam-tam and symphony orchestra) received the same distinction in 2020. He was also named Best Lithuanian Theatre Composer of 2006.

Since 2005 he has served as coordinator of the annual International Music Theory Conference “Principles of Music Composing” and was assistant editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Principles of Music Composing* from 2005 to 2020. He is the author of a number of scholarly articles.

**Jan BIELAK** is a lecturer at the Academy of Music in Wrocław. He holds degrees in music theory and conducting—both of which he completed with distinction. In 2023, he received an academic grant for realising the artistic creation project entitled *Songs of Karol Szymanowski. Development of a complete monograph and its international promotion* under the first edition of the program “Pearls of Science,” organized by the Ministry of Education and Science. He held the post of resident conductor at the Józef Wiłkomirski Sudecka Philharmonic Orchestra in Wałbrzych in the 2023/2024 season under the Conductor-in-Residence program, organized by the National Institute of Music and Dance. He participates in academic conferences in Poland and abroad. He publishes among others in *Kwartalnik Młodych Muzykologów* and *Notes Muzyczny*.

**Desislava (Desi) DOBREVA** is a well-known singer and a TV host in Bulgaria with multiple concerts in Bulgaria and abroad. Desi graduated from the National School of Arts “Dobri Hristov” in Varna, where her major was in classical piano. In 2005 she graduated from the National Academy of Music “Prof. Pancho Vladigerov”, Sofia, with two master's degrees—pop and jazz singing and musical pedagogy. In 2007 Desi graduated from Berklee College of Music, Boston, U.S.A., as a bachelor in voice performance. As an excellent student her name was entered in the annual almanac of the U.S.A.: The National Dean's List 2006.

Desi became famous with her participation as a lead singer in the nightly TV show *Slavi's Show* and as an author and a TV host of the Bulgarian National

TV's show Night Flight. Being a lead singer of Ku-Ku Band and Slavi's Show, she sang along with such stars as Manhattan Transfer, Dream Theater, Glenn, David Coverdale, Joe Lynn Turner, BOND, Incognito, Zucchero, Al Bano, Goran Bregović, Ishtar, Army of Lovers, Lou Bega, Moloko, to name a few.

Dobrevna has participated in multiple projects such as: the dramatic plays *The Mystery of Enyovden* and *The Circus* with National Art, *The Legend* of Lili Ignatova, *The Comics* (bTV), the National Guards Orchestra and Bulgarian National Radio, *BalkanSky* with Theodosii Spasov, *Bulgaria's Got Talent* (bTV), *The Voice of Bulgaria* (bTV), *Kato Dve Kapki Voda* (Nova TV; Original show—*Tu cara me suena*), *Muzika Bezkrui* (Bulgarian National TV), Desi's author project Ludo Mlado, presenting Bulgarian folklore in a new modern vision; and others. She has worked with such talents as the cosmic voice Valya Balkanska, Ivo Papazov-Ibryam, Neshka Robeva, Slavi Trifonov & Ku-Ku Bend, Ishtar, The Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices, Filip Kutev Ensemble, and many others.

Desi has performed at such prestigious stages as the legendary Royal Albert Hall and Astoria Hall (London, U.K.), as well as at the famous jazz club Blue Note (New York, U.S.A.), Mann Auditorium (Tel Aviv, Israel), Copernicus Theater (Chicago, U.S.A.), Harvard University, Regent Theater and Berklee Performing Center (Boston, U.S.A.), National Palace of Culture (Sofia, Bulgaria), Arena Armeetz (Sofia, Bulgaria), National Stadium "Vasil Levski" (Sofia, Bulgaria). She has sung also in Russia, Italy, Slovakia, Switzerland, Germany, Greece, Turkey, Malta, Belarus, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Romania, Macedonia, China, as well as yearly tours in the U.S.A. and Canada. She has worked as a vocal teacher in the National Prof. Pancho Vladigerov Academy of Music and many times has been a jury member of musical contests. Desi has also taken part in Varna's Stoyan Bachvarov Drama Theatre as an actress and vocalist. Dobrevna, together with associate professor Valya Manolova, is an author of a music manual for kindergarten (2013). In 2021 Desi wrote her book *Personal & Tasty* containing 87 of the author's recipes, along with 87 personal stories.

Desi Dobrevna has received many awards both at Bulgarian and international contests. Desi is the first official Good Will Ambassador of the campaign "Bulgarian Youth Delegate" 2010/2011 to the UN. As a representative of the Bulgarian Cultural Center in the U.S.A. and throughout her career as a musician, Desi has been actively promoting Bulgarian culture across Europe and the U.S.A. Currently Dobrevna is a Ph.D. student at the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria.

**Gvantsa GHVINJILIA** is a musicologist, Ph.D., Doctor of Art Studies, and Associate Professor at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire (Department of Music History). She is a member of the Academic Council and the head of the dissertation board at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Additionally, she is a member of the Georgian Composer's Union and a guest senior lecturer at Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Cinema Tbilisi State University. She served as a jury member for the Tsinandali Awards in 2022. Ghvinjilia has received scholarships from Zakaria Paliashvili and the President of Georgia. From 2006 to 2013, she was the PR manager and head of the literary department at the Tbilisi Zakaria Paliashvili Opera and Ballet State Theatre. From 2021 to 2023, she participated in the Erasmus+ Mobility exchange program in Belgium, France, and Poland. She has delivered public lectures in Georgia, Belgium, Poland, and Ukraine and is frequently invited as a speaker on Georgian television and radio programs. Ghvinjilia also works as a music critic for periodical publications in Georgia. She is an active participant in national and international conferences. Her scientific interests include eco-music; religion and music; transhumanism and music; multimedia hybrid musical genres; interdisciplinary studies; the European integration of Georgian music; Soviet ideology and music.

**Sanna IITTI** (Ph.D.) is a Finnish musicologist. She graduated from New York University and has carried out her research in the U.S.A., Germany and the U.K. besides Finland, Greece and Sweden. Dr. Iitti is a specialist of the vocal music of the long 19th century. Her research revolves around Lied and opera in tandem with feminist criticism and cultural history of music. She has also explored issues in the field of music iconography. Dr. Iitti's publications include books entitled *Reflections on Opera, Faith and the Orient* (Beau Bassin: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2018 [2016]) and *The Feminine in German Song* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006). She is currently an independent scholar.

**Yusuke ISHII** is a pianist, musicologist. After studying in Japan, France and Germany, he obtained a master's degree in musicology at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. From 2021 he continues doctoral studies focusing on his thesis "Development of Modernism of Lithuanian Music in Diaspora" (supervised by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Darius Kučinskas) at Kaunas University of Technology. In 2020 he was awarded the George Mikelis (Jurgis Mikelaitis) scholarship for the implementation of the project "Review and Editing of Manuscripts of Piano Etudes by Lithuanian Interwar Avant-garde composer Vytautas Bacevičius, Publishing

of a Complete Collection and Musical Presentation“. As a pianist he won second prize at the 14th Xavier Montsalvatge International Competition in Girona, Spain, the Nadia Boulanger Special Prize in 2008, and the André Jolivet Special Prize in 2010 at the International Piano Competition in Orleans, France. Yusuke has released two compact discs featuring piano compositions by Jolivet and Varèse (ALM records, 2012), and works by Jolivet and Lenot (Lyrinx, 2013). He plans to release his third disc featuring piano compositions of Vytautas Bacevičius (Lithuanian Music Information Center).

**Daiva RAČIŪNAITĖ-VYČINIENĖ**, Ph.D., habil., Professor and Head of the Department of Ethnomusicology at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. The author of four monographs and over 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals and collections of essays, a compiler of as many as 15 CDs and DVDs. She is a renowned researcher of *sutartinės*, the singer and leader of group Trys keturiose, one of the organizers International Folklore Festival Skamba skamba kankliai. She has received two prestigious national recognitions in Lithuania—the Jonas Basanavičius award (2002) and the National Prize for Culture and the Arts (2021).

**Paula MLADIN** is a scientific researcher at the Gheorghe Dima National Academy of Music in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She graduated from the musicology program of the same institution, obtaining her Ph.D. title in 2020 (*summa cum laude*), following the defense

of the thesis “The Chamber Oeuvre of the composer Adrian Pop“ (later published under the title *Stylistic Aspects in the Chamber Music of Adrian Pop*). Paula Mladin’s musicological activity has been manifested, over time, through her presence at national and international scientific events—such as “Stylistic directions in contemporary music creation“ or “Memory of the stage—music rewritten“ (organized within the International Sigismund Toduță Festival, Cluj-Napoca, Romania), “The Science of Music—Excellence in Performance“ (Brasov, Romania), International Music Therapy Symposium (Cluj-Napoca), the AEC Annual Meeting for International Relations Coordinators 2023 (Leuven, Belgium)—through publications in specialized journals as well as through the coordination of large-scale projects, the most recent being IncluMusic—Increasing skills for building more inclusive conservatories (KA220-HED-80543879), initiated in 2022.

**Aistė VAITKEVIČIŪTĖ** is a Lithuanian young-generation composer and researcher. In 2022, she was awarded a doctoral degree (D.A.) for her thesis “Perceiving Categories along the Timbral Continuum: Compositional Potentials“ at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. From 2016, she is a co-editor of the annual peer-reviewed journal *Principles of Music Composing*. Aistė Vaitkevičiūtė’s interests are not limited to compositional issues, but encompass such fields as cultural studies and aesthetics. She has a bachelor’s degree in cultural history and anthropology from Vilnius University.