

First International Conference Translating Music #1 The Idea of a Musical Work and Its Transformations

26th–27th March 2026

The Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music
Łódź, Poland

The question regarding the idea of a musical work touches one of the most interesting aspects of Western culture. The issue is essential to the understanding of how music had functioned in the periods before the rise and after the fall of the Romantic concept of *Werktreue*, which sees a musical composition as a finished and complete work of art that should not be changed any further. This way of perceiving art seems neither adequate for the music of earlier periods, as it has been shown in studies of Lydia Goehr (*The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: an Essay in the Philosophy of Music*) and Anna Maria Busse Berger (*Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*), nor for the avant-garde and postmodernist pieces of the 20th and 21st centuries (as shown on some examples by Umberto Eco in *The Open Work*). All these issues raise important questions about the identity of musical work and its different versions and transformations.

The starting point for our considerations is the definition of *musical translation*, understood as a rendition of the musical text and its essential features, which involves necessary changes and transformations resulting from the time, place, and purpose of the new version. Like in literature, the prerequisite for a translation to occur in music is the already existing musical text, be it a musical score, a live human-made musical performance, or a recording thereof. Technically then, the term encompasses such phenomena as transcription, arrangement, orchestration, reduction, performance or cover version. Yet, the process of translating music is not to be viewed as a merely reproductive activity, but one that involves an interpretation and recreation of the work. It also often implies some intersemiotic work with the verbal text, especially in the case of vocal music.

The conference is addressed to musicologists, music theorists, musicians involved in the historically informed performance of early music, as well as scholars conducting interdisciplinary research, especially in literature. The Program Committee kindly invites all the interested to send their submissions within the following areas in particular:

- Arrangements, transcriptions, reductions and orchestrations in Western Classical music: music-analytical and historical perspectives;
- The mutual influence of composing and arranging music;
- Social aspects of arranging and translating music;
- From the score to the sound: musical performance as a reproductive, creative and transformative act;
- Cover versions and reinterpretations in popular music;
- Word-sound mediations in the context of translating music (singable translations, intabulations, contrafacta, etc.);
- Interdisciplinary negotiations between musicology and Translation Studies – methodological inquiries.

The official language of the conference is English.

Scientific Board

- **Agnieszka Draus** (Associate Professor, The Krzysztof Penderecki Academy of Music, Kraków)
- **Tomasz Dobrzański** (Ph.D., Cantores Minores Vratislavienses, Wrocław)
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- **Marek Nahajowski** (Associate Professor, The Grazyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music, Łódź)
- **Szymon Paczkowski** (Professor, University of Warsaw)
- **Mikołaj Rykowski** (Associate Professor, Academy of Music, Poznań)

Application details

The papers must be limited in duration to twenty-five minutes. Abstracts of maximum 500 words and short biographies should be sent to: transmus@amuz.lodz.pl. The submission should also include name, affiliation (if applicable), and contact details (postal address, e-mail address and telephone number). The deadline for submitting proposals is **September 30th, 2025**. The final decision of the Committee on the selection of papers will be made and announced to the participants no later

than **October 31st, 2025**. The selected papers will be published in a post-conference book.

Conference fee: 100 EUR

The organizers do not cover travel expenses, accommodation or board. All the speakers selected for presentation of their papers, will receive all necessary information (including bank transfer details and list of suggested hotels and hostels) via e-mail.