

PRESS RELEASE

EuroStrings – the European Guitar Festival Collaborative

is pleased to announce the

7th ZAGREB GUITAR FESTIVAL 2021

Part II: More Concerts in August 2021

featuring

EuroStrings Artists

Jack Hancher, UK
Francisco Luis, Portugal

Özberk Miraç Sarıgül, Turkey
Bianka Szalaty, Poland

and

Lovro Peretić, Croatia – Winner of the Third EuroStrings Guitar Competition

Lovro Peretić was born in Zagreb in 1995 and began his guitar studies with Xhevdet Sahatxhija. Later, he graduated from the Academy of Music in Zagreb, where he studied with Darko Petrinjak. He has been successful in many national and international competitions. He has represented Croatia in many important festivals such as the Vladimir Spivakov International Foundation's festival in Moscow and the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth's Young Hearts for Music in Austria and Germany. He also regularly performs in his duo with violinist Katarina Kutnar and in the guitar trio Evocación. He has performed as a soloist with the Croatian Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra, Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra, and Zagreb Soloists, among others. Lovro was awarded the Dean's and Rector's prizes of the University of Zagreb.

Thursday 26 August 2021

Masterclasses with Margarita Escarpa

Rehearsal of **EuroStrings quintet** for Gala concert to be held at Youngmasters Festival in Samobor

Jack Hancher, Francisco Luis, Lovro Peretić, Özberk Miraç Sarıgül, and Bianka Szalaty.

Friday 27 August 2021

Outreach concert at Kuća 'sv. Vinko Paulski', Oborovo, a home for disabled people.

EuroStrings quintet performance at Youngmasters Gala concert, Samobor.

EuroStrings Artists teaching masterclasses with children in Samobor

Saturday 28 August 2021

EuroStrings: Guitars in the Garden: Özberk Miraç Sarıgül and Francisco Luis

at the Botanical Gardens in Zagreb, live streamed, 5pm.

Sunday 29 August 2021

EuroStrings: Guitars in the Garden: Bianka Szalaty and Jack Hancher

at the Botanical Gardens in Zagreb, live streamed, 12 noon.

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Jack Hancher is an award winning classical guitarist. He completed his Master in Performance at the Royal College of Music (RCM), London in 2018 where he studied with Gary Ryan and Chris Stell and won the RCM Guitar Award 2014 while still in his second year as an undergraduate. In 2020, Jack Hancher won First Prize at both the Zagreb Guitar Festival Competition and the Plovdiv GuitArt Festival Competition. He was also awarded Fourth Prize at the Changsha International Guitar Competition 2020. In 2015, in duo with the guitarist Haydn Bateman, he performed for the IGF Aspire Stage Concert at Kings Place, and later that year as a soloist at Proms at St Jude's performing music by Rodrigo, Piazzolla and Houghton. In 2017, he was accepted onto the International Guitar Foundation (IGF) Young Artists Platform, and performed at the IGF London Guitar Festival at Kings Place in October that year. Jack Hancher made his debut at Wigmore Hall, London, in July 2018, performing his arrangements of Albeniz's piano music and at the Cheltenham Contemporary Arts Festival with music by Arnold, Britten and Dowland. He has performed in European venues such as the Großer Ehrbar Saal, Vienna and the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi, Turin.

Francisco Luis, one of the rising stars of Portuguese classical guitar, was born in Caldas da Rainha, in 1998. He started his guitar studies at the age of ten with Luís Roldão, in the Conservatory of Caldas da Rainha. After five years, he began his studies at the Music School of the National Conservatory, in Lisbon; studying guitar with Eurico Pereira, chamber music with Júlio Guerreiro and Paulo Amorim and basso continuo with Helena Raposo. He completed his Bachelor degree with distinction with Carlo Marchione, at the Maastricht Conservatorium, before beginning his Masters with Zoran Dukić at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. Francisco Luis's numerous international awards include First Prize at both the Harmonia Cordis International Guitar Festival and the Festival International de Guitarra de Guimarães, as well Second Prize at both Uppsala International Guitar Competition and the Aalborg International Guitar Competition.

In 2015, Francisco Luis was soloist in the *Concierto de Aranjuez* by Joaquín Rodrigo with the symphony orchestra of the National Conservatory of Lisbon. His varied repertoire includes transcriptions of works by Bach, Scriabin, Telemann and Rameau. He also frequently performs classical improvisations, mixing his musical knowledge with his creativity and distinctive musical personality. He has performed in venues such as Casa da Música in Porto and the Palácio da Ajuda in Lisbon.

The Turkish guitarist **Özberk Miraç Sarıgül** was born in 2000. From a young age, he began performing not only as a soloist but also with orchestra, including performances of the *Concierto de Aranjuez* by Joaquín Rodrigo with the Bilkent Symphony Orchestra in 2017, and the *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre* by Joaquín Rodrigo with BGSO in 2019. As a soloist, he plays a broad range of repertoire, from the Elizabethan music of John Dowland, to the Baroque music of J.S. Bach to more contemporary music by Joaquín Rodrigo, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Joaquín Turina.

In 2018, Özberk Miraç Sarıgül was selected for the prestigious 8th Donizetti Classical Music Awards for 'Under 18, Musician of the Year' in Turkey. He has won prizes in many national and international competitions, winning First Prize at the International Istanbul Guitar Festival Competition, at the Estonia Lions – Thomas Kuti European Classical Guitar Competition and at the Florida Guitar Foundation's Virtual Competition Intermediate Division in 2020. Sarıgül is currently studying in Bilkent University Music and Performing Arts Faculty with Kağan Korad and has had masterclasses with leading guitarists such as Leo Brouwer, Pepe Romero, Aniello Desiderio, Hopkinson Smith, David Russell and Hubert Käppel. Özberk Miraç Sarıgül has performed in duo with Mesut Özgen at the Türkiye Gitar Buluşması Festival, as well as being invited as soloist to perform there and at other festivals.

Bianka Szalaty was born in Wrocław, Poland, in 1994. She first performed with orchestra at the age of 13 – *Concerto in D* by Antonio Vivaldi with the Koszalin Philharmonic Orchestra; since then Bianka Szalaty has played the guitar concertos by Joaquín Rodrigo, Manuel Maria Ponce and Heitor Villa-Lobos. Currently, she is preparing for her Konzertexamen with Tomasz Zawierucha at the Folkwang Universität der Künste in Essen. She completed her Masters at the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music in Poznań with Łukasz Kuropaczewski. As a soloist, Bianka Szalaty has been a prizewinner at numerous international competitions – she won First prize at the 10th J.S. Bach International Guitar Competition in Tokyo, Concorso Internazionale di Chitarra 'Alirio Diaz' in Rome and at the International Guitar Competition Nürtingen in Germany – and has received scholarships from the Ministry of Culture and Prime Minister of Poland. She performs music by John Dowland and J.S. Bach, as well as more modern music by Leo Brouwer, Stephen Dodgson and Peteris Vasks. Bianka Szalaty has given solo and duo concerts at many international festivals in Moscow, Brno and Copenhagen. She has a duo with the lyric mezzo-soprano, Ewelina Koniec, Meninas Duo, for which she transcribes the music of Leonard Bernstein, Benjamin Britten, Francis Poulenc as well as Manuel de Falla and Karol Szymanowski.

For full EuroStrings Artists profiles, visit: <https://eurostrings.eu/young-stars/eurostrings-artists-of-2020-2021/>

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About EuroStrings

EuroStrings is the first platform of European guitar festivals, led by Zagreb Guitar Festival and ever expanding with an initial 14 member festivals in 2018 and reaching 17 member festivals in 2021; with three Associate Festivals also added in 2021 as well as Affiliate Partners around the world, including the Americas and China, making it a truly global project. The project is co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union and is the first guitar project ever to receive such funding. Each member festival also stages an international guitar competition.

EuroStrings website: <https://eurostrings.eu>

About the EuroStrings Artists

EuroStrings Artists are a group of young professional guitarists, who are the laureates of the international competitions organised by the 17 EuroStrings platform members' guitar festivals. They are invited to take part in the EuroStrings Exchange Programme, which is delivered through the EuroStrings Curriculum. The EuroStrings Exchange Programme was created for EuroStrings Artists to help them to develop professional careers as classical guitarists.

About the Zagreb Guitar Festival

The Zagreb Guitar Festival was founded in 2015 by the Music School Bonar of Zagreb with two main development programmes in mind: Striving for Excellence and Guitar for All. Striving for Excellence includes promoting excellence on several levels by organising: concerts of the world's foremost established guitarists and the top guitarists of the younger generation, an international competition of classical guitar and masterclasses with the world's leading guitar masters. Guitar for All includes organising performances by festival orchestras, guitar exhibitions open to all visitors, a strategy designed to retain the existing success and work towards the further expansion of the audience, through the development of cultural marketing strategies to reach out to wider multicultural audiences. The ultimate goal is to promote fine music, to create a cultural experience and additionally to promote Zagreb as one of the leading cultural centres in Europe.

About the Zagreb Guitar Festival 2021

The theme of the **7th Zagreb Guitar Festival** is the 'Sound of Hope'. The concerts in the first part of the festival, in June 2021, featured **Biréli Lagrene** and **Mate Matišić**, **Miroslav Tadić** and **Yvette Holzwarth** (violin) (*Balkan Melos*: CD Release Concert) and **Neno Belan** and **Olja Dešić**, with masterclasses given online by **Miroslav Tadić** and **Danaja Vegelj** and **Miroslav Tadić** also presented a lecture.

For the **complete programme**, please visit <https://zagrebguitarfest.com/concerts/>

About ZGF International Competition

The **ZGF International Competition** was held from 31 May–4 June 2021 in five age categories live at the Croatian Composers' Society, Zagreb, and the no age limit category, which was held online. The winners in the open age category were: **First Prize: Pavel Ralev**; **Second Prize: Luka Lovreković**; **Third Prize: Dragos Ilie**; and **Fourth Prize: Yuki Saito**.

For the **complete details**, see: <https://zagrebguitarfest.com/competition/>

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