

PRESS RELEASE

EuroStrings – the European Guitar Festival Collaborative

is pleased to announce

22nd Szeged International Guitar Festival (Szeged IGF)

14–17 October 2021

Live and ONLINE Szeged IGF Facebook page and YouTube channel

featuring

FIVE 2020/2021 EuroStrings Artists:

Marcin Kuźniar, Poland

Kevin Loh, Singapore

Marcell Nickmann, Hungary

Cheng Shi, China

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.

Concerts

Thursday 14 October 2021, 20.00

OPENING CONCERT: Marcin Dylla and Marcell Nickmann

– Szegedi Tudományegyetem Bartók Béla Művészeti Kar

Friday 15 October 2021, 18.00

ONLINE CONCERT: Kevin Loh and Cheng Shi

Saturday 16 October 2021, 18.00

ONLINE CONCERT: Bianka Szalaty and Marcin Kuźniar

Sunday 17 October 2021, 18.00

Lovro Peretić and EuroStrings Artists Outreach concert

Masterclasses

Marcin Dylla and Giampaolo Bandini with the EuroStrings Artists

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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.

Marcin Kuźniar Marcin Kuźniar was born in Krakow, Poland, in 1992. He started studying the guitar at the age of six with Adam Makowski and, later, with Włodzimierz Lerner. During his university years, he worked with Alina Gruszka, Marcin Dylla and Paolo Pegoraro. By age 20, he had performed the *Concierto de Aranjuez* and *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre* by Joaquín Rodrigo, and *Concerto* by Heitor Villa-Lobos – all with orchestra; and later also *Concerto del Sur* by Manuel María Ponce and *Guitar Concerto*, Op. 36 by Mauro Giuliani. By 25, he had won prizes in about 40 guitar competitions, such as Grand Prize at Ex-Aequo International Classical Guitar Competition, New York, in 2020, Special Prize for the Best Interpretation of Contemporary Music at Forum Gitarre, Vienna, in 2019. Marcin Kuźniar has a strong interest in performing the works of contemporary composers not often heard in guitar recitals, such as Tristram Cary and Tristan Murail. His debut CD of 2018, *Song Without Words*, includes works by Richard Rodney Bennett, Alan Rawsthorne and György Ligeti complemented with a transcription of *Moments Musicaux* by Schubert (rarely performed on guitar), and music by Mertz and Tárrega/Arcas. During 2020, he released videos of *Escarraman* by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and *Variations on a Theme of Debussy* by Tilman Hoppstock, and began to transcribe music by Polish composers Penderecki, Weinberg, Szymanowski and Lutoslawski.

Born in Singapore, **Kevin Loh** is one of the leading classical guitarists of his generation, having won many international awards, including the Cambridge University Musical Society Concerto Competition and, in 2020, London International Guitar Competition. Kevin Loh has performed at Wigmore Hall, London, Konzerthaus Berlin and Suntory Hall, Tokyo. In 2013, he premiered the *Guitar Concerto* by Bernard Tan with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. In 2019, as Singapore Symphony Orchestra's 'President's Young Performer', he performed the *Concierto de Aranjuez* by Joaquín Rodrigo. Kevin Loh's broad repertoire includes Bach, Dowland and Weiss, his arrangements and transcriptions of Schubert and Schumann, as well as modern works by Stephen Dodgson, Graham Fitkin and Steve Reich. Kevin Loh is passionate about giving back to society. He actively visits schools to share more about the guitar and music education. He also raises funds in Singapore and in the region for various charities and initiatives such as ChildAid, to provide opportunities for underprivileged children to have exposure in the arts. Kevin Loh studied with Richard Wright for seven years at the Yehudi Menuhin School in Britain. After finishing two years of mandatory military service in the Singapore Armed Forces, he is now pursuing his undergraduate degree in Music at Girton College, University of Cambridge as the College Music Scholar and a scholar of the Loke Cheng-Kim Foundation.

Marcell Nickmann was born in Budapest, Hungary and started playing the classical guitar at 14 with his first teacher, Sándor Árok. He quickly achieved success in regional and national competitions, winning several first prizes, which offered opportunities such as performing with the Austro-Hungarian Haydn Chamber Orchestra in their matinée series. In 2016, he began studying with Andrea Bozóki at the Music Faculty of University of Szeged. Since 2018, he has been working with Dávid Pavlovits. In 2019, after finishing his Bachelor degree, Marcell Nickmann won Third Prize in the Tallinn International Guitar Competition and Second Prize in the Harmonia Cordis International Guitar Competition. In February 2019, he premiered Claude Vivier's *Pour guitare* in Hungary, and with his duo partner, the guitarist Dóra Cserenyec, they premiered *Salita in discesa* – a microtonal work written for them by the electro-acoustic composer Ákos Nagy. In 2020, as well as continuing to premiere pieces in Hungary with Dóra Cserenyec, and performing Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Tierkreis*, he began to focus on early music, recently transcribing the works of the French Baroque composer Louis Couperin. In October 2020, Marcell Nickmann won First Prize in the Szeged International Guitar Competition.

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The classical guitarist **Cheng Shi** was born in Liaoning Province, China in 1991. She began learning the guitar with Professor Guangxu Jiang in Shenyang in 2006. After graduating with a Bachelor's degree from Shenyang Conservatorium in 2010, she left for Germany in 2014. There, she completed a one-year professional performance course (Zertifikat) with Reinbert Evers at the Musikhochschule Münster, where she completed her Masters summa cum laude in 2018. In 2020, she graduated from Musikhochschule Münster again with summa cum laude for the Konzertexamen. Early on in her studies, Cheng Shi began winning prizes, such as First Prize at the Longshan CUP in Heilongjiang in 2006, at the Internationalen Vladivostok Competition for Classical Guitar in Russia, in 2009 and First Prize at the Liaoning International Guitar Competition in 2011. Since 2016, Cheng Shi has been performing with the Korean guitarist KyungHeon Yoo, in a guitar duo called 'Le Due'; they both are also members of the Polaris Guitar Quartet with the German guitarists Andreas Maria Marcus and Peter Kersting. Cheng Shi has been invited to perform as a soloist in recital and with orchestra in Germany, Italy, China and South Korea.

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 María 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/>

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>

EuroStrings Scholarship

To help young people of modest means study the guitar in an international context, EuroStrings has developed an annual scholarship programme for young guitar students. Every EuroStrings platform festival gives one scholarship. The scholarship includes entry to all festival concerts, lectures and masterclasses as well as participation in the festival's international competition. The **EuroStrings Scholarship** to attend the **22nd Szeged International Guitar Festival** has been awarded to the young Swiss guitarist **Damien Theux**.

Damien Theux has won numerous national youth awards and is presently studying at the Lausanne's university level conservatory La Haute Ecole de Musique Valais-Wallis, as well as having accordion lessons at the Conservatoire Cantonal du Valais in Sion.

For details of EuroStrings Scholarships at 22nd Szeged IGF, see: <https://www.gitarfesztival.hu/en/eurostrings>

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About the Szeged International Guitar Festival

The Szeged International Guitar Festival (Szeged IGF) is a multi-venue guitar festival for open-minded and curious fans of the guitar, which presents diverse music genres, including like classical, world, folk and even pop-rock, innovative combinations of various art forms three cities, Szeged, Budapest and Subotica (Serbia). It includes an exciting competition and a showcase for the young stars of classical guitar and masterclasses given by noted classical guitar players worldwide, which creates a networking platform for amateurs and professionals. Beside the guitarist community, the festival wishes to have an impact on youngsters who are not related to the guitar by having a volunteer programme for high school students. Szeged IGF aims to support young talents both in a professional and a personal way.

EuroStrings is proud to be a part of the 22nd Szeged International Guitar Festival from 14–17 October 2021.

About Szeged International Guitar Festival 2021

At Szegedi Tudományegyetem Bartók Béla Művészeti Kar, Tisza Lajos körút 79–81, Szeged, 6722.

- **8th Szeged IGF Guitar Competition** – Pro category (**Friday 15 October 2021**, 14.00–17.00)
- Lecture: **Stringboost** and **Mihailo Vihula** (**Friday 15 October 2021**, 17.00–18.00).
- Concert: **Peter Graneis** and **Alexander Swete** (**Friday 15 October 2021**, 20.00–21.30).
- **8th Szeged IGF Guitar Competition** (**Saturday 16 October 2021**, 09.00–17.00).
- Lecture: **Sándor Gyüdi** and **Ferenc Bernáth** (**Saturday 16 October 2021**, 17.00–18.00).
- Concert: **Álex Garrobé** and **Girán Péter** (**Saturday 16 October 2021**, 20.00–21.30).
- **8th Szeged IGF Guitar Competition** (**Sunday 17 October 2021**, 09.00–17.00).

At Csongrád Megyei Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara, Párizsi körút 8–12, Szeged 6721.

- Gala: **Florian Larousse** and **Giampaolo Bandini** and **Cesare Chiacchiaretta Tango Duo** (**Sunday 17 October 2021**, 20.00–21.30).

For the complete programme, please visit www.gitarfesztival.hu/hu/programok

For details of the **8th Szeged IGF International Guitar Competition**, see: www.gitarfesztival.hu/en/szeged-international-youth-guitar-competition

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