

**Cleveland Classical Guitar Society
to present Kuropaczewski-Fraczkiewicz Duo**

by Mike Telin



In October of 2014 Polish guitarist Łukasz Kuropaczewski presented a stunning debut recital for the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society. On Saturday, March 12 at 7:30 in Plymouth Church, Kuropaczewski will return to the CCGS International [Series](#) for a duo recital with Polish accordionist Maciej Fraczkiewicz.

Their eclectic program will feature music by Boccherini, Schnittke, Górecki, Penderecki, Mozart, Tavolaro, Rabinski,

and Gubitsch. On March 11 at 7:00 pm, Kuropaczewski will present a [master class](#) in the Dolan Science Center Reading Room at John Carroll University. While in Cleveland, the duo will also visit some of CCGS's partnering schools.

I spoke to Łukasz Kuropaczewski and Maciej Fraczkiewicz by Skype, beginning by asking them how they came to form a duo with the unlikely combination of guitar and accordion.

Łukasz Kuropaczewski: To be honest, we have to thank maestro Krzysztof Penderecki and his Association. Five or six years ago they contacted both of us asking us to be part of a project. At the time we didn't know each other, but we met at the [Penderecki European Center of Music](#). The project included a series of concerts during his festival, and we loved playing together so much that we decided to keep doing it. Since then we've performed together many times — we've played the Piazzolla concerto a lot with orchestras, as well as duo recital programs.

The accordion is not thought of as a classical music instrument in the United States, so we think it will be interesting for people to hear a musician of Maciej's talent. He's

sitting next to me, but I can tell you that this guy is one of the best accordion players in the world.

Mike Telin: Are there many guitar-accordion duos concertizing?

LK: There are other guitar-accordion duos who regularly play concerts, but they tend to play music from Latin America. We play a variety of styles including baroque, romantic, and contemporary. Maciej is famous for playing Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, and he's premiered many contemporary works by European composers.

MT: Maciej, when I last spoke to Łukasz he told me that he wanted to play the guitar from the first time he heard the instrument at the age of nine. Why did you choose the accordion?

Maciej Frąckiewicz: It wasn't really my choice. When I was six years old I knew I wanted to play an instrument, I just didn't know which one. So my parents took me to the music school, and the teachers said, 'How about the accordion?' and I said, 'OK, why not?' I didn't even know what it looked like or how it worked. It's not a romantic story, I'm sorry to say.

MT: When did you decide to make the accordion your career?

MF: When I was about twelve years old and I won my first competition. It was not an important one, but it was a national competition for children. After that I thought that playing accordion might be a great way to spend my life. Of course there were times when I thought that maybe it wasn't such a good choice. It's not easy to be a musician. But by the time I was sixteen I was sure it was what I wanted to do.

MT: Let's talk about your fascinating program.

LK: We'll start with Maciej's arrangements of Boccherini's Grave and Fandango from his famous quintet for guitar and string quartet. I basically play the guitar part and Maciej plays the quartet part, so his job is a bit tougher.

MF: When we first had the idea to arrange it, we borrowed the score of a version for guitar and harpsichord, but it wasn't full enough, and didn't sound very good on the accordion. So I took the string quartet parts and combined them into one.

MT: You'll continue with Schnittke's Suite in the Old Style. I love the music of Schnittke, but I don't know this piece.

LK: If you didn't know the piece when you heard it, you'd think it was by a Baroque composer.

MF: It was written either for a movie or the theater, and it's a suite from the score. It was originally for violin and harpsichord.

LK: When we first read it we weren't sure if it would work — I played the violin part and Maciej played the harpsichord part. But when we finished we thought, 'Wow, this is really pretty.'

MT: You'll follow the Schnittke with Maciej's arrangement of Gorecki's Arioso e Furioso.

LK: This is not by Henryk Górecki, it's by his son Mikołaj, who lives in the United States. It's a great piece that was commissioned by a guitar festival in the south of Poland. It was originally for guitar, strings, and celesta, and the festival asked me to play the premiere.

I really liked it and told Maciej that I thought it could work for our duo. So we asked Mikołaj if he would agree to allow us to arrange it, and he said, 'Absolutely, I think it's going to sound really great on guitar and accordion.' Maciej is the transcription guy in our duo. He started working on it and sent it to Mikołaj for approval, and the composer was very happy.

MT: After that, each of you will play a solo work. First is Maciej's arrangement of Mozart's 12 Variations on "Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman" for solo accordion. Then Łukasz, you'll do your own arrangement of Penderecki's Aria and Cadenza. The Penderecki is another piece I don't know.

LK: *Cadenza* is a piece for solo viola. I did my arrangement in cooperation with Penderecki — he likes it and is going to have it published. *Aria* is a movement from his cello suite. When I played *Cadenza* for him I asked if he had anything else that he thought could work on the guitar. He suggested *Aria* and said that he was certain it would work. It is a privilege to play both pieces.

MT: With a title like Milonga, Fernando Carlos Tavolaro's piece must evoke a tango flavor.

LK: This is the little hint of Latin America that we wanted to include on program, otherwise it would be too heavy. It's a very nice piece that we think people will enjoy.

MT: The program will conclude with works by Jacek Rabinski and Tomás Gubitsch.

MF: Rabinski's a Polish composer who lives in Berlin. He wrote *Il Vento Sferza* for our duo. It's an interesting piece in a minimalist Philip Glass kind of style.

LK: Gubitsch is an Argentine composer and *Travesuras* is also in a tango style. It's fun, and a great way to end the program.

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