



Polish Heritage

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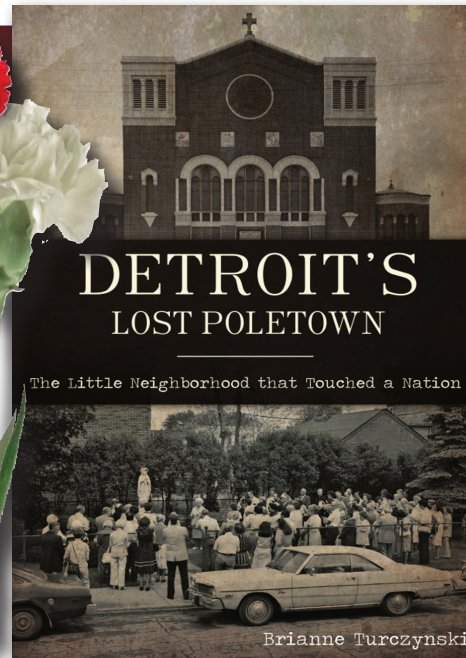
AMERICA'S FIRST CIVIL RIGHTS ACTION FOR THE RIGHT TO VOTE

We have recently completed a presidential election which was challenged because of alleged irregularities in the vote totals attributed, to among other things, persons participating who did not have the right to vote. Before you decide if such a challenge was reasonable, the same type of challenge was issued in America's first election in 1619 in Jamestown Colony, Virginia which was to give "free liberty" to all men through "freely elected representatives."

The problem was "all men" was interpreted to mean "only Englishmen" which caused the Polish Craftsmen, who lived in the colony since 1608, to challenge that interpretation in the colony court in 1619 and to close their industries until the issue was resolved.

The court agreed with the Polish Craftsmen and they were granted the right to vote. Our tri-fold titled "AMERICA'S FIRST CIVIL RIGHTS ACTION FOR THE RIGHT TO VOTE" provides details on this little known historical fact. The sections describe events which led to the Polish Craftsmen obtain-

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Book Review.....

Detroit's Lost Poletown - An important insight into a sad episode in Polonia's History

The following is an excerpt from "Detroit's Lost Poletown: The Little Neighborhood that Touched a Nation" by Brianne Turczynski.

Poletown was once a vibrant, ethnically diverse neighborhood in Detroit. In its prime, it had a rich Polish culture and a store on every corner. Its theaters, restaurants and schools thrived, and its churches catered to a multiplicity of denomi-

nations. In 1981, General Motors announced plans for a new plant in Detroit and pointed to the 465 acres of Poletown. Using the law of eminent domain with a quick-take clause, the city planned to relocate 4,200 residents within ten months and raze the neighborhood. With unprecedented defiance, the residents fought back in vain. In 2004, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that the eminent domain law applied to Poletown was unconstitutional—a ruling that came two decades too late.

The story of Poletown is an American story that budded out of the roots of Polonia. The fight was something in the blood of those men and women, generations-old pride for the old country they had built in the new—free from communism.

In 1980, the 465-acre neighborhood of Hamtramck was a living, breathing community. There were over 1,400 homes, 144 businesses and more than a dozen churches, not to mention schools, a hospital and over 4,200 residents. There were bakeries and restaurants famed for their barbecue and kielbasa. There were generations-old businesses like Stella Barowski's general store, where children would go to buy candy and ice cream sandwiches. But all this would be destroyed within a year by a signature on paper. In the eyes of media viewers at home, the fight for Poletown, all the protests and legal action by the residents, seemed overblown. "Why can't they just move?" was the question on every dispassionate tongue. GM's presence in the media was perpetually advertised as a hero, coming to pull Detroit out of or lessen the blow of a nationwide recession (caused by the declining prosperity of the auto industry) by offering to build a plant in Detroit that would supply six thousand jobs. But the people of Poletown fought still, however muted their voices might have been.

In the fall of 1980, letters from the City of Detroit were mailed out to let the

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On December 19, 2020, the first annual Anna-Mae Maglaty Literary Competition was launched with great success and fanfare. Nine students from the Hartford Polish Saturday School submitted essays on the theme “Why I Am Proud to Say I Am Polish,” all written in the Polish language. Ala Grabarczyk, Grade 4, took top honors with the first prize award of \$250, while Sabina Urbanska (2nd prize), and Maya Tomczyk (3rd prize), each received \$100. The awards were presented by Club President, Lilia Kieltyka, with Hartford Polish Saturday School President, Anna Ramoya, and Kasia Brodowicz, Director of Curriculum, in attendance.

Kasia Brodowicz, Director of Curriculum, and Anna Ramoya, President, of the Hartford Saturday Polish School; Ala Grabarczyk (1st prize winner); Maya Tomczyk (3rd prize); Sabina Urbanska (2nd prize).; and Lilia Kieltyka, President of the PCCGH

The PCCGH also thanks the ACPC for matching part of the 1st prize award through its Wachtel Literary Award grant. The Competition honors the memory of Anna-Mae Maglaty, a devoted and beloved educator who believed in the power of the written word as well as in the abilities of the children she taught. She was a long-time member of both the PCCGH and ACPC Boards.

Nine year old Ala, who is very proud of her Polish origins, likes to read, write poems, play soccer, and sing. She wants to be a songwriter and singer in the future. A copy of her winning essay can be found on the Club’s website, www.polishculturalclub.org in both Polish and English. The following is Ala’s original poem excerpted from her winning submission:

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| jest północ | ... let it be midnight |
| jest dzień | let it be day |
| jesteśmy ludźmi | we are all people |
| inni, ale tacy sami, | different but the same, |
| niektórzy ludzie mówią | some people say |
| że wszycysą inni | that all of us are different |
| inikt nie jest takisam | no one is the same |
| wyglądają i myślą inaczej... | depending on our look |
| | and thinking... |
| ale w naszych sercach | but in our hearts |
| wszyscy dobrzy ludzie | all of the good people |
| na całym świecie | in the whole world |
| są najlepszymi przyjaciółmi ... | are best friends ... |



Emblem of the Kościusko Squadron

The theme of this year’s 2021 Jennie Marconi-Javorski Scholarship essay honors the Kościusko 303 Squadron, which played a crucial role in the Battle of Britain in 1940 during WWII. This inspiring group of Polish airmen also contributed significantly to the Allied war effort in the air. Currently, the Polish Studies Program at Central Connecticut State University, in collaboration with the New England Air Museum, is in the planning phase of creating a permanent Kościusko Squadron exhibit which will pay tribute to these patriotic Poles.

We remain grateful to our members for their understanding and continued support throughout 2020 as we look forward to a more optimistic year and a return to our usual endeavors.

neighborhood residents know their fate, and the people began to rally. The Immaculate Conception Catholic Church became the epicenter for the resistance efforts and the last breath of this community whose death certificate was already signed and notarized. Father Joseph Karasiewicz of Immaculate Conception, whom in this work I have often called Father Joe, was cautious when speaking out against the plant, as the archdiocese had already sold the church to the city for \$1.3 million. But when Ralph Nader and his team showed up, Father Joe became more vocal about what he felt was an injustice even though he was ordered by the archdiocese to keep quiet.

Some of the residents, stay-at-home mothers and elderly women, were surprised at the ways in which they rose against the injustice, willingly protesting in the streets. Even the American Council of Polish Cultural Clubs got involved, demanding the archdiocese use the money from the sale of the two Catholic churches in Poletown to build a Polish cultural center. Father Joseph Karasiewicz found a new calling in the matter, fighting for his parishioners and their church with everything he had. His parishioners would go on to organize the group 'Friends of Father Joe' to make time to reunite with each other again after Poletown fell, nurturing their comradery, like veterans after a war.

Some in the archdiocese accused Father Joe of being brainwashed by Ralph Nader. Eventually, the beloved Polish priest became one of the top spokespeople of the neighborhood, even speaking out against the archbishop himself. This would evidently cause him to be somewhat ostracized by the archdiocese, and it was speculated that his sense of alienation and disillusionment led to his heartbreak and eventual death five months after Immaculate Conception fell.

If anything, the resistance efforts in Poletown was evidence of what a community can do when it sticks together, allowing fellowship to reign even in the face of death or injustice. Even when the powers were trying to split and scatter the neighborhood, the residents instead became more united than perhaps they had ever been. If anything, despite how angry and hurt these people were, their protests were an act of passionate love for their neighbor, for their family, for their church, for their childhood memories and for their Polish traditions. Theirs was the fight, with mute voices in the face of the media, for what's real in life. Yet the 'powers' weren't listening, they were even calling the neighborhood, its community, a myth. The Poletown residents fought for the things we all should fight for and what we have fought for; theirs was the honorable fight, a fight for their lives.

There was nothing materialistic or capitalistic about it. If we look at what—as a conglomerate—GM, the City of Detroit, the UAW and the Catholic Archdiocese were trying to gain out of the deal compared to the people of Poletown, those bending to material gain are plainly exposed. This is how we discern between the truth and the lie. It is the same discernment that took place in the hearts and minds of those activists and residents who helped the neighborhood fight—even when they doubted their own power to do so.

This work is meant to memorialize those affected by the destruction of the Poletown neighborhood. With this piece, my goal was to release certain documents and ideas from the archives. I wanted to put these materials into the hands of regular readers, materials that otherwise would be filed away in the dark indefi-

nately. I consider this work an oral history, a collection of firsthand accounts and witnesses of a neighborhood and a time that will never be again. It is a story to be passed down from generation to generation. And I have felt like its mother in many ways through my journey with it—protecting all that I can, capturing and collecting knowledge of its past so that the future will remember and know that it indeed existed. Poletown was no myth. It was very real, and I'm sure, for a moment it was very wonderful. This work is a love letter to the neighborhood—wiped from the map—whose later people fought with more vigor and energy than most people do (or will ever have to) their whole lives, just to save their community and their culture. This work was my prayer, an effort to preserve Polonia.



Detroit's Lost Poletown: The Little Neighborhood that Touched a Nation is available wherever books are sold including Barnes and Noble, Amazon, and Target. To book Brianne Turczynski for a Poletown presentation via ZOOM or in person visit www.BrianneTurczynski.com.



Brianne Turczynski is an award-winning freelance writer and historical researcher in Detroit. She received her MA in education from Oakland University with a concentration in English and history. In addition to being the author of the historical fiction novel, *Proper Mourning*, her fiction and poetry has appeared in *Halcyone Magazine*, *The 3288 Review*, *The Write Launch* and *The Flying Ketchup Press*. Her nonfiction has been featured in *Valley Living Magazine*, *Michigan Out of Doors Magazine* and *Planet Detroit News*. She is a regular contributor for *Metromode Detroit*. In her spare time, she enjoys woodcarving saints and loves to fish.

Reprinted from *Detroit's Lost Poletown: The Little Neighborhood That Touched a Nation* by Brianne Turczynski (The History Press, 2021).



For Nature, Home, God and Country: A Celebration of the Writings of Minnesota Poet Victoria Janda

Webinar Event Saturday April 24, 2021
Virtual Poetry Reading and Discussion
11a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- A Pulitzer Prize-nominated author
- Minneapolis cultural leader and social worker
- Born 1888 in Nowy Targ, Poland
- Works of poetry include *Star Hunger* (1942), *Singing Furrows* (1953), and *Walls of Space* (1945)

Victoria Janda's civic involvement began during World War I, when she was the only woman serving on the Citizens Aid Society in Minneapolis. She co-founded the Polanie Club, and was the first executive secretary of the International Institute of St. Paul. She died in April 1961.

Please join from your computer, tablet or smart-phone:
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/619823597>



Editor's Note:

Every effort is made to produce each issue of *Polish Heritage* on a timely basis. However, sometimes we encounter printing and mailing delays which are out of our control. We apologize if a scheduled virtual event has already taken place by the time this issue is delivered to you. If so, please check the event-related web site as some events are often archived or available for viewing at your convenience.



Spring Greetings to the ACPC! Cecilia and I wish to send you spring greetings at this beautiful time of year. The flowers here in Virginia seem to have more color than usual so I hope it is a sign that life may be getting better.

This has been a difficult year but we can take pride that our members have taken the initiative and developed methods to continue to communicate our message of promoting Polish culture.

Ted Mirecki has established a system which we can use to exchange email with attachments. I have encouraged our members to use the address to exchange information on their club activities and general information which may be of interest to the membership. Mark Dillon set up our virtual meetings which allowed our members from many locations to participate in the meetings. The music committee produced a virtual concert featuring one of the Sembrich winners. Debbie Majka served as chairperson of a video production of the many loves of Chopin which is on Facebook. You should see the program - it is one of the best presentations of Chopin's life and music.

In March we had a virtual board meeting with over 30 members attending. We followed our "in person" format with a social event on Friday and a Saturday meeting which allowed all committees to make their reports.

A special part of the meeting was that nine organization presidents or their representatives introduced themselves and described their organizations activities. I think it is vital that we encourage participation in board activities by ACPC organizations because we are here to help them succeed in their local promotion of Polish culture.

We have important objectives to complete this year, which include our annual convention and the election of officers and board members. The election will be part of our convention so it is important that we finalize conventions plans if possible. To communicate our progress on these issues, particularly to newer members of the ACPC, I will call for a board meeting at the end of June so we can get reports on the status of the election, of the board meeting and committee reports. I will also propose a shorter format for the meeting which I will explain in another message.

In conclusion, thank you for your participation and leadership of the ACPC.

Sincerely,

Raymond Glembocki
President



President Raymond Glembocki

Con Amore - The Loves of Frederick Chopin

A special presentation by
the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia

submitted by Debbie Majka, Concert Chair

How do you have a Chopin Concert in the midst of a pandemic when it's not possible to gather together in a concert hall?

On Sunday, March 14, the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia premiered *Con Amore – A Musical Journey through the Loves of Fryderyk Chopin*. Pianist Martin Labazevitch created an hour-long video, filmed at the elegant Steinway Society in San Juan, Puerto Rico, which featured a number of the love stories that inspired Chopin's romantic compositions.

Praised by critics in Europe and the United States for his lyricism, virtuosity and an intensity of performance, pianist Martin Labazevitch appeared in many concert halls and festivals in Poland, Ukraine, Finland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Israel, Japan, South Korea and the United States. He is a recipient of many awards and recognitions in piano competitions in the U.S., Spain and Japan as well as recipient of the Honorary Ambassador Award in Stalowa Wola, Poland, Rina Menashe Award in Israel, Kościuszko Foundation Scholarship, Harold Schonberg Scholarship as well as the Harold Bauer Award for the most promising pianist at the Manhattan School of Music.



Pianist Martin Labazevitch

Born in Poland, Mr. Labazevitch studied at the Odessa Conservatory in Ukraine, with Anatoly Kardashev, before immigrating to the United States, and obtaining a scholarship to study at the Manhattan School of Music with Mme Nina Svetlanova and later with Cuban-American virtuoso Horacio Gutierrez - whom he considers his greatest inspiration. Currently, he is pursuing his doctoral studies with Jose Ramos Santana in Washington D.C.

His performances have been broadcast on radio stations throughout the U.S. such as WQXR, WWFM, and WFMT in New York, WFMT in Chicago as well as classical radio stations in Poland and Lithuania. Mr. Labazevitch has been a soloist

with leading orchestras in Spain, Poland, Lithuania, Japan, and the United States. As a chamber musician, he is a founding member of the Paderewski Trio, an all-Polish ensemble, which for the entirety of its existence had been coached by the late Isidore Cohen - member of the Juilliard String Quartet and the Beaux Arts Trio. Paderewski Trio's debut recital at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall was praised by *Strad Magazine* as "...exuberant, multi-faceted, ...gripping from first note to last."

Every boy's first love is his Mother, and, Chopin was no different. His first love - and George and said his only - was his Mother, Justyna Krzyżanowska, who was also his first piano teacher. One of the first melodies he heard her play was the folk melody, *Już Miesiąc Zaszedł*. You may also know it as *Laura i Filon*. Chopin wove it into his *Grand Fantasy on Polish Airs, in A Major, Op. 13*. The second movement of his *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11*, entitled, *Romance*, is thought to have been inspired by his unrequited love for soprano Konstancja Gładkowska, with whom the 19-year old Chopin fell in love, but never told her though he did tell his best friend Tytus Wojciechowski.

The pants wearing, cigar smoking, George Sand, with whom Chopin had a nine-year love affair, was quoted as saying that Chopin, "was a virtuoso in the art of flirting." Who knew Chopin was such a flirt? Well, he met his match in the "dark-eyed" Maria Wodzińska, who was two-timing him with the famed Polish poet, Juliusz Słowacki. She was engaged simultaneously to both and broke the engagement to both!

There are a few more loves that inspired Chopin, not the least of which is George Sand, and we urge you to view the video on YouTube and delight in the music played so lovingly by pianist Martin Labazevitch along with the love stories — *Con Amore*:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xcKTllwlfmGjXTv4gmSSK3QSoPudWljh/view?usp=sharing>

High Quality Virtual Programming from the PAAA

Like everyone else, the Polish American Arts Association moved to virtual mode during the year of pandemic to maintain its activities. In addition to holding our board and committee meetings online, we have staged two of our major annual events on Zoom and through YouTube streaming.

On Sunday, December 13, 2020, PAAA members and guests gathered around computers or other devices with a catered traditional dinner on the table or simply a glass of wine in hand to celebrate the annual PAAA Wigilia. After our *duszpasterz*, Father Philip Majka, blessed the *oplatek* and we held it towards our screens in a symbolic gesture of sharing while exchanging wishes, several past presidents recounted stories of other Wigilias in our 55-year history, including those that were held in the early 1990s in the Embassy of newly liberated Poland. President Raymond Glembocki extended greetings from the ACPC and his wife Cecilia talked about the traditional food she prepares each year, displayed on sideboards decorated with beautiful Polish Christmas ornaments (photo below).

A number of Polish organizations and individuals sent videos with their greetings from places near and far, including one all the way from Minneapolis, Minnesota, and another from the Podkarpacie region of Poland. Rose Kobylinski talked about the *Szopka Krakowska* tradition and showed



Screenshots from the PAAA Zoom program: Clockwise from top left: author Annik LaFarge; program moderator Matthew Stefanski; PAAA President Celia Larkin; pianist Alvin Smithson performing the Funeral March from Chopin's Sonata No. 2.

handmade ornaments and a Christmas scene painted on glass by her late mother Róża Nowotarska. The artistic program included a presentation from Poland produced by the Ambassador Theater and its artistic director, our board member Hanna Bondarewska. Soprano Laura Kafka-Price sang several *kolędy* with Alvin Smithson at the piano; we also heard performances by young Rosalinda Sherman and Anne Margaret Zelenka. The evening culminated with *kolędy* singing by all, led by Stasia and Olek Skrypczuk. It was a beautiful celebration and we hope we can repeat it next December, this time in person.

The last PAAA live event held before the pandemic struck in March of 2020, was the annual Chopin Concert benefiting our scholarship fund. Since a live concert was impossible this year, we did something different but equally as exciting to celebrate the music of the great Polish composer. On Sunday, March 21, 2021, the PAAA hosted a virtual Zoom presentation: *Chopin on the High Line: The Romantic Spirit in Music and Landscape*, by the acclaimed writer Annik LaFarge, author of *Chasing Chopin: A Musical Journey Across Three Centuries, Four Countries, and a Half-Dozen Revolutions*. The program started with Alvin Smithson playing the third movement of Fryderyk Chopin's *Sonata No. 2, Opus 35*, known as the *Funeral March*, from the score print-



ed on the endpapers of Ms. LaFarge's book. The author then talked about how that piece of music sent her on a journey retracing Chopin's footsteps, to Warsaw, Paris, Nohant and Majorca, to concert halls and intimate performance spaces, to musical libraries and recordings, in an effort to discover who Chopin was when he wrote the piece, and to better understand Chopin, the man and the composer.

This all resulted in a book that gives us a fresh look at who Chopin was in his time, as well as how his music continues to influence what we hear not just at concerts but also in films or in modern jazz clubs. Although talk about Chopin and his music dominated both the author's presentation and the discussion afterwards, Ms. LaFarge also spoke about Romanticism's influence on landscape and architecture, from Paris to New York, specifically focusing on an urban park built on the abandoned raised New York City railroad line, which is the subject of her other book, *On the High Line: Exploring America's Most Original Urban Park*. Using slides of her own photographs, she talked about this most unusual park and the feeling it evokes when one walks through it; a feeling akin to the one evoked by an especially moving and beloved piece of music.

The program presented by the PAAA was produced and moderated by Mathew Stefanski, our newest board member and a recent scholarship recipient. The program was free but generous donations from our members and friends, resulted in a healthy contribution to the PAAA Scholarship Fund. The presentation can be seen on the PAAA YouTube channel.

Devoted to the Music of Chopin

ACPC 2020 Cultural Achievement Award Recipient Brian Ganz

The National Philharmonic, an orchestra founded and directed by Maestro Piotr Gajewski, continues to perform a full season of concerts that during this year of pandemic are accessible not only to its regular audience in the greater Washington, D. C., area but are heard near and far by anyone with an internet connection. During the 2020-21 season we are treated two Sundays a month to beautiful music selected around particular themes. Concerts are free and can be watched online or on the PBS TV Channel WETA. Our favorite was an all-Chopin performance by pianist Brian Ganz last December. We are happy that it will be presented again on **Sunday, April 25, 2021** at 2 p.m. Program details and link to the concert can be found here: <https://nationalphilharmonic.org/event/music-that-connects-us-all-encore/>

Brian Ganz was selected to receive 2020 ACPC Cultural Achievement Award which we hope will be presented to him during the ACPC Convention being scheduled for the fall of this year. In 2010, the bicentennial year of Chopin's birth, Brian embarked on a decade-long project to perform

all of the works of Fryderyk Chopin at the Music Center at Strathmore. Works for piano and orchestra are being performed with the National Philharmonic.

A Maryland native, Brian is a graduate of the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, where he studied with Leon Fleischer, and is now on the faculty of that institution. He is also the artist-in-residence and member of the piano faculty of St. Mary's College of Maryland. He has appeared and recorded with world-class orchestras, including Washington's National Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, National Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, and the City of London Sinfonia, and has performed with such conductors as Mstislav Rostropovich, Leonard Slatkin, Piotr Gajewski and Marin Alsop.

Here is what Brian wrote about his encounter with Chopin's legacy in Poland: "Recently I had the privilege of visiting Poland, the homeland of Chopin, for the very first time. I knew that Chopin was a national treasure, but had not known that he is THE national treasure. There are pictures of him everywhere, sometimes with no caption of any kind. He is truly the spirit of his country. The trip was very moving to me, and intensified my connection with the man and his music."

To listen to Brian's concert on April 25, as well as to find the schedule of other online offerings, please visit the National Philharmonic website: <https://nationalphilharmonic.org/>



National Philharmonic
Chamber Concert
Sun, April 25 @ 2pm
Encore Presentation:
**Music That
Connects Us All**

Free Streaming on  
& at nationalphilharmonic.org

Back in the game: PACIM hosts virtual Bal Karnawalowy



submitted
by Mark Dillon

One goal of the new Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota (PACIM) leadership team that took office January 7 is to appeal to all generations, with respect for the diverse musical and cultural tastes of both Polish-Americans and native Poles.

With entertainment from Warsaw, Washington, Winona (MN), Chicago and Pennsylvania, on the night of February 13, members and guests of the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota were treated to a revived virtual *Bal Karnawalowy*. The event featured modern Polish jazz, a classical Polonaise, polka, folk dancing and pop.

Inspired by the success of 2020 virtual versions of Polish Christmas holiday traditions by ACPC's affiliate member organization the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, D. C. and supporting member, the Polish Falcons of America, PACIM's corresponding Bal Silent Auction event netted nearly \$5,000 after expenses, partially replacing revenues lost due to COVID-related cancellations of food-based fund-raising activities such as Minnesota's Festival of Nations, cancelled again for 2021.

On the coldest week of a long, dark and socially-distanced winter in Minnesota, with temperatures well below zero, the young adult polka band *The Kosmix* transported Bal attendees to a lively beach party on a hot summer's day on the Atlantic sea coast with their hit video *Everything's Better at the Beach*. The video aired at the virtual upstate New York Polish Fest last year.

The Minnesota evening's headline entertainment was the first U.S. performance by globally-known Polish jazz singer and songwriter Michał Sołtan. PACIM member Cecelia Dillon had been following Michał's music since spring 2020, when he began livestreaming balcony concerts from his Warsaw apartment as the COVID-19 pandemic shut down live music venues in Poland.

Here was Polish innovation at work, sounds of joy and hope resonating from the dreary grey stucco walls of a confining pre-1989 urban Warsaw high rise. Here on Facebook Cecelia found that Poles were doing what Italians were doing from balconies of piazzas under quarantine.

Sołtan, unable to have gigs in Western Europe or China, decided that playing music for his neighbors was something that he could do. So, for more than sixty consecutive days he played a song each day and

found his neighbors were asking for more. He did a daily Facebook video post that achieved more than 1.3 million views and 33,000 followers. With him on stage and balcony is his fiancé, Sopot mural artist and seascape painter Magdalena Jankowska, and their golden retriever Bruno.

Cecelia reached out to Michał after learning that PACIM wanted to host a virtual Bal event with a Valentine's Day theme, and Michał fully embraced the idea of making Minnesota his U.S. debut. Viewers heard his hit *Origami Blues* as well as Frank Sinatra's *New York, New York*, and a Polish song called *Kitchen Sink*, the lament of a man whose former significant other "took it all without a blink."

Art runs deep in the Sołtan family. Sołtan's grandfather, Aleksander Sołtan, competed in the 1936 Berlin Olympics painting competition and later became a lecturer and director of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (1937-39 and 1947-49). After WWII, Alexander headed the graphics journal *Knowledge* (1947-49) and was editor of *Poligrafika*. Art competitions were part of the Olympics until 1948.

In addition to Michał's jazz, PACIM's musical repertoire for the Bal also included:

- A performance of the *Polonia Restituta Polonaise*, first performed in Chicago, a work of composer, Jarosław Gołombowski, president of the Chicago Chopin Society;
- A custom recording from the Kashubian Choir of Winona, MN of Bobby Vinton's *Melody of Love* in English and Polish. (Special thanks go to Chuck Kernler and the Polish Institute);
- A video from the Polish American Arts Association in Washington D.C. of the 2019 *Wianki* celebration, an annual tradition of song and dance on the National Mall that is slated to reopen this June. Special thanks go to Marianna Eckel, organizer of the annual *Wianki* on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Michał Sołtan hopes to do a U.S tour when COVID restrictions lift. He is a graduate of the Jazz Department of Zespół Państwowych Szkół Muzycznych im. Fryderyka



Origami Blues (muz./M. Soltan, lyrics M.Soltan, D. Pięrasik)



Top: A screenshot of Warsaw jazz artist Michal Soltan performing his Polish hit Origami Blues during the PACIM affiliate's February 13 virtual Bal Karnawałowy.

Bottom: The Kosmix.

Chopina in Warsaw. He has been performing as a guitarist and leading bands since he was a teenager. His two bands *Imagination Quartet* and *Soul Town Leaders*, have performed original jazz compositions for audiences in Poland, Germany, Denmark and China.

PACIM's Bal had historically been a formal dinner held for many years at the upscale St. Paul Hotel in downtown St. Paul but was then moved in 2018 to the Crowne Plaza hotel in Minneapolis, with mixed reviews. This year's virtual event was a casual, fun family-affair.

"We need to reach out to new people, a younger generation, while still celebrating our heritage," said Iwona Srienc, a PACIM board member who chairs the 145-member group's newly formed Contemporary Culture Committee and manages its expanding virtual Polish language classes.

Editor's note:

The Kosmix web site is located at www.thekosmixband.com.

Michal Soltan's official web site is www.michalsoltan.com.

Michal's official music video "Zakochaj się" which also features Magdalena Jankowska and Bruno, can be viewed on his web site's opening page.

Sembrich Vocal Competition 2021



Marcella Sembrich

Attention ACPC Affiliates and Supporting Organizations:

The ACPC Music Committee is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for the ACPC Marcella Kochańska Sembrich Vocal Competition 2021. Like last year, the competition is being conducted online. The deadline for submissions is May 31, 2021. All singers up to the age of 35 who are not under professional management are encouraged to apply. Details can be found on the ACPC website: http://www.polishcultureacpc.org/semblich/Sembrich_Rules.html

The competition honors Marcella Kochańska Sembrich (1858-1935), a Polish coloratura soprano with a long career at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, after which she taught at Curtis Institute and Juilliard School of Music.

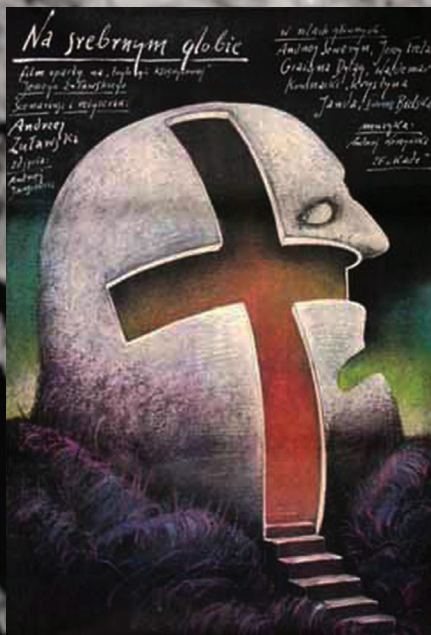
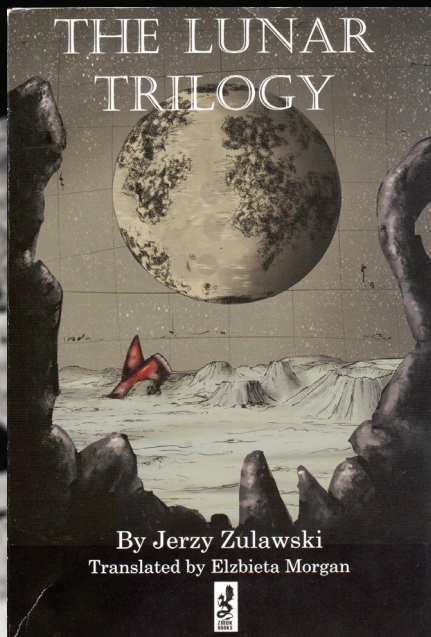
This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the ACPC Marcella Sembrich Award, which was established to support the career development of a young singer of Polish descent. The first award was given in 1954, but the tradition of an annual competition did not start until 1971. Thanks to a gift from admirers of Mme Sembrich, a decision was made at the 1970 Convention of the American Council of Polish Cultural Clubs (as ACPC was formerly known) in Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania, at Alliance College, to present an annual Marcella Sembrich Vocal Award to a talented vocalist of Polish descent, male or female. Originally, the award was given to a singer from the area in which the convention was being held. This has changed with time and now the award recipients are selected from among candidates throughout the United States by the ACPC Music Committee.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Celia Larkin
Chairman, ACPC Music Committee

The Lunar Trilogy (Trylogia Księżycowa) - Science Fiction with a Polish Flair

by Peter J. Obst



(warning! spoilers ahead)

For most people familiar with Polish science fiction literature, the name of Stanisław Lem is writ large. But, preceding Lem, and many other science fiction writers was Jerzy Żuławski (1874-1915) and Polish science fiction aficionados acknowledge his contribution to that specific literary genre, including Lem who called him “an inspiration.” *The Lunar Trilogy* was written during the years (1903-1911) and parts of it appeared in serialized form. What makes it interesting is how Żuławski was able to build on the legacy of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells while introducing new concepts and social commentary into his stories. These ideas and the innovations he added, eventually filtered into western science fiction. Now, at last, the entire work is available in English from Zmok Books, translation by Elżbieta Morgan (sold on-line by Amazon).

The first installment of the story *On the Silver Globe* utilizes the “message-in-a-bottle” concept (in this case it is a manuscript-bearing missile) to relate the story of a lost moon expedition. The group consists of several men, an international crew of adventurers, and one woman “Marta.” They explore the surface of the moon by putting wheels on their space vehicle and, fighting against diminishing supplies of air, water and food, locate a place with atmosphere and arable land, where they can set up a sustainable colony. Inevitably, they must face an unavoidable conflict as there is but a single woman among them. As the story ends, the remaining humans are Marta’s descendants, and the “Old Man” (a Pole named Jan Korecki). It is Jan who launches his manuscript toward Earth hoping that someone will find it and be able to learn the fate of the expedition.

Life goes on in the Lunar Colony and the humans there evolve into a mini-folk who are dominated by the Shern, intelligent bat-like creatures who are native to the Moon. A few hundred years pass since the arrival of Korecki’s manuscript on Earth. Marek (most of the main characters are Polish) pilots his “automatic” spaceship to the Moon and is greeted by a population of mini-humans. Some think that he is the long expected messiah, The Conqueror, a concept that is embedded within their religion (also the title of the second book in the story). He organizes the people to fight the Shern and leads an initially successful military campaign. Unfortunately, he gets enmeshed into the politics of the local priesthood who manipulate him and is opposed by a group of heretics who play the game for their own ascendancy. The Shern prove to be a tenacious and crafty enemy, difficult to eliminate. In the end, a priestess of the lunar cult stabs him to death.

The last part of the story is played out in *The Old Earth*. There, both political instability and a movement to create a scientocracy are gaining in strength. A leading character, among a diverse cast is Jacek, a scientist who has invented an



immensely destructive weapon that works at long distance over telegraph wires (!).

Two of the mini-humans from the moon, Mataret and Roda, arrive in the middle of all this after they enter Marek's spaceship and press the start button. Landing in Egypt, where they are mistaken for some sort of monkeys, they are sold into captivity. Their liberation comes when they hear spoken Polish (the sacred language) and make themselves understood. Aza, an idolized singer, stages a musical performance in a ruined ancient Egyptian Temple (shades of the 2018 performance of Verdi's *Aida!*). A mystic who practices eastern supernatural arts has a successful try at teleportation. The terrible weapon is on verge of being deployed. Fortunately, the plot is foiled and Earth survives. As the revolution ends Roda is appointed to a high government executive post. Gasp! There is almost enough here for two more sequels.

The book bears the indelible stamp of nineteenth century literature - with long descriptions that are almost poetic in parts. It is also identifiable as part of the serial-literature market where each segment had to end in a cliff-hanger - with the reader impatient to get to the next part in the following week; while the writer kept scratching to keep the pot boiling. Despite - or perhaps because of - all these traits, the story has a kind of energy that keeps it moving along. In parts it is very much like modern Polish science fiction, concentrating on atmosphere and character building; then it transitions to being action and theme centric. It is a long text (636 pages) but Elżbieta Morgan has created a translation that strives at being both interesting and charming to the English reading audience.

Science fiction readers will recognize many of the ideas and concepts which appeared in later books and films: *Frau im Mond* (Thea Von Harbou), *Planet of the Apes* (Pierre Boulle), *Star Trek* (Gene Roddenberry) and Stanisław Lem's own *First Spaceship on Venus*, for a start. Not to mention trends popular in current society. Hard to tell if Żuławski was the inspiration for it all, but it is interesting to speculate. Ideas have a way of drifting around and being shared, regardless of language.

It should also be mentioned that Andrzej Żuławski (a grand-nephew of Jerzy) tried to make a film adaptation during the years 1976-77. Though the origin is recognizable, results were far from the original vision. The production ran into considerable problems with both financing and censorship (nudity, graphic violence and possible political messaging) and the filmed footage was ordered destroyed by the People's Government Film Controllers. Apparently, it was not. A cobbled-together version, made from fragments that were completed, combined with narration for continuity, premiered at Cannes in 1988. (Please see the Polish Poster promoting this film on page 10, bottom image.) Afterwards, some viewers called it the "best science fiction film never made." Segments from this work are floating around on YouTube and at one time a DVD version was available. View it at your own risk. The legacy of Jerzy Żuławski lives on.



ing the right to vote and each section has the historical reference supporting the described event. This is an issue that the American public and educators support no matter what their ethnic background because it is one of the basic rights we as Americans demand.

An example of the public interest in this topic is the State of Virginia, Visitor Welcome Centers Division, has informed us that they have distributed 10,000 copies of the tri-fold and have requested that we immediately replenish their supply with 5,000 additional copies.

This tri-fold has been popular with 4,000 educators who attend the National Conference for the Social Studies annual convention. Many have asked for several copies for their classes while others asked for several hundred for their school district.

As with all of our publications you are welcome to print these documents for your use or we can supply printed versions if that would help in your teaching effort. For information contact raymondglembocki@gmail.com.

Pass on the good news and we will keep you informed of our progress on this important issue. Who knows one of your ancestors may have demanded the right to vote in 1619.

We are also pleased to inform you that the project supported by the ACPC Board relating to AMERICA'S FIRST CIVIL RIGHTS ACTION FOR THE RIGHT TO VOTE, has been presented in the Polish American Congress February 2011 newsletter titled "Your Voice in America."

Mark Pienkos, PAC Vice President for Public Relations and Editor of "Your Voice in America" worked with us to produce an article related to the Polish Craftsmen's demands for suffrage in Jamestown, VA in 1619 to the present day debates on who should vote in American elections. I think you will agree that our Polish ancestors confronted with courage and determination an issue which challenges our contemporary election processes.

Your support of our research, publications and participation in events for educators has made the Jamestown, VA history a successful project and the related tri-fold a particularly successful publication explaining the Polish Craftsmen's contribution to America's democratic traditions.

Submitted by Raymond and Cecilia Glembocki, Chairpersons, Polish Perspectives Exhibit Committee

An impressive amount of materials on the Poles in Jamestown and related topics is available for downloading by visiting the ACPC web site at:

<http://www.polishcultureacpc.org/news/J-town/Jamestown-materials.html>

The PAC February newsletter article can be found on their web site at <http://www.pac1944.org/newsletters/>



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