

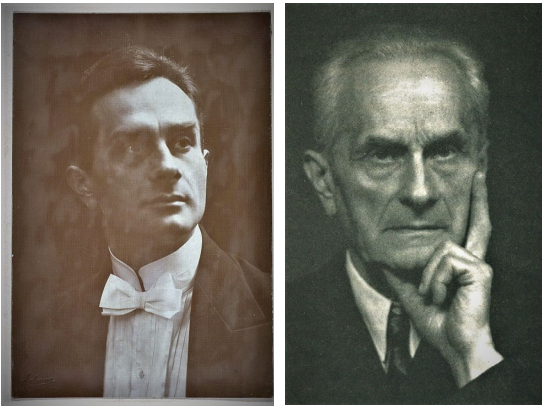


Polish Heritage

Published Triannually by the American Council for Polish Culture

Summer, 2021

Vol. 72 No.2



Witold Friemann: His Life and Legacy

by Konrad Pawelek

Witold Friemann was a composer whose legacy and contributions to the Polish musical scene and clarinet repertoire in his country have been overlooked and are likely unknown in most of the world. Friemann was a composer, pianist, conductor, and pedagogue whose works and contributions shine forth with the spirit of national identity. He yearned to always be in front of the piano, composing with an ink pen in his hand, although circumstances often restricted his desires. As a result, when notes flowed from his pen they vividly spoke to whom he was as a person and what he was passionate about, specifically in significant solo, chamber, and orchestral compositions for clarinet. (Full disclosure: I am a clarinetist.) A prolific composer, he wrote about 400 songs, several staged works, two operas, and numerous piano pieces. He composed about 320 preludes, over 240 mazurkas, many miniatures, etudes, nocturnes, and dances. Works for wind and brass instruments were a strong suit. While not all were published—Friemann was known for handing out handwritten sheets of scores to his friends—a substantial body of work is in the repertoire and discography. When examining these

continued on page 8

Photos above: Witold Friemann in 1970 (right) and as a young composer (left),

2021 ACPC Annual Convention in Washington, D.C.

After a year of uncertainty and cancellations, the restrictions are being lifted and we can once again meet in person and proceed with plans for the 2021 American Council for Polish Culture Convention. The Polish American Arts Association of Washington, D. C., looks forward to being the host for the 72nd annual ACPC gathering under the banner "Celebrating Polish Culture in the Nation's Capital."

To lessen the impact of any potential setback through the first summer months of reopening, the date for the convention was set for the third week of September 2021, with arrival on Tuesday the 21st and meetings Wednesday the 22nd through Friday the 24th. The historic Arts Club of Washington will serve as the venue for convention meetings and guest accommodation will be provided by the Lombardy Hotel next door. We were able to secure the same favorable rates agreed to last year. The Arts Club and the hotel are located in a great area not far from the White House and near historic Georgetown. Other attractions and great restaurants are within walking distance or accessible by public transportation.

The ACPC Awards Committee has already selected recipients for the Distinguished Service, Cultural Achievement and Founders Awards for 2020 and they will be honored at the awards banquet along with the 2021 awardees that are now being selected.

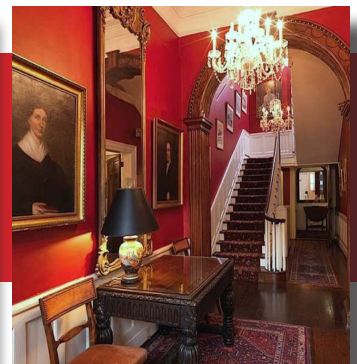
The ACPC Music Committee is in the process of selecting a winner of the Marcella Sembrich Vocal Competition from among talented young singers who sent in their applications this year. The winner will be presented at a concert during the convention. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Sembrich Competition and the committee is very proud of the work of its predecessors throughout the last half century and of the roster of very talented Sembrich Awardees.

The Arts Club of Washington is located in the historic mansion which was formerly the home of President James Monroe, just a few blocks away from the

continued on page 7



The historic Arts Club of Washington will serve as the venue for the 2021 ACPC Convention.



Pulaski Scholarships 2021

AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR POLISH CULTURE \$5,000 PULASKI SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Six winners of the 21st annual \$5,000 Brig. Gen. Casimir Pulaski Scholarships were announced recently by the ACPC's Pulaski Scholarship for Advanced Studies Committee. A large number of applications (14) was received this year. The scholarship program was initiated 21 years ago as a result of a sizeable endowment by the Conrad R. Walas family with the continuing support from Polonia.

Serving on the 2021 Pulaski Scholarship Committee are Dr. Stephen E. Medvec, Chairman; Alicia L. Dutka; Deborah M. Majka; Carolyn Meleski and Peter J. Obst.

The exceptional qualities of school work and research plus dedicated community services per-

formed by the applicants made the final selection process difficult. The Committee felt that most of the applicants deserved recognition for their outstanding achievements and honestly wished that funding was available which could have allowed for several more scholarship awards.

The Pulaski Scholarships Committee wishes these six outstanding students continuing success and is confident that they will attain their career objectives fully. The Committee trusts that they will honor their heritage by ultimately remaining close to the Polish community wherever possible during their careers.

The Pulaski Committee selected the following students for the 2021 Pulaski Scholarships for Advanced Studies grants of \$5,000 each:



Alexandra (Ola) Baczynska - A native of Chicago, Illinois, Ola has her BS in Environmental Science and a BA in English from Loyola University Chicago. She has an MS in Medical Physiology from the University of Illinois at Chicago. At present, she is pursuing her Doctor of Medicine at the University of Illinois College of Medicine. Her focus is on locomotive therapies for individuals with neurological diseases and injuries, tutoring students from ages 7-17, and as a medical volunteer at the Holy Spirit Clinic in Maggotty, Jamaica. She is also active in environmental sustainability, including floral diversity in prairies. Moreover, Ola translated Polish dialogues and interviews for an article that appeared in print May 2016 as "Nazi Underground" in *The New Yorker*. Also, in Spring 2016, at the Eighth Student Forum on Central Europe, Ola presented her paper on the LGBTQ community in Polish cinema.



Christopher Kujalowicz - A native of Chicago, Illinois, Christopher has a BSA in Biology and a BA in English from the University of Texas in Austin. He is currently pursuing his Doctor of Medicine at the Stritch School of Medicine at Loyola University Chicago (expected graduation May 2024). He holds the Stritch School of Medicine Admissions Department Scholarship. Inspired by his Polish grandmother's struggles to comprehend non-Polish-speaking doctors, Christopher works with the Polish population of Chicago as an instructor in Loyola's Medical Polish Program where he teaches Medical Polish skills to native speakers of Polish and new learners. He also is a student in the Medical Spanish Program and hopes to use his Spanish and Polish to communicate best with patients throughout Chicago. Christopher also was involved with the club gymnastics program at the University of Texas, where he served as the Men's Team Captain and Men's Team President between 2017 and 2020. This summer, Christopher will be biking across the United States with *Texas 4000*, raising money and awareness in the fight against cancer.



Angelika Kwak - A native of Oak Lawn, Illinois, Angelika received her BS in Neuroscience with a minor in Public Policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her Master's degree is from Loyola University Chicago. Angelika was also a Parkinson Social Justice Scholar in 2021. At present, Angelika is pursuing her Doctor of Medicine and Master of Public Health (anticipated graduation May 2024), at Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine. She also has studied at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland on a Kościuszko Foundation Study Abroad Scholarship for immersion in Polish language and culture. She serves as a Committee member at the Medical Polish Organization at Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine. She also is a Polish interpreter in hospitals. In addition, Angelika volunteered at Medlife in Riobamba, Ecuador for health education and patient care in Spanish for low-income patients in Ecuador. One of her references noted, "Angelika has a unique scholarly ability to integrate her practice experience, such as her community work in food pantries, with systemic academic inquiry."



Agata Lesniewska - A native of Brooklyn, New York, bilingual in Polish and English, Agata holds a BA in Mathematics and Economics from New York University. She also completed a Pre-Health Post Baccalaureate, Summa Cum Laude, from Rutgers University. She is an MPH candidate, 2021, at Stony Brook University School of Public Health. She is a candidate for Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) at Stony Brook University School of Dental Medicine. Agata has served as President of the ADEA Stony Brook Chapter, represents Polish-Americans in dentistry, worked as a dental assistant for three years in Brooklyn; performs community service for *Give Kids A Smile*, manages soup kitchens and distributes meals throughout New York City, and holds a COVID-19 Constant Tracing Course Certificate from Johns Hopkins University. She was also chosen as one of seven students to fly to Madagascar to extract teeth of Malagasy people in serious risk of infections and life-threatening illnesses.



Laura Le Voir - A native of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Laura holds her BM in Voice from The Juilliard School. She has her MM in Voice from Rice University. She is currently at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music pursuing her DMA in Voice, anticipated in December 2021. She works as a private voice instructor in Minneapolis, Houston and Cincinnati to develop students' voice affectations, speaking onstage and vocal techniques. Laura has specializations in diction in American English, Italian, German, French, Spanish, with a specialization in Polish. She also has competency in opera, classical, Golden Age and contemporary musical theater, pop and jazz. She plays the piano, trumpet, French horn. Her primary area of research has been on Polish art song, particularly that of Karol Szymanowski. As a descendant of Polish immigrants, Laura is "grateful for the opportunities music and performance have afforded me to continue the beautiful legacy of Polish music." She won the ACPC Sembrich vocal competition in 2020.



Joanna Sajdlowska - A native of New York City, Joanna holds her BS in Allied Health Sciences and a MS in Health Promotion Science from the University of Connecticut, Storrs. She is now pursuing the degree of Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine at the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine in Biddleford, Maine. A native speaker of English and Polish, she has participated in the Walking Pilgrimage from Kielce to Częstochowa during the Summer of 2006, served as an active member of Polish Scouts (Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego - ZHP), and was a Miss Polonia contestant in New Haven, Connecticut and in New York City, both in 2016. She holds numerous scholarships in Osteopathic Medicine and is widely published with a concentration in childhood, maternal health, and quality improvement. Joanna has completed AmeriCorps service and is inspired to continue working with underserved and medically marginalized populations.

Skowronski Scholarships

The **Leonard Skowronski Polish Studies Scholarships** has awarded two, \$3,000 scholarships for 2021. These scholarships are intended for students pursuing some Polish studies (major may be in other fields) at universities in the United States who have completed at least two years of college or university work at an accredited institution. The Skowronski Scholarship Committee includes Deborah Majka, Chair; Ursula Brodowicz; Jacqueline Droleski; Alicia L. Dutka and Carolyn L. Meleski.

Angelika Osiniak graduated in May 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service in Washington, D. C. Her major was International Politics/ International Law/ Eurasian, Russian, and Eastern European Studies. Her Polish Studies included numerous courses focused on Eastern Europe. In 2019 she attended the Warsaw School of Economics through the CIEE Study Abroad Central European Studies Program and completed an internship at the Chancellery of the President of Poland during which time she met with Poland's political leaders including the President, as well as personnel from the U. S. embassy. Angelika is fluent in Polish and has advanced skills in Spanish. She hails from Riverhead, New York where she grew up speaking Polish; she is very involved in the Polish community in her home town. She plans to pursue graduate studies in international affairs at either John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies or the George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs.



Cassidy Darragh is pursuing a B.S. in Neuroscience Honors and University Honors with a Polish minor, pre-dental track at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. Born in Michigan, Cassidy is a third generation American of Polish and Italian descent. In the Directed Studies course, Cassidy's deep commitment to her Polish heritage and culture was evident. In her paper, entitled, "The Personal Evolution of Cultural Identity", Cassidy reflected on her "path to Polishness", which speaks volumes to the extent and strength of her commitment. Be-

coming a member of the Polanie Song and Dance Ensemble was an integral part of Cassidy's personal journey. With this group Cassidy twice visited Poland to attend the World Festival of Polish Folk Dancing in Rzeszów. The second time, Cassidy not only performed at the Festival, but also studied Polish folk dancing in her first year as a student of choreography. Since then she has started the process of earning a certificate in Polish dance from Polonijne Studium Choreograficzne in Rzeszów. Cassidy also is an Assistant Choreographer for the PNA Centennial Dancers, teaching children between the ages of 3 - 9 at weekly rehearsals. She's a member of the Polish Culture Club at Wayne State and the Nu Rho National Honor Society in Neuroscience, Children's Oral Health Advocacy Project and the Diverse Dental Society.

POLISH PRIDE IN THE GARDEN *by David Motak*



*"Polish Spirit"
Clematis*



On May the Third of this year – Poland's national holiday – I encountered a great surprise in my garden. As if on cue, blooming exactly on *that* day was the first clematis flower in my garden which is aptly named "Polish Spirit" (photos above). That set-off a cascade of flowers that has not stopped and will probably continue well into September, vining through trellises, over archways and framing doors and windows with their deep blue-purple beauty. This is only one of a few "Polish" clematis cultivars that I have which were developed by **Brother Stefan Franczak** (1917-2009), a Polish Jesuit from Warsaw who spent a great part of his life studying horticulture and creating countless varieties of this colorful blooming perennial vine.

For nearly fifty years, Brother Stefan created and named over 80 clematis varieties, a good number of which have been award-winning, particularly by Britain's Royal Horticulture Society and others. This simple Polish cleric raised the largest number of clematis



Brother Stefan Franczak

of any living horticulturalist and many of his plants have been acknowledged as some of the most valuable in the world. Through his attention to detail, patience and dedication, Brother Stefan created new types of flowering clematis, and, in doing so, he achieved great international fame in the gardening world. There is not one contemporary gardening catalogue that does not feature at least a few of his cultivars.

Most of Brother Stefan's work was done during the Polish Communist period, when it was difficult for Polish citizens to establish relations abroad. In 1948, his superiors asked him to assume management of the monastery's "garden" area on Rakowiecka Street in Warsaw. This area was comprised

of nearly two acres of debris, stumps and war refuse. Over the years, Brother Stefan transformed the area into a virtual Eden with over 900 ornamental plants. His interest in growing clematis began in the 1960s as he needed plants that would climb over unsightly parts of the garden plot but would also grow well in Poland's colder climate. He cleverly used the international connections of his Jesuit Order to acquire clematis plants from around the world. Many cultivars raised by Brother Stefan are distinguished for their striking beauty, wide range of vibrant colors and profuse and long flowering period. He was deliberate in choice - he would observe the plant for the period of over a dozen years before naming and submitting it for registration.

But, perhaps most significantly, Brother Stefan used his plants to promote his Polish heritage, of which he was very proud. By giving each plant a special name related to Polish history or culture, Brother Stefan spread an awareness of Poland around the world. Such clematis varieties include the above mentioned "Polish Spirit," and dozens of others, including "Kardynał Wyszyński," "Fryderyk Chopin," "Warsaw Nike," "Warsaw Syrena," "Copernicus," "Maria Skłodowska Curie," "Pope John Paul II," etc. He even selected names of famous incidents in Polish history such as "Westerplatte," "Monte Cassino," "Grunwald" and many others. For many gardeners around the world, owning one of Brother Stefan's plants was their first contact with Poland and provided an opportunity for an international audience to learn more about his homeland. Nearly all clematis offerings in modern gardening catalogues that have Polish-related names were developed by Brother Stefan.

Unfortunately, Brother Stefan's story does not have a happy ending. For some time, his Jesuit order was seeking to build a church in part of the garden area on Rakowiecka Street but were thwarted by the Communist authorities. After the fall of Communism, however, Brother Stefan's superior took possession of the garden with the intention of building the church. In an apparent fit of spitefulness, the superior had the rest of Brother Stefan's garden plowed with the intention of turning the cleric's life's work into a grass field. Thanks in large part to a tremendous outcry from the world horticultural community, the superior relented and allowed Brother Stefan to keep a tiny portion of his garden until his death in 2009. In 2009, the President of Poland awarded Brother Stefan with the prestigious Commander's Cross of the order *Polonia Restituta* for his "outstanding achievements in the field of breeding of ornamental plants and of his contribution to international horticultural advancement." Unfortunately, this honor came much too late to rescue Brother Stefan's garden and his beloved clematis, which were destroyed upon his death.

From the President

Hello ACPC Members -

I was trying to have a statement in this message indicating that the situation with COVID is getting better which would make our September Convention well attended. Well, this morning at mass the priest solved my problem, he said things were better because this was the first time since the pandemic began that he had an infant sing at mass. "From the mouths of infants you have established strength, Psalm 8:2."



President Raymond Glembocki

I believe we have demonstrated strength, creativity and commitment to the goals of the ACPC during this difficult time. I want to again acknowledge the contributions of Ted who set up our internal communication system which allows for transmitting mail with attachments, and has greatly enhanced our ability to share information. Also Mark continues to set up our virtual communication which has allowed us to have maximum participation in our activities. Virtual communication is an accepted method used by most of us in our daily activity but when it was first suggested for the ACPC, I was quite sure this was not for us. Because of Mark's efforts it works well for our needs.

As you know I have encouraged ACPC individuals, committees and organizations to share their activity or information about others who share an interest in Polish Culture. I want to acknowledge the contributions of the Panna Maria Historical Society in Texas and the Marcela Sembrich Memorial Association in New York for their professional presentations which we share with the membership. Our music committee always shares their planned activities and information on other presentations on music subjects. Finally, individuals should keep the membership informed on their activities, for example my wife Cecilia and I wrote an article for the Polish American Congress newsletter which we shared with the membership.

As for the future I urge you to join our virtual board meeting on June 26, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm Eastern Time. We will have a short Board Meeting focusing on the Convention and the Election. Celia Larkin, the President of the Polish American Arts Association of Washington which is the host organization, will present an overall description of the event status and the planned activities. Rose Kobylinski will describe the status of the Convention Booklet; Mary Flanagan, the status of the Awards; Jarosław Gołombowski the status of the Directory and Mark Dillon on the status of the Affiliate Activity Book. Every two years we have an election of officers at the convention. At the June 26 Board Meeting we will have a presentation by the Nomination Committee on their progress in producing a slate of candidates. They will also explain how the election will proceed if multiple candidates are nominated for elected positions. Any questions on the process will be answered at the meeting.

I look forward seeing you virtually at the Board Meeting and in person at the Convention.

Best wishes for a great summer and remember September is a beautiful time in the Nation's Capital.

Sincerely,
Ray Glembocki

POLISH AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MINNESOTA

Spring is a time of rebirth. On April 24, the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota and ACPC jointly sponsored a webinar to honor one of the founding members of ACPC, poetess Victoria Janda of Minneapolis. Polish actress Hanna Bondarewska of Warsaw, Twin Cities Polish-American management consultant Jill Johnson and PACIM Polish language program manager and board member Iwona Srienec gave poignant recitals of Janda's work.

Each woman read several of Janda's writings, with Hanna producing a 10-minute video of Janda's signature, Pulitzer Prize-nominated work *Star Hunger* that can be found <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZ9baziTBu4>

For more than five decades Victoria Janda was a literary and cultural leader for Minnesota Polonia. Born in Nowy Targ, in 1909 at age 21 she founded a young adult group in Minneapolis for Polish Americans – Sokolice. She later co-founded three more cultural institutions: the Polanie Club, the International Institute in St. Paul, the group that sponsored Minnesota's annual Festival of Nations, and ACPC (in 1948). Janda was a keynote dinner speaker at ACPC's 1959 convention in Wilkes-Barre, PA.

At the webinar, Jill, whose ancestral family is also from Nowy Targ, read poems that included Janda's poetic eulogy to Ignacy Paderewski in July 1941 when his remains were laid to rest in at Arlington National Cemetery. From her deck outside her Lake Elmo, MN home, birds singing in the background, Iwona read some of Janda's spring-themed poems such as *Another April*. Both Jill's and Iwona's readings can be found under the events section at www.pacim.org

Janda emigrated to America at age three, was a parishioner at Holy Cross Church, and became a noted social worker in Minneapolis. Her husband Fryderck Janda ran several grocery stores in Northeast Minneapolis and was the Minneapolis regional recruiting director for the Polish Army in France during World War I. The Twin Cities sent more than 300 volunteers soldiers to fight in Haller's Army in France and Poland in 1917 and 1918.

Much of Janda's work has an inspiring faith dimension, full of light and hope, with images of nature. Copies of Janda's three works – *Star Hunger*, *Walls of Space* and *Singing Furrows* are available at PACIM library as well as the Hennepin County Library system.

Hanna, who is also the artistic director of the Ambassador Theater in Washington, D. C., is hoping to raise funds to create a more extended and expanded video to illustrate Janda's work.



An illustration to one of Victoria Janda's poems.

FRIENDS OF POLISH ART



Shown in front of Comerica Park in Detroit, Michigan at the 50th Annual Polish Night are (left to right) Richard Lapham, President Friends of Polish Art (FPA) and three of the winners of the art contest sponsored by FPA: Harper Hamilton, Kenny Germain and Ryan Ozog.

Friends of Polish Art sponsored an art contest for the 50th Annual Polish Night with the Detroit Tigers. It is the oldest ethnic baseball night in the country, founded by Fr. Ted Blaszczyk, pastor of Our Lady Queen of Apostles Parish in Hamtramck, Michigan. At the time, Hamtramck was a predominantly Polish community. The ten winners were Kalina Barth, Kenny Germain, Monica Osentoski, Ryan Ozog, Taylor Withers, Phillip Gilders, Anna Gilders, Sasha Gilders, Jack Guzman and Harper Hamilton. The complete history along with many photos of art contest winning entries, Polish dancers and athletes was compiled in a 97 page commemorative book.

College Scholarships of \$2,000 each were also awarded to seven recipients of Polish descent. Along with that requirement, applicants were scored on essay, Polish activities, scholastic achievements and community participation. The Frank Filipek scholarship winners were Cassidy Darragh, Victoria Davidowicz, Dominika Kusmierczyk, Mikolaj Pal, and Olivia Westphal. Mitchell Fine Arts winners were Taylor Burnham and Gabriela Pejas.

President Lapham wishes to thank Brian Malski and his committee for their work on the scholarship committee. Since the determinations were made relatively recently and no formal ceremony was held, no photographs are available.

The Kosciuszko Squadron



THE POLISH CULTURAL CLUB OF GREATER HARTFORD, INC. (PCCGH)

Spring is a time of hope and renewal, and with the return to normal life, there is sense of energy and excitement within the Club. The Polish Studies Program at Central Connecticut State University, in collaboration with the New England Air Museum, held an event on May 2, 2021 to celebrate the future permanent exhibit at the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks honoring the heroism of the Kościuszko Squadron and Polish 303 Squadron RAF.

On hand were special dignitaries: Hon. Susan Bysiewicz – Lieutenant Governor, State of CT; Mateusz Gmura – Vice-Consul, Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York; and LTDC Karol Budniak – Deputy Defense and Military Attaché, Embassy of the Republic of Poland. Ron Katz and Steve Perez of the New England Air Museum, as well as Dr. M. B. Biskupski, Endowed Chair of the Central Connecticut State University Polish Studies Program, and Renata Vickrey, CCSU Archivist, also gave remarks. A newly renovated space will house the artifacts, display cases, and touch screen kiosks, each presenting elements of the Squadron's story in different ways and through different periods of time.

Eager to help the Allies gain an aerial advantage, the Squadron agreed to fly and fight under British command. Piloting British Supermarine Spitfires and Hawker Hurricanes, they valiantly defended Great Britain against Ger-

man aerial assault in the decisive 1940 Battle of Britain, with feats that were truly legendary. Several members of the PCCGH were involved with organizing the original Kościuszko Squadron exhibit at the Air Museum that was dismantled a few years ago, and its reestablishment is important to Polonia in documenting a little-known nugget of WWII history.

This new permanent exhibit is expected to be completed by the end of the year. Donors are invited to help fund this project – if interested, checks should be made payable to the CCSU Foundation, marked "For the Kościuszko Squadron," and mailed to P.O. Box 612, New Britain, CT 06050.

In other Club news, ten applications for the annual Marconi-Javorski Scholarship Committee were received from scholars of Polish descent in pursuit of higher education. Five recipients were selected and will receive a check for \$1,000 each at a presentation ceremony to be held on June 17. Chairs, Virginia Pudlo and Florence Langridge, make special note of the caliber of these youth, all of whom exhibit exceptional academics, extensive community service, and most importantly, connectivity to their Polish roots.

We wish everyone a good summer!

Editor's Note: Donations for the Kościuszko Squadron Exhibit can also be made on line at: <https://ccsu.networkforgood.com/causes/17039-the-kosciuszko-squadron>.

National Convention

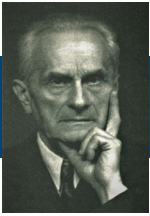
continued from page 1

White House. Monroe's first inaugural ball was held in its parlors in 1817. Almost 100 years later, the house became "a gathering spot for artists and arts lovers," as artists in the nation's capital formed the Arts Club of Washington in 1916, and purchased the former home of President Monroe as its clubhouse. With a focus on painting, sculpture, music, and drama, the Arts Club has provided a welcome place for artists to meet, converse, dine, share and make art together. This tradition continues uninterrupted for over a century now, and today the Club bustles with dinners, luncheons, entertainments, artistic workshops, awards and scholarships that enhance the city's thriving arts scene. In addition to historic portraits and furnishings, there is an ongoing exhibit of works by contemporary artists in the Club's galleries.

The James Monroe House is a National Historic Landmark, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As an art gallery, a site for performances and programs, a symbol of preservation in action, and an elegant and congenial gathering place for members and their guests, the Arts Club's link to Washington and its history endures.

The PAAA has been holding its membership meetings and other events, such as the annual Wigilia, at the Arts Club of Washington since 2014. A number of Arts Club members also belong to the PAAA.

The PAAA looks forward to welcoming the ACPC delegates in our city and celebrating Polish culture in the Nation's Capital in September 2021. Details on hotel reservations and Convention registration are posted on the ACPC website: http://www.polishcultureacpc.org/Conv_2021/index.html.



Witold Friemann

by Konrad Pawelek

continued from page 1

these compositions closely, we may observe who Friemann was and how his circumstances and decisions shaped his artistic work and legacy.

Born in 1889, Friemann would grow up and begin his musical career during the modernist period that swept over Poland encompassing visual art, literature, and music, a movement with strong ties to idealistic, symbolist, and decadent “art for arts” sake values known as Young Poland (*Młoda Polska*, 1880–1918). He was a believer that style itself does not define quality, but that rather talent, knowledge, and the underlying intent determine the value of the work. Friemann chose to remain true to composing in the style that felt right and appealed to him—romanticism, a late 18th century movement in the arts and literature that emphasized inspiration, subjectivity, and the primacy of the individual.

Many composers incorporate the folk music traditions of their native land to acknowledge their influence and richness, as well as to embrace nationality, culture, and customs. For Friemann, folk elements are something more. They represent individuality, emotion, and heritage. Friemann’s family, education, and life experiences all played a role in shaping who he was as a composer. To understand this better, it is important to begin with the history of the Friemann family.

Friemann’s ancestry traces back to the mid-18th century when two brothers emigrated from Sweden. One brother, Jakub Krystian, settled in Poland and established the Polish line of the Friemann family.

Throughout the family’s early years in Poland, the country experienced a series of wars with their aggressive neighbors that would eventually result in the first partitioning of Polish territory in 1772 by Austria, Russia, and Prussia. It would be 123 years before Poland recovered and reclaimed its identity as a nation. During this time, the Friemanns, who came from a noble family, established a prominent position in Polish society. The family’s patriotism for their new homeland grew, and they developed a strong allegiance to Poland’s cause for regaining independence.

Witold Friemann was born on August 20, 1889 in Konin in central Poland, the youngest of three children. He grew up in a deeply patriotic and artistic household. When Witold was little, his father, an amateur pianist, played patriotic melodies and songs by ear and told stories of Poland’s suppressed 1863 January Uprising against Imperial Russia. Witold’s mother, Maria Brodowska, was a trained painter, coming from a family of artists, poets, and writers. These intertwined strands served to develop Witold’s national identity, a strong sense of the family’s values, and a broad imagination.

Friemann’s musical studies began at the age of five with piano lessons with his grandmother. As he recounted later, after the lessons, he would close the door to his room and begin to improvise as he preferred this activity over scales or technical exercises.

To accommodate the studies of his older siblings, the family moved to Kalisz, then a center of piano manufacture, and later to Warsaw in 1900.

During this time, at the age of thirteen, Friemann experienced an emotional blow. The family received word that his father, who remained behind, had passed away while



Witold Friemann, age 17, Warsaw, 1906.

serving as a civil servant in the family’s hometown in order to support the family. Left without income, the family relied on Witold’s older sister, Wanda, who undertook employment as an English teacher.

In Warsaw, Friemann studied piano and theory with well-known instructors, who prepared him for studies at the Warsaw Conservatory. There, Friemann studied with Aleksander Michałowski (1851–1938), a renowned pedagogue, who instilled Witold’s understanding of the music of Bach, Mozart, and Chopin. His composition teacher at the conservatory was Zygmunt Noskowski (1846–1909). Noskowski holds a privileged position in Polish music culture as a famous teacher, prominent conductor, and scholar. In the 20 years of his career, Noskowski taught virtually all of the noted composers who emerged from that era, among them Grzegorz Fitelberg, Mieczysław Karłowicz, and Karol Szymanowski. They later would form an informal neo-romantic organization of composers within the *Młoda Polska* movement with the aim to situate Polish music developments in the broader context of European cultural life.

Alongside seeking a wider acceptance abroad of the music of his native land, Friemann, as several others, embraced musical folk elements that can be discerned in Friemann’s compositions from his time as a student at the Warsaw Conservatory all the way until the end of his remarkable career at The Society for the Blind in Laski.

After graduating from the Warsaw Conservatory in 1910 at the age of 20, Friemann’s next move was setting out to Leipzig in order to study composition with the renowned Max Reger (1873–1916), who at that time moved to Meiningen in order to direct the Hofkapelle, but retained a master class in Leipzig. During their first meeting, uncertain of Friemann’s talent, Professor Reger suggested that he enroll in the Leipzig Conservatory, to which Friemann replied, “I already have one diploma.” Friemann was determined at this point to expand his compositional skills, hone his style, and establish himself on the musical scene.

Seeing that his student was so resolute, Reger skimmed rapidly through the sample compositions that Friemann brought with him, suggested a few revisions, and requested that he return the following week with four four-voice fugues and a number of chorales. Prof. Reger again skimmed through the music and pointed out a few rectifications which Friemann corrected on the spot. This proved to Reger that the impressive, if youthful works were authentic, and that no one else wrote them for Friemann, as sometimes was the case with students that came to Reger.

Friemann's time in Leipzig was intense, yet fruitful. He spent ten hours every day practicing piano and five hours composing, along with commuting to Meiningen to work with Reger. He took piano lessons under the Austrian composer Joseph Pembaur, with whom he formed a friendship.

This period of studies in Leipzig was interwoven with winter and summer breaks spent on his mother's family estate in Iwankowicze in southeastern Poland, (now in present day Ukraine). There he was in direct contact with nature, absorbing the sounds of the night, and often spending an entire day venturing into the forest on horseback. It was in this environment where he felt most comfortable.

As the culminating assignment, Prof. Reger assigned Friemann a violin sonata. He produced a sonata featuring melodic lines and rhythms characteristic of traditional Polish music. After hearing the work, Reger gave Friemann a lecture on music of other European countries. To Friemann's surprise, he was particularly familiar with Polish folk melodic lines, as well as the music of Asia.

Friemann received training in various composing styles including sacred, major, minor, tonal, atonal, and quarter tone, which particularly fascinated Reger. Friemann recalled Reger as an open-minded instructor who did not force a particular style on his students, and viewed the sympathetic teacher as influential in his development as a composer.

Friemann culminated his time in Leipzig with a recital on March 20, 1914, organized by the concert office in Leipzig and assisted by his dear friend Pembaur. After receiving high praises in a review from Walter Neiman, a prominent German critic, the promising career that opened in front of Friemann was suddenly shattered by the eruption of World War I.

Returning to Warsaw in 1915, Friemann was drafted into the Russian army, though with help from his uncle, he was assigned to a railroad battalion responsible for construction of the railroad for the army. During this time, Friemann's older brother Jerzy, now a lawyer, with a patriotic sentiment and hope for Poland regaining its independence, volunteered to join the light cavalry; tragically, he was killed in the first month of the war. Another harsh blow for the young artist.

The experiences of WWI left Friemann emotionally despondent, placing a profound mark on his view of the world and humanity. In his later years, he explained to one of his friends that "he returned from war mentally torn, after witnessing murder, brutality, rape, worthlessness, and violence which led to his loss of faith, not in God, but in people."

To his mental rescue came the Henryk and Józefa

Ciecierski family, landowners and great supporters of art and music, whom Friemann and his sister frequently visited. They provided him with psychological support that helped with his mental distress. It was during a stay at their estate in Podlasie that he met Irena Lelewel, a Doctor of Philosophy and his future wife.

In 1922, Witold and Irena married and upon an invitation from Adolf Chybiński, head of the Department of Musicology at the university, settled in Lwów (Lviv in present day Ukraine), at the time a cultural center of Poland and eastern Europe. Friemann took on positions at the Lwów Conservatory as a teacher of piano performance and composition, as an editor of music columns for the journal *Słowo Polskie* (Polish Word), and as a lecturer at Jan Kazimierz University.

Mieczysław Sołtys, the director of the conservatory, greatly admired Friemann's choral works and piano concertos, which were performed by the local music association. This gave Friemann a firm position on the regional artistic stage.

While in Lwów, the Friemanns were visited by many prominent intellectuals such as Wincenty Lutosławski, a philosopher and the uncle of Witold Lutosławski, the composer of *Dance Preludes for Clarinet and Piano*—an impassioned 1954 work for my instrument based on folk songs from North Poland.

As Friemann was establishing himself in Lwów, he was presented with a new career opportunity which would require moving to Katowice, a city in the Silesian Region of Poland. It was again upon the invitation from Chybiński that Friemann would take on a position as a director of the music conservatory to be formed there. Friemann was reluctant, as he felt comfortable in Lwów. However, he viewed this as another step forward, and after a great deal of persuasion from Chybiński, agreed and moved the family, now comprising three with two-year old son, Jerzy, to Katowice in the fall of 1928. He was given only a few months to create an educational institution from its foundation. After tiring work related to overseeing the construction of facilities, adapting the interior, acquiring instruments, developing curriculum, and selecting the faculty, on September 28, 1929, the State Conservatory of Music was officially opened. Interestingly, the school is now named the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music, after Friemann's contemporary. On his initiative, the only military music school in the nation was also established at this time at the University of Katowice.

In addition to administrative duties, Friemann taught

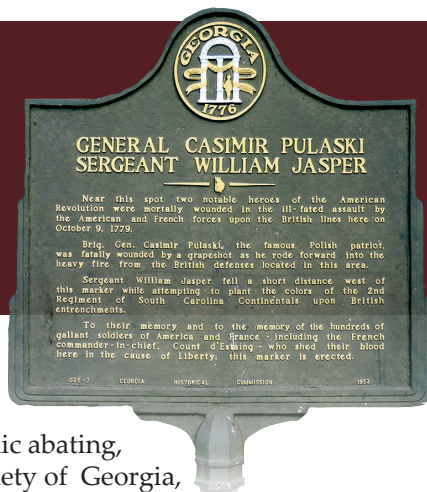
continued on page 10



Witold Friemann, Lwów, 1923

SAVANNAH BATTLEFIELD CEREMONIES TO BE HELD THIS YEAR

by Peter Obst



With the Covid pandemic abating, the Coastal Heritage Society of Georgia, is making plans to hold its annual commemoration in Battlefield Park in Savannah. The date is Saturday, October 9th. While the date is certain, it is not settled if there will be a reception on the evening prior to, or a breakfast after the morning's activities on the field.

A web-page has been created with current information, which will be updated as additional details are received. This page also has links to reports from previous year's ceremonies. http://www.poles.org/Pulaski/Tablet/Stone_tablet.html So far, there is only one new tablet to be dedicated this year.

The Pulaski Cadets organization of Perth Amboy, NJ, are sponsoring a stone tablet for Colonel Michael Kovats (Mihály Kovács), the Hungarian-born commandant of cavalry in the Pulaski Legion. The Pulaski Cadets are acting in the time honored tradition of upholding Polish-Hungarian friendship. There is a saying in Poland that underscores this: *Polak, Węgier - dwa bratanki, i do szabli, i do szklanki* - which roughly translates as: "Pole and Hungarian are two brothers, skilled with the saber and in draining the glass."

The text for the tablet is as follows:

Colonel Commandant Mihály Kovács c. 1724 – May 11, 1779

Hungarian nobleman, served as cavalry officer in Hungary and later in Prussia. Petitioned by Gen. Pulaski for inclusion into Pulaski Legion in 1778, commissioned Colonel Commandant. Trained American volunteers in cavalry tradition; fought at Osborne Island and Little Egg Harbor, N.J., and Charleston, S.C., where he gave his life for American Independence.

The Pulaski Cadets Perth Amboy, New Jersey

The Savannah General Pulaski Committee of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC) in Savannah is also seeking support for a tablet honoring Lieutenant Karol Litomski. He was an officer in Poland during the Bar Confederation, and later joined the Pulaski Legion in the American War for Independence. As Gen. Pulaski's aide-de-camp, he and companions carried the wounded Pulaski from the Savannah battlefield onto the privateer *WASP* and later witnessed his burial on land. Returning to Poland, he fought in the Napoleonic Wars, and eventually settled in Brazil.

Witold Friemann

by Konrad Pawelek

continued from page 9

piano technique and composition. This entire effort was fast-paced and strenuous, all at the cost of his compositions, which he had to put on hold.

After this extensive work, which led to Friemann's physical and artistic exhaustion, he resigned from the post and moved to Warsaw in 1933. Although it was a grueling four years, Friemann felt proud leaving Katowice behind with a legacy of impressive artistic and educational accomplishment.

Upon settling in Warsaw, Friemann assumed a position at Polish Radio (Polskie Radio), first as "music controller" and then as classical music editor. At the radio, he had an opportunity to meet various guest musicians and to become familiar with their techniques. These included, among many others, Ludomir Różycki, Apolonia Szeluta, and Władysław Szpilman. Friemann's character was portrayed in a scene in the film *The Pianist* (2002) as the radio engineer during the moment when Szpilman's live radio performance is interrupted by the World War II Nazi Luftwaffe bombing of the capitol city.

It was during this period, which he referred to as a fruitless time, that he fixed as his life and career goal to cultivate Polish traditional music and a national spirit as a way to fight the new oppressors. Following an official order, all able men were marched east out of Warsaw. When he returned to the city after weeks of wandering, Friemann found his wife, mother, and son safe, albeit now living under German occupation. From their ruined apartment, the family moved to a smaller apartment from which they ran a book rental store as their only means of income.

Friemann's composing work became active in a particular way which accentuated many life matters which he experienced during WWI. He took on the fight with his music by shifting attention towards the struggle for freedom, laying the foundation for his patriotic style. Among his compositions from this period were 47 mazurkas, 5 polonaises and 22 preludes for piano, *String Quartet no. 2*, *Quintet for Clarinet, Piano and Strings*, and vocal works. They were often given subtitles such as the *Mazurka No. 27 in D flat Major "Triumphant"*, *Prelude no. 2 "Curse"*, and two songs "Shed Tears" and "Soldier's Song."

Along with many top musicians, Friemann took part in secret underground concerts in which he did not restrain from commenting on current events and performing patriotic music. These were suddenly interrupted in the late summer of 1944 with the eruption of the Warsaw Uprising, an effort by the underground army and citizens of Warsaw to liberate the city from German occupation. Despite its heroism, the effort failed after three months, hindered by limited resources and the lack of support from the Allies. In retaliation, the Nazi army bombed all of Warsaw, leveling it to the ground.

After the retreat of the German army in 1945, the Friemanns, who were exiled to a prisoner camp, returned to Warsaw only to find that their apartment was turned to rubble. Miraculously, all that could be recovered were Friemann's manuscripts, due to a heroic act of his wife who buried them in the backyard during the time of the Uprising. The homeless family found refuge in a small apartment belonging to the Medical Society for Mental Hygiene, where Friemann worked guarding storage units containing medicine, clothes,

and food, which might catch the eye of roving bands of robbers. (During the post-war time, the rule of law was non-existent.) One feared for one's life over trivialities of survival. Many times, Friemann fought off raiders, shooting with rifles. Once, when changing shifts, Friemann serendipitously met Zofia Morawska (1904–2010), an engaging social activist who was an administrator at The Society for Blind Children in the village of Laski in the Masovian Voivodeship. Upon learning that Friemann was a musician, she invited him to the institute with the intent of starting a music program. With the uncertainty of day-to-day life for his family, Friemann felt the need to consider this proposal.

As he contemplated the offer, he realized that his compositions would be hidden away from artistic circles and might be even forgotten. However, he also recognized that the new, intriguing position would be among people who so desperately needed to experience the art of music, and that the situation might allow him to return to composing. On November 15, 1945, the Friemanns moved to the institute compound where Witold, then 56, was finally able to resume his artistic passion. He was to remain for 17 years, until his retirement from the post, though he continued to reside there.

When Friemann arrived at Laski, the school was recovering and restructuring from the abrupt interruption of the war. Friemann's responsibility was not only to provide instruction to children, but to develop a fully functioning music curriculum and a department equal to any music conservatory in the country. The work was not easy, as teaching piano and choir to the visually impaired while implementing classroom management again placed a strain on Friemann. However, this time, Friemann's experience at the conservatory in Katowice greatly aided the new endeavor. He quickly incorporated rhythm, movement, and piano accompaniment into the curriculum. Among his accomplishments were forming a four-part choir (comprising soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) and writing musical plays that were performed by the students. Every day brought new challenges in teaching and composition. During the remaining years of his life at Laski, Friemann, despite the demands of his activities, composed more works than during all the previous years of his career. This included an additional 174 Mazurkas, 275 preludes, two piano concertos, solo works and 18 concertos for string and wind instruments as well as various songs to words by Polish authors, and two theatrical works.

While absent from the performance stage during this time, Friemann was able to maintain contact with colleagues who admired and performed his works, as well as develop new friendships that yielded compositions for a variety of wind instruments. In particular, he became close friends with a clarinetist, Ludwik Kurkiewicz (17 years his junior), to whom Witold dedicated many works and who was a great promoter of Friemann's clarinet compositions. *Quasi una Sonata* (his only published clarinet composition), *Sonata Romantica no. 3*, or the "Autumn Dusk."

Friemann spent his final years doing the work he had longed to do his entire life, passing on his knowledge and love for music to others: his students at the institute, his



Witold Friemann, interview by Irena Dziedzic for the Polish Television program titled "Tele-echo", March 1972

colleagues, and his close acquaintances. He did all of this with his best friend at his side, his wife Irena. On February 8, 1977, after a long illness, his wife passed away. Saddened by the loss, Friemann began to lose strength and on March 22, 1977, at age 88, Friemann died, completing the couple's wish to leave this earth together.

When looking at Friemann's life, we can see that through all the misfortunes he experienced, he strived to overcome adversity through his perseverance, dedication, and moral rectitude. The premature death of his father, the interruption of his promising public career, the horrific experiences of WWI, the loss of his brother, the exhausting work establishing the music conservatory in Katowice, and the hardships of the fight against Nazi oppression during WWII serve as examples of his determination. Friemann left a rich legacy through his compositions, the founding of two music schools in Katowice, and creatively revitalizing music programming at The Society for the Blind in Laski.

It is mystifying that Witold Friemann remains relatively unknown despite the humanitarian and musical impact he made in so many spheres.

A native of Poland, clarinetist Konrad Pawelek is a graduate of Northeastern Illinois University where he earned a bachelor's degree in Music Education with a K-12 teaching certificate, followed by a master's degree in Applied Pedagogy. He is an active educator teaching elementary music and leading the Youth Orchestra of Polonia. In addition, performs in the Chicago area appearing as a soloist and collaborator with various classical and folk ensembles.

Bibliography:

Mitscha, Adam. "Witold Friemann. Życie i twórczość", *Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Muzycznej w Katowicach* No. 17, 1980.
 Wardecka-Gościńska, Alicja. *Witold Friemann – ostatni romantyk*. Konin: Biblioteka KTM, 2005. Special thank you to Mrs. Halina Blezińska-Białobrzieszka, granddaughter of Witold Friemann, for providing personal family information and permission to copy manuscripts located at the National Library in Warsaw.

