



Polish Heritage

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An Invitation to the ACPC 76th Annual Convention

Chicago is getting ready to welcome delegates and guests to the 76th Annual Convention of the American Council for Polish Culture on August 7-10, 2024. The Chicago Chopin Society (CCS) is preparing to make your four-day gathering seem like a vacation in a gentle breeze of the Windy City.

The convention will be held at the Paderewski Symphony Orchestra (PaSO) and Music Academy. Barbara Bilszta-Niewrzol, the co-founder and executive director, will welcome us with a talk about the project as we enjoy a tour of the facility.

An exciting program is being prepared, which will be both productive and entertaining. Outside of the business sessions, you will be entertained with tales of notable Poles, the likes of singer and philanthropist Ganna Walska, who was known for her exquisite banquets to honor artists and politicians, and who created the famous Lotusland in Montecito, California. We will present reminiscences of other notable immigrants, like Feliks Konarski (Ref-Ren), author of many songs (including the famous *Czerwone Maki na Monte Casino*) and the group of entertainers who sang them or collaborated with his theater, such as Nina Oleńska, Julita Mroczkowska, Barbara Kożuchowska, Liliana and Andrzej Piekarscy, and Monica Silvan. Let's not forget our Polish media personalities, like Bogdan Lanko, Robert Lewandowski, the Migala family and the one and only Sunshine Lady, Lidia Pucińska.

There's much more! We have young musicians ready to serenade you throughout the convention and some serious speakers, like Dr. Waldemar Niklinski who will present a lecture about the Chicago Chapter of the Polish White Cross.

Your host, the Chicago Chopin Society leads a somewhat nomadic lifestyle - we've performed at many venues, from Northeastern University and PianoForte to St. Barbara Church, as well as in private residences, always adapting to and satisfying our demanding audiences. We collaborate with organizations in Chicago and elsewhere in the United States, including the Polish Consulate and our fellow ACPC affiliate, the Polish Arts Club of Chicago.

We have a long history of collaboration with the Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra. Our combined concerts have commemorated the 70th Anniversary of World War II



(2019), the 100th Anniversary of Poland's Independence (2018), the Kościuszko Memorial Concert (2017) and Highlanders' Folk Music (2016). The story of the Chicago Chopin Society will be presented with more historic detail in our convention program book. (*Additional information is found on page 15.*)

This year, the ACPC Sembrich Vocal Competition Winner's Concert will be held at the PaSO Concert Hall on Saturday, August 10, 2024. Our publicity committee is hard at work to spread the word about the 76th ACPC Conventions in media outlets, including on the Polonia Calendar, the Polish American Congress, Illinois Division website, and others.

While you're in town, we invite you to check out the Polish Museum of America (an ACPC Supporting Organization), catch a concert at the Grant Park Music Festival, or explore a special exhibition at Chicago's renowned Art Institute. And, if you're feeling adventurous, please visit one of our two zoos. And hey, if you're craving something fresh for lunch, why not try your luck fishing in Lake Michigan? We'll even turn your catch of the day into a culinary masterpiece! There is plenty here to entertain you and your family.

Finally, please support our sponsors and advertisers—they keep our lights on around here. So pack your bags, bring your friends and family, and get ready to fall in love with the Windy City—where the only thing breezier than our Convention is the wind itself!

*Dr. Jarosław Gołombowski and
his committed Convention Committee*

Further convention information can be found beginning on page 15.



President's Message



President
Cecilia Larkin

Dear ACPC Members and Friends:

Almost three months into 2024, we are still basking in the glow of celebrating the 75th anniversary of existence of the American Council for Polish Culture, recalling the milestone convention with its festive banquet and congratulating ourselves on keeping the organization alive in changing times and changing norms of our society. Our third quarter century book of organizational history is getting finishing touches and will be out soon to show what our affiliate and supporting members did to fulfill our joint mission of promoting and living with Polish culture.

More importantly, though, there is the need to look to the future and define who we are now and how we will look in our fourth quarter century. What defines Polonia now and what is the role in it for an organization like ours? As I talk with our members, I hear some fretting that Polonia organizations are currently fragmented, even disjointed, and not sufficiently integrated. That may be true to a degree as individual clubs and associations experience losses in membership because, let's face it, we live in a different world. Technology and easy access to broad social media and sources of all kinds of entertainment seem to suggest that people are less likely to seek out and focus on traditional niches founded and nurtured by past generations. Still, just searching through the social media, we discover a Polish club in Florida holding regular dances and cultural events, a young dance group in Atlanta, Georgia, traveling to places near and far at the invitation of other lovers of Polish folk traditions, and a community in Ohio dedicating a newly constructed, multi-million-dollar Polish Cultural Center. Just a small sample.

Our membership outreach committee has been hard at work to attract new members and I'm especially grateful to its head, John Cebrowski, whose lifelong work experience is helping to win new members for ACPC. Several organizations, as well as individuals have joined just since the last convention.

So why should these organizations join us? The cover of the 75th Anniversary Convention book has a simple but striking design, just two colors: the top half in white and the lower one in red with an encircled number 75 in the center. As you look closer, a texture becomes visible, representing facets of a diamond, symbol of longevity and strength traditionally used for this milestone anniversary. And there is the answer. Each organization is a unit onto itself, functioning within a circle of its own community. However, when joined with others, each becomes a facet of a diamond reflecting off the others and drawing on each other's strength. By becoming members of the ACPC, they are part of a national organization that "is dedicated to inspiring appreciation, promotion and sharing of the rich culture, heritage and history of Poland." Individual

bricks make big buildings and facets of a diamond result in a brilliant sparkle. *W jedności siła.*

Let's look now at what is our agenda for the coming months. The next ACPC board meeting on April 27, 2024, will be virtual, so I expect all our board members, including representatives of each of our member organizations, to set aside the few hours to discuss the business of our organization, exchange ideas and get to know each other better. Some of the time will be devoted to the 2024 ACPC Convention planned for August 7-10 in Chicago. Judging by initial reports from the Chicago Chopin Society, music will be a theme interwoven throughout the proceedings, so everyone should be well entertained. There are many attractions in Chicago and you may wish to invite friends and bring family members.

I would like to invite each member of each of our affiliate or supporting organizations to consider getting personally involved in the ACPC activities. There is plenty of room on our committees for your skills, your talents and your time. Look at our list of committees on the website in the ACPC Bylaws and see where you think you can fit and where your ideas could be usefully applied. Come to the convention if you can or get a report from your organization's representatives who were there. At each convention, six new board members are installed and new officers are elected every two years so a pool of candidates needs to be constantly expanded. We cannot count on the same people to do all the work. The Nominating Committee just sent out a request for nominations for: recording secretary, six board members, auditor and members of Nominating and Credential and Grievances Committees. Look around and talk to you fellow organization members to see who could fill these positions and send in your nominations. And don't forget to look in the mirror. Self nominations are welcome from those who qualify and are willing.

I look forward to seeing you at the board meeting and at the convention in Chicago.

Have a wonderful spring and a Happy Easter.

Cecilia Larkin
President

THE DREAM BEGINS

submitted by Robert Fronckowiak



The Dream Begins: Agrippa Hull & Tadeusz Kościuszko in celebration of Martin Luther King was presented on Sunday, January 21 at the Montante Cultural Center on the campus of Canisius University, hosted by the Polish Arts Club of Buffalo and the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius University. The program was produced and directed by Thomas T. Kazmierczak III with Artistic Coordinator Mary Craig. Featured as Agrippa Hull was Charles Eberhardt with Carlton Van Pyrz as Tadeusz Kościuszko in live action vignettes. Joyce Carolyn, soloist, the Chopin Singing Society and the St. Martin de Porres Choir presented musical selections. James Bess read excerpts from Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. The program concluded with a dynamic performance by the African Cultural Center's Dance and Drum Performing Company (pictured above).

Agrippa Hull, an African American patriot, a free black man, served as an orderly to Tadeusz Kościuszko, a Polish military officer, engineer and nobleman.

"Agrippa Hull was one of the most remarkable and unnoticed African Americans of the revolutionary era..... Hull's influence on shaping the abolitionist thought of Tadeusz Kościuszko, the Polish military engineer for whom he served as an orderly for the last 50 months of the war, is the hidden importance of the young black patriot." (Gary Nash, author) The friendship of these two Revolutionary War Heroes challenged the status quo of their time.

After the war, Agrippa received a veteran's pension. Reportedly he turned down an offer from Kościuszko to settle in Poland. By 1800 Agrippa had become the largest black landowner in Stockbridge, Massachusetts and had amassed more wealth than forty percent of the town's white householders.

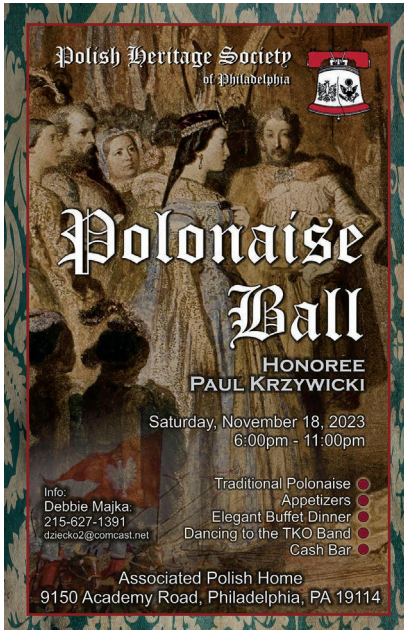
Kościuszko returned to Poland to lead the unsuccessful uprising against the nation's partition by Russia and other foreign powers. He was jailed in Russia from 1794 to 1796 and returned to the United States in 1797 with the intention of retiring. His friend Thomas Jefferson, however, sent him to France to ease the tension between the U.S. and the radical French government. With Poland under foreign control Kościuszko never returned home and spent the last years of his life in Switzerland where he died in 1817. His body was buried at Wawel Castle Cathedral, in Kraków, alongside the tombs of the Polish kings.

Kościuszko specified that the American funds from his estate were to be used for the emancipation and education of American slaves. Unfortunately, his executor Thomas Jefferson never executed this will and the funds were returned to relatives in Poland. Today streets, bridges, monuments, and even neighborhoods across the United States bear Kościuszko's name. In Polish American communities, he is regarded as a hero equal to George Washington himself.

A common comment shared by many in attendance was "Why is this information not better known?"



Polish Heritage Society Philadelphia, PA



At the 2024 Chopin Concert were (left to right): PHSP Board members Alexandra Ziolkowska-Boehm, Paul Krzywicki, John Wisniewski, Dianna Blichasz, Margaret Zaleska, Debbie Majka (Chopin Concert Chairperson), pianist Antoni Kleczek, PHSP President Peter J. Obst, Tiffany Loomis and Vice President Michael Chrabowski.

The 2023 Polonaise Ball

On Saturday, November 18, at the Polonaise Ball organized by Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia (PHSP), Paul Krzywicki, a retired member of the Philadelphia Orchestra, was the recipient of the Polonia Achievement Award. Paul was tubist with the Philadelphia Orchestra for 33 years. His career included over 4,000 concerts, sixty record albums and performances of several new compositions including Jan Krzywicki's *Concerto for Tuba*. As a professional musician, he advises and assists the PHSP in organizing its annual Chopin Concert.



Jan Krzywicki

Members of the Polish Heritage Society, music lovers and friends of Paul Krzywicki and his wife Joan, enjoyed an evening of dancing and a delicious banquet at the Associated Polish Home in Northeast Philadelphia. A printed event program, that included greetings from Philadelphia's Mayor James F. Kenney, was published with Paul's biography, along with wishes and congratulations from supporters of the Polish Heritage Society. Income from the event, and the accompanying auction, will be used to support the Polish Heritage Scholarship Program.



Antoni Kleczek

The 2024 Chopin Concert

The Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia held its annual concert to honor Fryderyk Chopin at the Germantown Settlement Music School on Sunday, February 25. This year's artist was young Antoni Kleczek who has already performed in some of America's great musical venues such as Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. In 2022 he was awarded the Grand Prix at the 29th International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition for Children and Youth in Szafarnia, Poland (photo insert above right.)

photo: wyborcza.pl

Antoni is a recipient of the 2023-2024 Chopin Foundation Scholarship and is currently studying privately with Dr. Martin Labazevitch in Washington D. C.

A reception with wine and various hors d'oeuvres followed the performance where many praised the outstanding rendition of Chopin's works by our young Polonian pianist. We are fortunate to have such rising talent in our midst and look forward to Antoni reaching new heights in his developing career.



Duo piano performers, Steinway Artists, Kazimierz Brzozowski and Tomoko Mack-Brzozowski.

This year's Chopiniana at the American Polish Cultural Center (APCS) in Troy, Michigan on October 15th was once again chaired by Jackie Kolowski with Dr. Kazimierz Brzozowski Ph.D. serving as master of ceremonies. This annual event was first originated by Noreen Smiałek-Sinclair, one of the founding members of the American Polish Cultural Society in Detroit. All proceeds from the annual Chopiniana were donated to the APCS in her honor.

The success of the 2023 salute to the memory of Frederick Chopin owes much to the wonderful contribution of internationally renowned pianists Dr. Kazimierz Brzozowski and his wife Ms. Tomoko Mack-Brzozowski. They introduced an especially exciting element to this year's program by playing arrangements of Chopin's work for two pianos. The first was the romantic *Rondo in E Minor* which was followed by Chopin's *Maiden's Wish*, an arrangement for two pianos by Edward Benbow. This was followed by two pieces by Chopin for single piano. They were *Fantasy on Polish Airs* and the very popular *Grande Polonaise Brillante*. The playing of our two pianists was both breath-taking and sparkling!

Kazimierz and his wife Tomoko have an incredible charismatic presence which absolutely draws the audience into their beautiful playing. They play Chopin in a way that enables the audience to establish a warm – almost friendly – connection to this great composer and his works. They are true ambassadors for Polonia.

For those of you who did not have the opportunity to attend this year Chopiniana hopefully you will do so in the future -especially, particularly if Kazimierz and Tomoko will honor us with the opportunity to hear them play once again. Of course, they do play at other venues and hopefully you will avail yourself of the opportunity to listen to them play elsewhere.

The success of the annual Chopiniana can be attributed to the contributions of so many supporting individuals, groups and businesses as well as the thoughtful employees of the Cultural Center. Many of the attendees belong to different Polonian organizations and this event helps us all to join together in an inspiring evening of shared Polish culture.

In closing, it should be noted that not only did the attendees have the opportunity to listen to beautiful music, to enjoy meeting old friends and to make new acquaintances,



Members of the Friends of Polish Art, the pianists and concert committee members at the 2023 Chopiniana.



Left to right: Donna Bielecki, Kazimierz Brzozowski, Chopiniana Chair Jacqueline Kolowski, Rev. Bernard Witek and Tomoko Mack-Brzozowski

but also to have the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful Polish cuisine prepared and served by the attentive and caring staff of the American Polish Cultural Center.

Thank you to everyone for making this Chopiniana, a great success and we hope to see you next year.

Contributed by Jacqueline Kolowski

AFFILIATE NEWS

POLISH CULTURAL CLUB OF GREATER HARTFORD, INC. Hartford, Connecticut

*Submitted by Lilia Kieltyka
and Fran Pudlo*



*Left: Participants in the Polish
Holiday Fair/Szopka Event*

Polish Heritage Month for the Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford (PCCGH) was quite active with two noteworthy events taking place. The first, a workshop on October 4, featured renowned Kurpie Folk Artist, Wiesia Bogdańska, from Kadzidło, Poland. Her Wycinanki (paper cutouts) can be found in museum collections in Berlin, Białystok, Warsaw, Łomża, Kraków, and Toruń. During the two hour session, fifteen participants enjoyed a hands-on experience making both Kurpie-style wycinanki and kwiaty (paper flowers). It was a fun evening with everyone proudly displaying their handiwork in a group photo.

The second event was a lecture and slide presentation on "What's Cooking: Polish American Cookbooks and What They Tell Us About Polonia" held on October 21 at the New Britain Event Center. The presenter was Dr. Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, a Distinguished Professor of History and the CSU Professor Emerita in the Department of History, at Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, Connecticut. Tracing the origins of Polish-American cookbooks and their evolution into modern times was fascinating. Dr. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann is currently writing a book on this subject. In keeping with the spirit of the topic, guests enjoyed a sampling of delicious Polish delicacies.

Two pierogi making sessions were held in October to prepare for the holiday season.

On November 11, Lilia and Steven Kieltyka hosted a reception at their home for attendees of the ACPC's Fall Board Meeting held in New Britain.

The Polish Holiday Fair/Szopka Event, jointly sponsored by the SS. Cyril and Methodius Church Ladies Guild and the Polish Cultural Club of Hartford, Inc. proved to be a big draw for holiday shoppers and food lovers. A number of szopki were on



Sharing the Oplatek at Wigilia.



ACPC Board reception on November 11

display from previous competitions.

With the closing of Hartford's Polish National Home in December 2022, there was uncertainty about finding a new venue for the Club's annual Wigilia. Thanks to an invitation by Rev. Adam Hurbanczuk, Pastor of SS. Cyril and Methodius Church, the event was held in the church's lower hall. Fifty guests enjoyed a lovely and elegant evening of exceptional food, joyous music, and good cheer. The traditional menu was prepared by volunteers of the SS. Cyril and Methodius Ladies Guild cooking team to rave reviews. As a special touch, recipes for many of the dishes were taken from the Club's cookbook, *Favorite Recipes*.

On January 26, 2024, several PCCGH members attended an exquisite concert by renowned Polish pianist, Ewa Póblocka, at Central Connecticut State University. This was sponsored by the Polish Studies Program, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Madame Póblocka's performance and artistry were both mesmerizing and moving. She is truly a Polish national treasure.

Once again, the PCCGH sadly marked the passing of another of its Founders, Jadwiga (Hedy) Bruks, who died on October 21, 2023.

The PCCGH looks forward to another interesting and active year.



Kurpie Artist Workshop



Above: Dr. Anna Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann

POLISH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SARASOTA, INC. Sarasota, Florida

A Short History of Our Association

It was 1975 when a group of Polish friends met in a Sarasota restaurant for dinner. Conversation revolved around starting a Polish Club in the city. History did not record where these friends had come from. It is even said that some of the participants spoke no Polish. Following through with their desire to start such a club they were off. Randomly calling Polish names in a phone book, announcing a gathering of Polish people brought two hundred some attendees to that first meeting. It was the beginning of what continues to this day. The organization initially called the Polish-American Club was registered in the State of Florida and ultimately became known as the Polish-American Association of Sarasota, Inc. with a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit designation.



The goals of the organization have been maintained: Promoting the rich culture and history of Poland with through concerts, lectures, and presentations such as a Pulaski Day event held annually in the city; supporting the efforts of the Polish Saturday School; along with offering scholarships to qualified students with Polish backgrounds residing in Sarasota or Manatee Counties, Florida. Much has already been achieved but there are still avenues to explore. New members joining our group bring ideas from their past affiliations.

As we approach our 50th anniversary in 2025 - a milestone event - the future continues to be interesting and positive.

*Sue Wardynski,
Board Member
The Polish-American
Association of Sarasota, Inc.*

REMEMBERING A TRUE MASTER

The late Szopka Master Maciej Moszew with one of his many award-winning szopka pieces.

by David J. Motak



As members of various cultural organizations affiliated with the ACPC, our readers are keenly aware of the many artists and performers who promote Polish culture both in this country and abroad. In my capacity as editor of the *Polish Heritage*, permit me to pay homage to one of these individuals whose talents and contributions may not have been universally recognized, but who was widely acclaimed in this native city and in his field: Szopka Master Maciej Moszew.

I first met Maciek in 2004 when I was given his contact information by the late szopka expert Anna Szałapak director of the City of Kraków History Museum's annual Kraków Szopka Competition. I had launched my szopka educational project, the Cracow Creche Workshop, teaching szopka building around the United States and I would frequently visit Kraków to do research, meet with prominent *szopkarze* (szopka artists) and study the various types of szopka styles and building methods. Unfortunately, the Kraków szopka community is a rather closed one and is highly competitive; szopka makers are reluctant to socialize with each other. However, as an American I was seen as non-threatening and I soon began to make significant inroads within the tight-knit group.

Of all the Kraków szopka craftsmen, Maciej Moszew proved to be the most talented, open and amiable. A former theatrical set designer, he participated in the Kraków Szopka Competition without a break since 1961, winning 30 first place awards and numerous secondary distinctions.

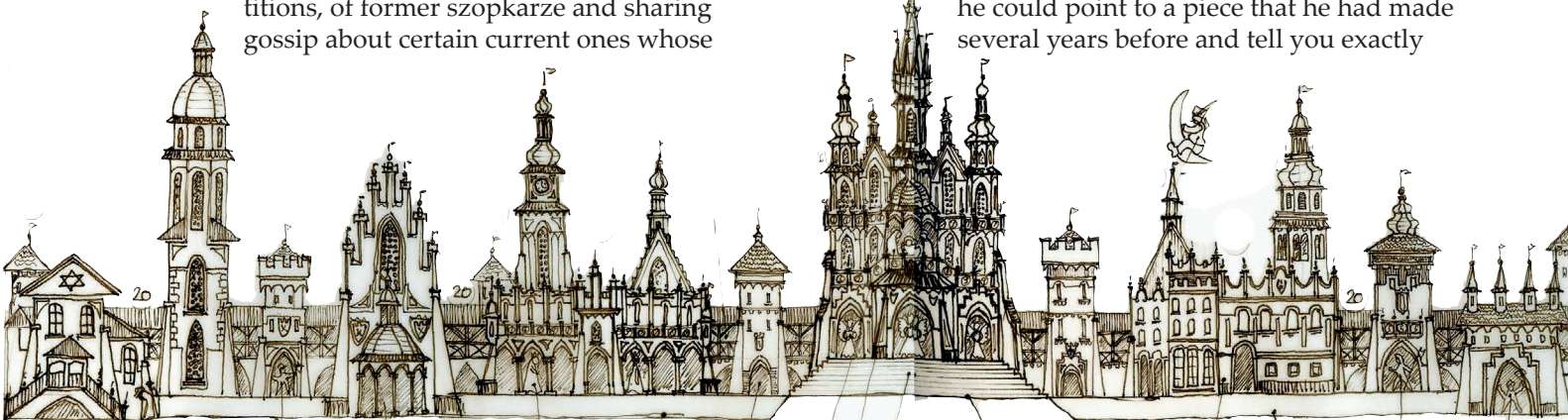
Maciek was extremely gregarious; I would spend hours in his tiny apartment, enthralled by his tales of past competitions, of former *szopkarze* and sharing gossip about certain current ones whose

work he freely critiqued. Although he remained somewhat aloof to most other szopka makers, Maciek did maintain a strong relationship with Stanisław Malik ("Staszek"), whose son Andrzej is also a szopka artist, as is his sister Anna and niece Rozalia. The Maliks are the last Kraków family to keep alive the old tradition of *Jasętka* – the Christmas puppet show on which the szopka tradition is based. Each year, at the opening of the annual Szopka Competition on Kraków's main market square, Maciek would place his completed szopka in the exact same spot at the base of the Mickiewicz monument; Staszek would place his szopka directly beneath Maciek's. This was an on-going, yearly tradition. After many years of study, in 2010 I became the first foreigner to enter a szopka into the Annual Competition and win a major award. I placed my piece next to Staszek's and directly below Maciek's. I had finally become a *bona fide* Kraków *szopkarz*. (From that point, whenever Maciek would introduce me to anyone in the Kraków szopka community he would say: "Have you met our American?")

Like many Cracovians of his generation, Maciek was very hospitable and always welcomed any companions whom I might wish to bring to see his work. When I hosted several "Christmas Tours" to Kraków, he invited the entire group – sometimes over 25 people – for an impromptu holiday party. We will long remember those festive gatherings, all of us crammed into his tiny apartment, singing *koledy* and enjoying the hospitality of a splendid host.

Maciej Moszew was known for producing some of the most magnificent szopka pieces, spending months in the design and building process. He openly criticized the cheap, mass-produced, knock-off "szopki" sold in Kraków tourist shops as "cereal boxes." (Unfortunately, many Polish Americans regard these as authentic szopki, which they are not.) Maciek never used any commercial elements and eschewed store-bought ribbon by making his own, spending countless hours twirling foil into delicate strips. The

roofs of his building elements were covered with tiny, hand made tiles. A perfectionist, he could point to a piece that he had made several years before and tell you exactly



how many roofing tiles were in that particular piece, as well as how many centimeters of foiled ribbon.

Maciek made each of the figures in his szopka pieces by hand, and they were all animated. Using just one tiny motor and an intricate system of belts and pulleys, he would animate up to 30 figures in one szopka. The angels would slowly flap their wings as they moved their trumpets up and down. A parade of figures would go in and out of a castle door, with a knight standing guard. When the knight moved his lance, the figures would stop, then proceed once again when he retracted it. The famous Trumpeter would appear at the top window of St. Mary's Tower and a fierce looking Wawel dragon would stick its head out from under a moving draw bridge. Maciek's szopki were truly a wonder to behold.

Extremely meticulous in his building methods, Maciek calculated and measured every element. I had the opportunity to work closely with him when I received a grant from the Pennsylvania Institute for Cultural Partnerships to apprentice in his Kraków studio for an entire month in 2008. Once, while working beside him, I was tasked to make something for the piece. I promptly sketched it and began to cut it out. He scolded me: "Robisz coś na oko w *moje* pracowni?!!" ("You're eyeballing it in *my* studio?!") And promptly handed me a ruler.

Maciek's szopka pieces were highly popular and sought by collectors throughout the world. In 1990, he was invited to design and construct an elaborate "Kraków Panorama" for an exhibition in Paris, France. This particular piece was over 20 feet wide with whimsical interpretations of many of Kraków's landmark buildings and moving figures illustrating various Kraków myths and legends.

Sadly, like many of the prominent szopka artists of the past, Maciek is now gone and I regard his passing as not only a deep personal loss, but an incalculable loss to his beloved Kraków and the Polish arts in general. Like other szopka artists of his generation, he represented a connection to age-old craftsmanship and attention to detail. Contemporary szopka makers – particularly the younger generation – do not seem to devote the amount of energy and time to create the kind of detail found in older szopka works. More and more, at the annual Szopka Competition one can see plastic, "made in China" bric-a-brac that one can easily find in a local American Michael's craft store. Once, when I was having coffee with Staszek and Maciek, they lamented this development and were quite agitated that someone had the audacity to put a "lalka Barbie" in their szopka piece. What has Kraków come to?

As members of various Polish cultural organizations, we collectively help to preserve and promote the beautiful traditions of our forebears. Unfortunately, times are changing. But, hopefully, like my szopka friends in Kraków, we can try to maintain an important connection to the past and help to create a better world where beauty, quality and craftsmanship are still valued and admired.

Cześć Jego Pamięci.

Left: Maciej Moszew's original sketch for his "Kraków Panorama" consisting of over a dozen animated szopka style pieces constructed as part of his 1990 Paris Exhibition.



Maciek working in his Kraków studio.

Photos above and right: Maciek examining the intricate mechanisms he used to animate the many figures in one of his unique szopki.



Left: The szopka piece that Maciek entered in the 2010 Kraków Szopka Competition which was awarded top honors in the "Medium Size Category."

The City of Kraków History Museum presented Maciek with the title of "Szopka King" due to his over 60 years of participation in the annual Kraków Szopka Competition. Accompanying him was his lady friend, prominent Kraków doll sculptor, artist Małgorzata Satora.



Szopka masters Maciej Moszew (l) and Stanislaw Malik.



POLISH HERITAGE CENTER

Panna Maria, Texas

South Texas Gala a Huge Success

The Polish Heritage Center in Panna Maria (PHC), Texas held its first-ever Red & White fundraising Gala on Thursday, February 15, at the Panna Maria Community Hall, which is near the Center.

Nearly 250 guests were welcomed by Board Chairman Aloys Notzon, who recognized the enduring legacy of PHC's founder, Bishop Emeritus John W. Yanta (1931-2022), as well as the continuing support of our donors. PHC Executive Director Alice Poore also thanked everyone for their generosity and detailed how their support would fund various educational efforts. Special guests included Consul Andrzej Fafara and Vice-Consul Karolina Śliwa from the Polish Consulate in Houston. A raffle that featured Polish pottery was a huge hit!

This being Texas, rib-eye steaks were featured on the menu, along with a dazzling array of Polish appetizers and desserts, courtesy of Apolonia Catering of Austin.



The Lone Star Dueling Pianos provided the entertainment, firing up the crowd with a variety of current and nostalgic pieces. The Polish Heritage Center, which honors the intrepid immigrants from 1854-1856 who founded Panna Maria, the first and oldest permanent Polish settlement in the United States, as well as twelve other communities in Texas, has been open to the public for nearly three years.

With Immaculate Conception parish, the oldest Polish Catholic Church in America, and St. Joseph School, the oldest Polish school in America, only steps away from the Heritage Center, Panna Maria has become Polonia's historical trifecta...an absolute must-visit! Groups are welcome, with our theater being an ideal spot for a meeting, and the Bishop John W. Yanta Room being an ideal spot for a luncheon.

Please visit our website, www.polishheritagecenter.tx.org to learn more. *Zapraszamy wszystkich...we invite you all!*

POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION Washington, D. C.

40 Years of Wianki on the National Mall

One of the first events organized by the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, D. C., during its first year of existence in 1966, was the traditional summer solstice celebration, known as Kupały, Sobótki or simply as St. John's Night. Originally held at a lake on a private property, it included a party with music and folk dances and a parade of young girls of all ages carrying freshly woven wreaths, Wianki in Polish, to the edge of the water. By early 1980s, the celebration was moved from Lake Barcroft in Virginia to the National Mall where it is held till this day near the Reflecting Pool at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. In 1984, the Festival of Wreaths on the Mall was organized in conjunction with the American Council of Polish Culture Convention hosted by the PAAA and a meeting of the American Youth of Polish Descent. Here is how it was described in the Fall 1984 issue of the *Polish Heritage*:



"The mood was relaxed and friendly, like an old fashioned picnic, with a Polish orchestra providing music for a costumed Polish folk dance group's performance. Wreaths bearing lighted candles were floated in the pool. In the waning sunlight, the sight was quite enchanting."

Today, the Wianki on the Mall festival is an event that is witnessed each year by throngs of tourists from all over the world, something that we can all be proud of. I was there 40 years ago and invite you to join me at the Reflecting Pool on June 22 of this year.

Celia Larkin

POLISH CENTER OF DISCOVERY AND LEARNING Chicopee, Massachusetts

The Polish Center of Discovery and Learning in Chicopee Massachusetts has been expanding its reach out into the community and is bringing the story of our ancestors to more people.

Our alliance with Elms College continues to provide the opportunity to teach and share Polish history, culture, and traditions with younger generations with the Polish language course being offered each semester. The History Department created a course on immigration last year and this year is focusing on World War II utilizing the vast array of artifacts within the museum's archives. The Borgia Gallery at Elms is hosting an exhibit on immigration which includes multiple items/possessions from Polish families who immigrated to our area.

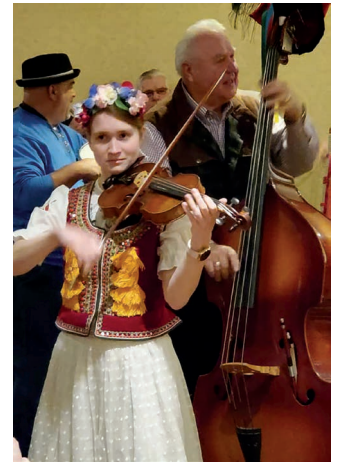
October saw the annual Krakus Festival recognize two longstanding volunteers, Cindy Kirejczyk, and her husband Gene Kirejczyk (posthumously), for their long and dedicated service. The Polanie Folk Dance Group from New Britain entertained the guests, especially the children's group (photos at right).

December brought the Wigilia Dinner, a favorite event co-hosted with the Polish Junior League of Massachusetts. Wigilia was a spiritual and moving evening which evolved into a fun filled night of singing *kolędy*. It brought back many memories for the attendees.

In March, we'll be hosting the Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra's "Burden of Hope" concert with prize-winning



international soloist Dr. Kinga Augustyn, performing Roxanna Panufnik's heart-rending violin concerto, which celebrates the connection between the Abrahamic faiths by weaving music from Jewish, Muslim, and Christian traditions. British-Polish Panufnik, the daughter of famous Polish composer and conductor Sir Andrzej Panufnik, wrote this piece in consultation with faith leaders in the wake of the attacks on September 11, 2001, as a message of unity and hope out of darkness.



The Polish Center continues to look for ways to share our stories and will be planning more exhibits and events throughout the year. We encourage anyone who is traveling through New England to be sure to make time to visit the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning. It will be a memorable visit for all.



Marcella Kochańska Sembrich

The American Council for Polish Culture Music Committee is accepting applications for the **2024 ACPC Marcella Kochańska Sembrich Vocal Competition**

now through May 15, 2024.

The competition is being conducted online.
Please see below for eligibility and requirements.

The winner will perform a recital
at the ACPC Convention held
in Chicago on August 7-10, 2024.

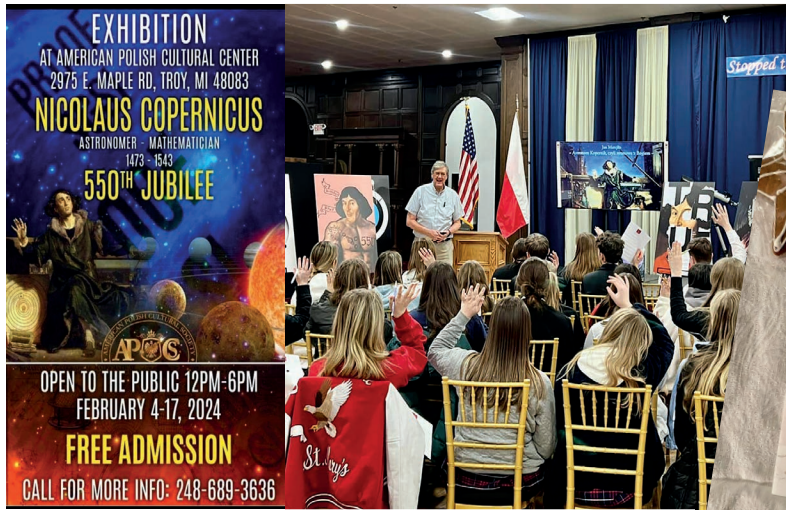
First Prize: \$3,500



Eligibility: Must be of Polish descent and a United States citizen or permanent resident. Singers up to age of 35 in early stages of career development who are not under professional management.

Requirements: Submit application with required attachments. Provide a link to a VIDEO recording of a performance approximately 15-20 minutes long, consisting of arias and art songs in several languages, including Polish.

Details and application form on ACPC website: <http://www.polishcultureacpc.org/>
Deadline: May 15, 2024
For additional information send email to:
acpcsembrich@gmail.com



Friends of Polish Art, (FPA) one of the oldest organizations in the ACPC family, started its new year with a new Board of Directors, new energy, and new undertakings.

The Election took place January 26, 2024, at the American Polish Cultural Center in Troy, Michigan.

The newly elected board: Brian Malski, President; Alina Klin, First Vice President; Michael Ostrowski, Second Vice President; Iwona Jędrzejczak, Treasurer; Carol Surma, Financial Secretary and Barbara Lemecha, Corresponding Secretary. Serving as Directors are: Donna Bielecki, Barbara Hantz, Patty Malski, Charles Pelshaw and Stella Szczesny.

During the membership meeting new officers discussed upcoming events and thanked the past president, Frank Dmuchaowski, for his leadership with a small token of appreciation, a book on the topic that is Frank's passion, the history of astronomy and the revolution in man's conception of the universe.

FPA has been offering scholarships for many years but starting in 2023 we added a dance grants program. This program is intended to support our local folk-dance groups. In 2024, four grants will once again be available in amounts up to \$2,500 each. This past year a special consideration was given to groups traveling to Poland attending the Rzeszów International Folk Dance Festival. The funds for these grants are from a bequest made by the Donald Francis Samull estate and FPA created the dance grant program to honor his contributions to the Polish American community.

We are also proud to share that FPA awarded scholarships in the amount of \$2,500.00 each to seven very deserving students in 2023. The total amount of scholarships awarded for the year was \$17,500.00.

Last December, the Friends of Polish Art Wigilia Celebration took place at the American Polish Cultural Center and by all measures was a great success. The FPA family enjoyed camaraderie, renewed old acquaintances, made new friends, exchanged the *opłatek* and enjoyed a delicious traditional Polish meatless dinner.

This February we supported three amazing exhibits commemorating the 550th Anniversary of Mikołaj Kopernik's birth (photos top left). The exhibits, open to the public, were sponsored by the American Polish Cultural



Photos by Alicja Karlic



Photo top left: Part of the Mikolaj Kopernik 550th Anniversary Celebration activities.

Top right: Addressing guests at the 2023 Friends of Polish Art Wigilia were (left to right) Brian Malski, President; Iwona Jędrzejczak, Fr. Bernard Witek and Fr. Roman Pasieczny at the microphone.

Above: The newly elected board of the Friends of Polish Art.

Society, the same organization that so graciously sponsored our 75th Anniversary Convention last July. Hundreds of visitors came in during the two weeks that the exhibit was open, including students from Polish schools, from universities and high schools.

In 2023, the Friends of Polish Art (FPA) was honored at the Annual Central Citizens Committee Awards Banquet for its outstanding contribution to the Polish American community in Michigan. The committee is now preparing for *Święconka*, scheduled for Palm Sunday, featuring a traditional Easter dinner, entertainment, and an Easter basket raffle.

Planning for an active calendar of events for 2024 has begun and we plan to continue promoting our Polish heritage. For more information, please visit:

www.friendsofpolishart.com

Contributed by Barbara Lemecha

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

WACHTEL LITERARY AWARDS

The Wachtel Literary Awards presented a matching first place prize to Amelia Kazimierczak a student from Hartford Polish Saturday School. Amelia's literary entry was in Polish and has been translated for your reading pleasure. Matching prizes are available up to the amount of \$750.00 for youth literary awards. For further information about the Wachtel Literary Awards program, please go to: www.polishcultureacpc.org and then to "Awards".

Amelia's Winning Entry:

Amelia was responding to the question: "If you had the opportunity to create an advertisement about Poland, what would you write about this country? Justify your choice."

Hi Michelle:

I hope you're doing well. I know that you travel a great deal, so I would like to offer you a trip around my country. Poland is a beautiful country. One thing is certain, a trip to Poland will never be boring. Thanks to the amazing landscapes, architecture, and the Polish spirit that have survived for many years, you will be able to explore many pleasant experiences.

Poland is a diverse country, although most of the terrain is flat, there are a large number of lakes, rivers, hills, swamps, beaches, islands and forests. Poland stretches from the Baltic Sea to the Tatra Mountains. There are so many nice places that you wouldn't even be able to visit them all in one stay. I would like to offer you four places.

The first place is Warsaw, the capital of Poland. When visiting it, you can walk through the Old Town, where the streets lead to the Royal Castle, which is a symbol of Poland. The second place is Kraków, called the jewel of Polish culture. There is the Main Market Square, one of the largest squares in Europe, surrounded by colorful cafes, shops, and St. Mary's Basilica, which is worth visiting. You can take a ride around the Main Market Square in a horse-drawn carriage decorated with Polish poppies. You're going to like it very much. Apart from the big historical cities,

Poland is a paradise for nature lovers. The third place is the Tatra Mountains, which offer beautiful landscapes and many adventures. One of the most beautiful trails you can go on is the trail to the Kościeliska Valley. One of the attractions on this trail is the passage through the Mylna Cave, which makes a fantastic impression. If you want to know the true spirit of Poland, the last place that I will offer you is the Polish countryside and the Biebrzanski National Park. It is one of the largest and most beautiful parks in Poland. In this park you will find many species of birds and one of the largest Polish mammals, which is the moose. While there, you can taste fresh and homemade dumplings, perfectly smoked sausages or simply a large number of chicken dishes with parsley or fish. Sweet delicacies and good food are something you will definitely enjoy in this country. Polish dishes are very diverse in terms of cuisine, you will definitely see it on your trip. The Polish countryside

is very distinctive. A long time ago, buildings were painted in many bright colors to show how rich the people who lived in them were.

Visiting Poland, you will also experience the warmth and hospitality of people who will make you feel at home. When I was in Poland, I wrote: "Poland, the homeland of my ancestors, although you are so far, I owe a lot, you raised many of us. Thanks to you, I know how to respect other people and understand my grandparents. I understand your language and culture. I know that Poland is one of those places on earth that will always be close to my heart. Thank you, Poland."

In conclusion, I would like to write to you that regardless of whether you wish to explore the history of cities, or the peace of small picturesque villages, Poland will offer you an unforgettable journey and ignite your desire to visit it for the first time.

Have a nice trip.

Eye of the Eagle

Submitted by Brian Malski



The Eye of the Eagle also referred to as the Władysław Zachariasiewicz Memorial Scholarship is pleased to announce the 2023 recipient of a \$5000.00 scholarship award.

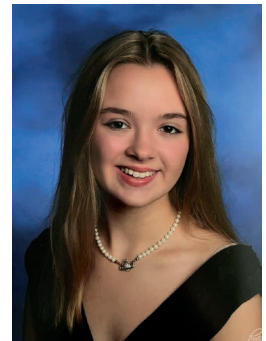
Jessica Antionette Saunders is a sophomore pursuing a Public Relations and Advertising degree at De Paul University in Chicago. As a transfer student from Columbia College Chicago, she will be using her communication skills while participating in the Polish Club and Music Business Organization. Her long-term goal is to create and promote cultural experiences that ignite social change.

A graduate of Royal Oak High School, Jessica wrote for the student magazine, *Acorn*, where she developed a passion for writing about social issues facing young people; commodification of self-care, the exploitation of teenagers in the staffing shortage, and fashion as self-expression. She also founded a fashion club that placed individuality, upcycling, recycling, and sustainability as its mission. As an intern at the Metropolitan Museum of Design Detroit, she assisted with the planning and promotion of cultural events that showcased how societal concerns intersected with artistic expression.

Jessica is an active member of the Zajączek Dance Ensemble in Warren, Michigan. For the past 14 years, Jessica has performed traditional Polish folk dances at festivals and sporting events throughout metro Detroit.

The Eye of the Eagle was established in 2021 in memory of Władysław Zachariasiewicz and is supported by his Memorial Scholarship Fund. The scholarship is awarded to an undergraduate or graduate student pursuing a career in journalism and/or mass media in the United States or Poland. The award is based solely on professional and academic merit with an appreciation for issues that affect Polish-Americans.

The Scholarship Committee members are: Donna Chmara, Basia Lemecha, Brian Malski, Henrietta. Nowakowski and Rose Kobylinski.



Jessica Antionette
Saunders

Book To Consider

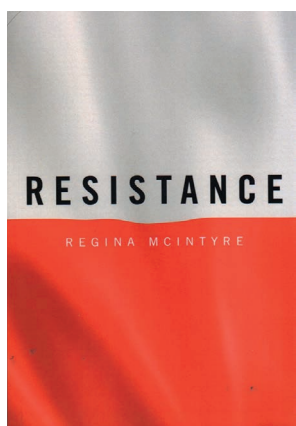
by Peter J. Obst



Krasnoludek: A Gnome Tale

by Matilda Szydagis
Matilda, whom many of you know as the irrepressible (and scene stealing) maid Zelda on *The Magnificent Mrs. Maisel*, has done it again with another bilingual illustrated children's book. Her red capped Krasnoludek goes about the woods meeting the birds, mushrooms, and a snowman - finally to join and go skiing with

two of his diminutive friends. The text is in Polish and English, an excellent aid for parents teaching Polish to their children while entertaining them as well. Available via Amazon. In color, 36 pages with a phonetic pronunciation guide.

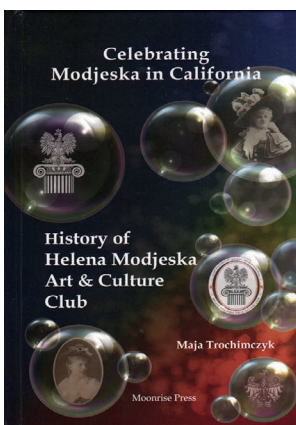


Resistance

by Regina McIntyre

Regina, a Philadelphia writer, uses the actual history of German occupied Poland in World War II as a background for the drama lived by her characters, some of whom are actual historical persons. Though the situation seems hopeless, they rise to the call for action against the invader, supporting the underground Polish army. They battle fear and uncertainty, and

suffer maltreatment at the hands of the Gestapo and prison for their activities. Though victory is uncertain, they believe and continue to do their duty for honor, God, and country. Trade soft cover, 212 pages, published through Xlibris.

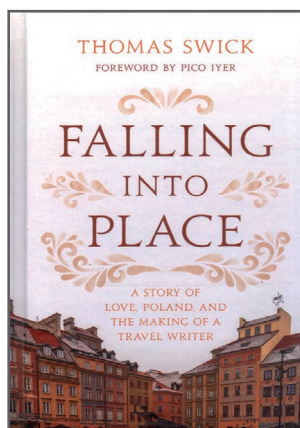


Celebrating Modjeska in California: History of Helena Modrzejewska Art and Culture Club

by Maja Trochimczyk

This is an incredible volume that traces the history of the Helena Modrzejewska Art and Culture Club from its founding and through several "eras" to the present. It begins with a brief history of its namesake, followed by a survey of Polish organizations in California and a biography of the Club's founder, actor-director Leonidas Dudarew-Ossetyński (1910-1989). The next six chapters are devoted to Club history and the various events and activities that

took place in that time span. It is interesting to note how personalities of the various Club presidents affected the makeup and goals of the organization. The history ends in 2023 with conclusions and recommendations. An interesting read, hardbound, 428 pages with many color illustrations, published by Moonrise Press.



Falling Into Place

by Tom Swick

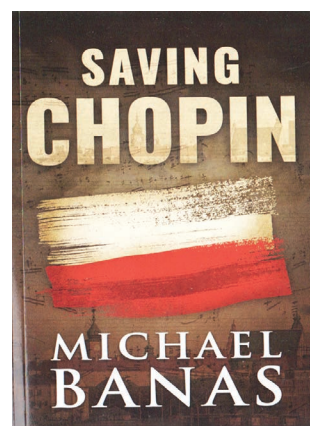
In this true life story, Tom Swick tells about his lifetime adventure which started in 1976 with his trip to Europe where he fell in love with Hania, his future wife. He moved to Warsaw, taught English and experienced the life changing events - such as the rise of Solidarity, Mar-

tial Law and finally the free elections - that reshaped the political face of Eastern Europe. A Protestant, he joined thousands of Catholic Poles on a pilgrimage to Częstochowa that turned into a 9 day protest march. In 1989 he witnessed the victory of Solidarity and freedom in Poland and, one month later, returned to the United States, to accept the position of travel writer - his dream job come true - on the *Ft. Lauderdale News and Sun Times*. Hardbound, 248 pages, published by Rowman & Littlefield.

Saving Chopin

by Michael Banas

A homeless man is found fainted on a Philadelphia Street, after arriving at a hospital he is identified as one Fred Chopin. Soon, a medical doctor gets interested in the strange tattoo on his body and the search for the man's origins begins. After many surprises and false



leads, the truth comes out. Fortunately, modern medical science manages to identify the nature of his ailments and prolong his life with a happy ending. This is a fictional literary treatment in a search for the cause of the real Chopin's death. It has its attractive and enigmatic side - a mystery story with some elements of crime and spy fiction. Michael Banas is an orthopedic surgeon and author of ten medical mystery novels. Trade soft cover, 320 pages, available on Amazon.

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The mission of the Chicago Chopin Society (CCS) is to create a greater interest in Polish and American music through engaging in the active support of composers, performers, and arts organizations.

The Society was established in 2004 driven by a need to celebrate Polish music and present it before one of the largest Polish diaspora communities in the world. The CCS has from its inception cooperated with other music organizations such as the Miami Chopin Foundation, the Chopin Society of Houston, Fryderyk Chopin Society of Texas, Mostly Music and the Polish Arts Club of Chicago. The CCS has hosted the winners of The Polish National Chopin Competition and the ACPC Marcella Sembrich Kochańska Vocal Competition among others. For the last two years the Society has been collaborating with American Music Festivals and the Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra bringing a variety of cultural exchange programs to Chicagoland area. In 2021 the Society presented "If Chopin Met Paderewski" in conjunction with the Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra which featured the United States premiere of Paderewski's *Suite in G Major for Strings*.

The many orchestral concert collaborations between the Chicago Chopin Society and the Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra have also included new arrangements of the music of Chopin, and works by Lutosławski, Kilar, Moniuszko, Ogiński, Panufnik, Karłowicz, Kurpiński, and Moszkowski as well as the premiere of compositions by Dr. Jarosław Gołębioski.

The goal of the Society is not only to bring the world's most prominent performing artists to share in the very best that music can offer, but also to share their experience with promising students, as the CCS is also committed to instilling in these young artists the joy that music can bring to their lives and how their performances can, in turn, enhance the lives of others.

Paderewski Symphony Orchestra



The Paderewski Symphony Orchestra (PaSO) debuted as the Polish-American Symphony Orchestra in 1995 with a concert featuring Polish and American music (Moniuszko, Copland) and was received with great enthusiasm by a multi-ethnic public. In 1999 the orchestra was named after one of the greatest artists who served both the Polish and American nations: Ignacy Jan Paderewski – pianist, composer, diplomat, and the first Prime Minister of a reborn Poland in 1919. From that moment, PaSO has been serving the one million strong Polish community of greater Chicago and the surrounding region. During this time it has grown from a small chamber ensemble to a major cultural organization with permanent staff, its own choir and an Academy of Music for children and youth. This is the only such music school in the United States based on the Polish system of music education. Over its nearly 30 year history, the PaSO has produced more than 380 major musical events in Chicago's most illustrious concert halls. Over 400,000 adult viewers and 48,000 students from Polish Saturday schools have attended PaSO events. An average performance season consists of 6-9 programs featuring a wide range of musical genre, from chamber music to full symphony orchestrations, from early music to contemporary pieces, including Polish, American and world music. This repertoire has included major productions such as Moniuszko's national opera *Straszny Dwór*, numerous musical galas and presentations of Polish religious and patriotic music.



2024 CONVENTION



Please complete and return the forms found on pages 18 and 19.

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Plan to extend your Chicago visit to enjoy some of what this great metropolitan city has to offer, including one of the largest Polish communities outside of Warsaw. Visit the Polish Museum of America, Chicago's beautiful historic Polish churches, Polish food vendors and great Polish restaurants.



*From Dr. Jarosław Gołombiowski
and the Convention Souvenir Book Committee:*

The Chicago Chopin Society will be hosting the 76th Annual Convention of the American Council for Polish Culture. The Convention will be held at the Paderewski Symphony Orchestra and Academy of Music, 5400 North Lawler Avenue, Chicago IL 60630, from **August 7 to 10, 2024**.

Our theme for this year's Convention is *The Achievements of Post-Solidarity Emigrants*, which is intended to recognize and honor individuals who promoted Polish culture throughout their lives.

Additionally, we will be celebrating 20 years of The Chicago Chopin Society. The Chicago Chopin Society began its journey in 2004 at Northeastern Illinois University Recital Hall with the First Annual Chopin Festival, featuring Adam Wodnicki playing a tribute concert of selected Fryderyk Chopin compositions. Twenty years later we still are helping emerging artists to be recognized and Polish culture to thrive.

As is customary, an attractive **Convention Souvenir Book** will be issued for the Chicago Convention. We invite all affiliates to encourage their members as well as any local area businesses, clubs and associations to advertise in the program book. Their message will reach audiences in numerous states.

The program book becomes a historical document cataloged and stored in national archives. Your gesture of supporting Polish culture will be known and preserved for future generations.

For more information on advertising and an honorary listing contract form contact:

Dr. Jarosław Gołombiowski
cell: 773-988-3663
email: composerjg@comcast.net
or email: chicagochopinsociety@gmail.com

Please return the completed contract
and checks/PayPal to:

Dr. Jarosław Gołombiowski
The Chicago Chopin Society
1427 W. Greenleaf Ave. #3N
Chicago IL 60626-2870



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DEADLINE FOR ADS: JULY 10, 2024



American Council for Polish Culture 76th Annual Convention

Chicago, IL August 7 – 10, 2024

Hosted by The Chicago Chopin Society

Held at Paderewski Symphony Orchestra and Academy of Music ,
5400 North Lawler Avenue Chicago IL 60630

Convention Registration Form:

- _____ Arrive Wednesday \$475.00 (Board Meeting and Welcome Reception)
- _____ Arrive Thursday, after Lunch \$450.00 (Grand Opening and Business Meeting)
- _____ Arrive Friday, after Lunch \$375.00 (ACPC Banquet)
- _____ Arrive Saturday, after Lunch \$275.00 (Business Meeting and Sembrich Concert)
- _____ Guest Award Banquet Ticket \$150.00 (Friday)

Please remit full amount or deposit of \$200.00 per person by July 1, 2024

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Make checks payable to: *Chicago Chopin Society*

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For further information contact:

Dr. Jaroslaw Golembiowski, 773-988-3663 chicagochopinsociety@gmail.com

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