



# POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION of Washington, DC

Summer - Fall 2022

NEWSLETTER

Member of the American Council for Polish Culture, Inc. since 1966

## Passing of the Gavel - New President of PAAA



Zoom board meetings and online events may have carried us through the worst days of the pandemic but nothing can take place of an in-person gathering to reconnect with old friends and colleagues, share experiences and make plans for the future. The PAAA general membership meeting on May 22, 2022, was the first since the fall of 2019. In 2020, force majeure was declared which allowed all officers and board members to remain in their positions without a formal election. This year, new officers and board members were elected or re-elected for another term. The new president is Matthew Stefanski, the first one under the age of thirty in thirty plus years or since before he was born. A 2011 scholarship recipient, he became a regular fixture at PAAA meetings over the past few years, served on the Board of Directors and on the Scholarship Committee, and contributed articles to the newsletter. He now takes on a task to bring more of his generation into the fold of the organization. Read more about his background and past Polonia involvement in a brief biographic note on page 5.

Also elected at the May meeting were: Celia Larkin, 1st Vice President; Rose Kobylinski, 2nd Vice President; Margaret Butler, Treasurer; Mary Beth Sowa, Recording Secretary. Members of the Board of Directors are: Hanna Bondarewska, Cecilia Glembocki, Laura Kafka-Price, Thomas Payne, Eve Marie Szczepanski, and Elżbieta Chłopecka Vande Sande; Auditors: Richard Larkin and Mark Ohnmacht. In addition, Constance Donnelly was appointed Membership Chairman. Father Philip Majka administered the oath of office.

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## PAAA at ACPC Convention in San Antonio, Texas



A dozen PAAA members attended this year's ACPC Convention in San Antonio, Texas, from July 26-29, the largest group from any of the affiliate organizations. A full report on the convention is provided in the Polish Heritage and on the ACPC website, along with many photos that can also be found in posts on ACPC and PAAA Facebook. Here we'd like to touch upon parts that pertain mostly to the PAAA participation.

The highlight of the convention was a day trip to nearby Panna Maria, the first Polish settlement in Texas, where a new Polish Heritage Center was recently opened. During the visit, Ray and Cecilia Glembocki presented some gifts brought from

Washington, including a U.S. flag that was flown over the Capitol on the 100th birthday of Saint John Paul II, a scrapbook of original works by painter Jan de Rosen preserved by Mary Flanagan, author of the book about the artist *With Paintbrush and Sword*, which was included with the gift, and a copy of *Poland: A Portrait of the Country Through Its Festivals and Traditions*, a book for children published by the Polish American Arts Association.

Like in past years, PAAA continues to be represented by several board and committee members, along with the ACPC President Ray Glembocki. Tom Payne continues to serve as ACPC Treasurer, Cecilia Glembocki, Rev. Phillip Majka and Celia Larkin are members of the board, and Rose Kobylinski chairs the

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# Message from the President

Dear fellow PAAA members and friends,

It is my great pleasure to write to you as the newly elected President of this great organization. I would like to express my thanks to everyone who entrusted me with this responsibility, and especially to past President Celia Larkin for supporting my involvement in the Polish American Arts Association and helping guide the transition. Additionally, I would like to thank our out-going treasurer, Ted

Mirecki, and board members, Dr. Renata Greenspan and Bożenna Buda, for their many years of dedication to the PAAA. I look forward to their continued involvement. This organization has prospered for more than half a century thanks to the devotion of so many individuals who selflessly dedicate their time and energy for the betterment of our group and Polonia as a whole. On that note, I am very pleased to welcome our new treasurer, Margaret Butler, our new board members, Elzbieta Chłopecka Vande Sande and Dr. Laura Kafka-Price, our new membership chair, Constance Donnelly, and all returning officers and board members. I greatly look forward to our collaboration over the coming years.

Earlier this summer, the American Council for Polish Culture, of which we are a proud affiliate, gathered in San Antonio, Texas, for its 74<sup>th</sup> Convention. This year, our past President Celia Larkin was recognized with the ACPC Founders Award for her many years of dedicated work and contributions to ACPC and Polonia. On behalf of the PAAA, I join in congratulating Celia. Our organization has been lucky to benefit from her leadership and continued involvement.

As we all know, the past few years have been challenging in unprecedented ways. Fortunately, the PAAA has survived thanks to our supportive membership and dedicated board and officers. We have successfully resumed our in-person events and are positioned to hopefully expand our programming and undertakings. Since accepting the Presidential gavel, I have been working with our officers and board to facilitate a smooth transition and begin planning our upcoming undertakings. Please save the following dates for our upcoming events: on October 23 we will hold our annual Fall Membership Meeting, and on December 18 we will resume our in-person PAAA Wigilia. I hope all our members will make an effort to join us. I am also excited to share with you a new initiative that has been in development for several months: the PAAA Holiday Card Project. This project unites our organization's efforts to support both artists and students in their educational pursuits, and I very much hope you will consider purchasing a set of PAAA holiday cards to use or to gift this season. You can read more about this project, including an interview with the artist Steven Zazenski.

I hope everyone has had a chance to visit our updated website in recent months. As we continue to add new features, I am pleased to announce that our members can now pay their membership dues and make donations virtually via our PayPal account. For more information, please visit: [paaa.us](http://paaa.us)

I look forward to meeting everyone in-person at one of our upcoming events. In the meantime, don't hesitate to contact me, and please enjoy this edition of our newsletter which is filled with a number of informative and interesting articles.

Do zobaczenia,  
Matthew

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## PAAA NEWSLETTER

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# ACPC Convention in San Antonio

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Nominating Committee and is on the Eye of the Eagle Scholarship Committee. Celia Larkin continues as Chair of the Music Committee, along with members Laura Kafka-Price and Dick Larkin, and is also on the Polish Heritage Committee; Cecilia Glembocki is on the Awards Committee in addition to co-chairing the NCSS program with Ray Glembocki. Attending the convention as PAAA delegates were: Margaret Butler, Eve Marie Szczepanski and Renata Greenspan who maintains her membership after moving to Texas earlier this year. The PAAA is proud to play such an integral role in the ACPC as it approaches its 75th anniversary.

During the Awards banquet on Friday night, Celia Larkin was presented with the 2022 ACPC Founders Award for her many years of service to the ACPC and the cause of Polish Culture. She received it from the hands of her friend and predecessor as PAAA president, Tom Payne. In her speech, Celia recalled some of the other PAAA members who received this award over the years, such as Walter Zachariasiewicz, Irene Coulter, Mary Flanagan, Verna Lopatkiewicz, Bernadette and Richard Wiermanski, Ted and Irene Mirecki, and more recently, Cecilia and Ray Glembocki, Tom Payne and Alice Laning. She also recalled her work on behalf of Poland in her government job and expressed pride in the United States and its role in supporting the Polish opposition in its struggle for freedom. Commenting on more recent events, she expressed pride in her two countries for being in the front line to provide support to the people of Ukraine in their heroic fight against the brutal invader of their country.

We are grateful to Tom Payne, the ACPC Convention Co-chair for the splendid job in setting up such a well-run event, along with Debbie Majka and local committee members. Having hosted last year's convention with Tom's invaluable participation, we know exactly what is involved. We look forward to attending the 2023 convention at which we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of ACPC's existence.

*Clockwise from top: Live Oaks trees in the Churchyard of the Immaculate Conception- site of the first Mass said in Panna Maria in 1854; ACPC Music Committee: Dick Larkin, pianist Jarek Golembiowski, 2022 Sembrich Award winner Matilda Smolij, Committee Chair Celia Larkin, ACPC President Ray Glembocki; Rose Kobylinski, Celia Larkin, Laura Kafka-Price; Tom Payne presents Founders Award to Celia Larkin; Jackie Kolowski and Laura Kafka-Price; Greg and Margaret Butler; Cecilia Glembocki and Richard Poremski; the famed San Antonio River Walk.*

*Photos by Dick Larkin*



# PAAA Membership Meeting



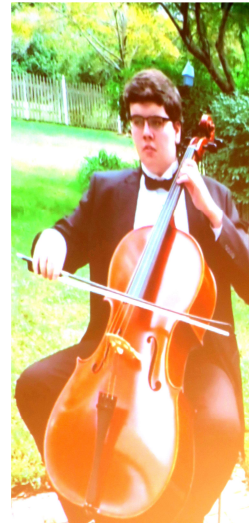
*New PAAA officers and board members: Cecilia Glembocki and Thomas Payne, Directors; Rose Kobylinski, 2nd Vice President; Cecilia Larkin, 1st Vice President; Matthew Stefanski, President; Margaret Butler, Treasurer; Mary Beth Sowa, Recording Secretary, Laura Kafka-Price, Director*

In addition to the elections, committee chairs provided reports on the gradually returning to in-person activities which included Wianki on the Mall in June 2021, and the Chopin Concert in March of this year. While plans were being made for Wigilia last year, they were curtailed by a fire at the Arts Club over Thanksgiving weekend, leaving no time to arrange for another venue.

PAAA Scholarship Committee Chair Mary Beth Sowa announced 2022 grants awarded to three outstanding Polish American students. They are: Anthony DeGrado, senior at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business; Casey Ladd, sophomore at the University of Virginia; and Sara McDaniel who is pursuing medical studies accredited by the American Medical Association at Jagiellonian University's Collegium Medicum in Kraków, Poland.

In her President's report, Celia Larkin provided a brief overview of the 2021 American Council for Polish Culture Convention hosted by the PAAA last September at the Arts Club of Washington and encouraged our membership to attend the 2022 ACPC Convention in San Antonio, Texas, at the end of July. As her third term as PAAA President was coming to an end, Celia thanked everyone for the support she received during the past six years and promised to remain active in any capacity that will be found useful to support the new leadership and the organization's mission.

At the end of the meeting, there was a surprise musical tribute to the outgoing president. PAAA's member artists David Cook, Laura Kafka-Price, and Stasia Skrypczuk, accompanied by pianist Alvin Smithson, performed a mix of classical, popular, and folk selections, representing both the mood of performances heard at PAAA events and Celia's own favorites. The afternoon ended with a wine reception and a beautifully displayed buffet arranged for by Matthew Stefanski. It looks like the PAAA has not only a talented new president but a great host as well.



*Clockwise from top: Mary Beth Sowa and Celia Larkin present scholarship certificate to the mother of Sara McDaniel who is studying in Kraków; Matthew Stefanski with Pateley and David Cook; past PAAA president Stefan Lopatkiewicz with Rose Kobylinski and Laura Kafka-Price; Laura Kafka-Price, Alvin Smithson, Celia Larkin, Stasia Skrypczuk and David Cook; new Membership Chair Connie Donnelly; scholarship winner Casey Ladd appeared in a video recording playing cello.*



## Meet Mathew Stefanski, the New President of PAAA

Matthew Stefanski is a first-generation Polish American born and raised in the north New Jersey community of Bayonne. He was a two-term President of the Polish Cultural Society of Bayonne High School, a student-led club which organized an annual Evening of Polish Poetry and participated in the New York City Pulaski Day Parade, among other undertakings. He arrived in Washington, DC, in the fall of 2010 to attend American University, where he studied international relations and history. At AU, he co-founded the Polish Student Organization and later served as its President. AU PSO brought together Polish and Polish American students, creating an environment where they could speak in Polish, build friendships, and promote Polish culture, history and traditions to the wider student body. You can read more about AU PSO in the Winter 2014 PAAA newsletter.



for a European Union public diplomacy initiative in the United States.

In addition to his regular job, Matthew is a columnist for the Polish American Journal, the largest English-language monthly publication dedicated to Polish topics, where he explores themes related to history, Polonia and more. He has authored the book entitled, *40x40: In Solidarity with Poland. Americans Who Strengthened Polish-American Ties*, published by the Polish Embassy, as well as an article, published in both Poland and the United States, entitled 'I am just one of 7 million' *The story of Flight Officer Ely Berenson* about an American aviator who was shot down over Warsaw while carrying supplies for the Polish resistance during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. He also wrote several submissions for the soon to be published work *Footprints of*

*Polonia: Polish Historical Sites Across North America* edited by Ewa Barczyk.

Matthew was awarded a PAAA Scholarship in 2011, making him the first-ever PAAA scholarship recipient to be elected President. As a student, Matthew also served as a board member for the Polish American Congress Washington Metropolitan Division and was the recipient of several other awards, including the American Council for Polish Culture 2012 Skalny Scholarship.

Upon graduating, Matthew served as public relations advisor at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland where he led digital diplomacy efforts and supported the Embassy's cultural and public diplomacy projects. He notably spearheaded the Embassy's *Find Your Kosciuszko* initiative to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kosciuszko's death in 2017. In 2019, he earned his master's degree in digital communications from Maastricht University in the Netherlands. Most recently, he has managed communications and outreach

Matthew's family hails from Warsaw and Zakopane. His grandfather, Arkadiusz Waloch, is a graduate of the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts and practices oil painting, watercolor and drawing. His work has focused on the Polish Tatra mountains, and since the beginning of the pontificate of John Paul II, the papal theme has been a constant motif. His works have been displayed in numerous exhibitions across Europe, and he was awarded the Gloria Artis Silver Medal for Merit to Culture by the Polish Minister of Culture. Matthew's grandmother was the longtime director of the Municipal Gallery of Art in Zakopane. His paternal great-grandfather, while not a professional artist, produced a series of over 70 watercolors illustrating popular at the time *żurawiejki*, which are short, two-line facetious couplets written specifically for cavalry regiments of the Polish Army in the interbellum period. The majority of these are now held by the Central Military Library in Warsaw.

Matthew currently resides in Alexandria, Virginia where you can often spot him walking his rescue coonhound Elio.

### PAAA Submits Comment to the NCPC

The National Capital Planning Commission recently announced its Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative, which seeks to reimagine the design of the iconic Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. As part of their public comment period, the PAAA called on the NCPC to ensure that in any future plan, the equestrian statue of General Casimir Pulaski, located on Freedom Plaza, remains displayed prominently and without obstruction so that future generations can continue to learn about and appreciate this Polish American hero.

# Steve Zazenski, Painter of Landscapes



*Steve Zazenski has been a full-time artist since 1978 and is known for his exciting and colorful watercolor landscapes. A native of Bayonne, NJ, he is a signature member of the American Watercolor Society and a longtime member of the New Jersey Watercolor Society. He has won numerous awards for his work, and his paintings can be found in public and private collections including the Library of Congress and Smithsonian Institutions among others. He currently resides in Bucks County, PA. Below interview with the artist was conducted by Matthew Stefanski.*

*Please tell us a little about your background, including your ties to Poland.*

All four of my grandparents were immigrants from Poland. They came at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I grew up in the same house as my maternal grandmother, and she would tell me stories about her youth in Poland. She came over to America in 1904 and first lived in New York City where she was a maid and made \$8 a month. The family then settled in Bayonne, NJ, where I was born and raised. Our family belonged to the Polish parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and I attended the parochial school there. We knew we were Polish, of course, but at the time we did not necessarily make a big deal about it.

*You have been a professional artist since 1978. What first drew you to the arts?*

My earliest childhood memories are of creating doodles. I was always a visual person. I would see things and want to reproduce them by drawing or painting them.

When I was in high school, my father, who was a contractor, needed to have some perspective drawings done and he asked me to create them. Over time, I probably did thousands of these drawings, showing customers what their kitchen would look like, for instance. This was the time before computers, of course.

*Many of your works depict serene landscapes, idyllic country homes or rustic farms among other themes.*

I always admired landscape painters. My family would spend the summer go up in Rockport, Massachusetts, near Gloucester. That area was an artist colony, and the town was filled with lots of art galleries. I used to drool at the paintings I saw. I used to think, geez, I would love to do this, and maybe I could if I had some training.

So, in my late twenties, I decided to take some art lessons with Ferdinand Petrie. His works focused primarily on landscapes. I took weekly classes with him, and that's when I went all in on painting. I started to really produce paintings and take part in art shows. And from the start, I was pretty successful.

*What do you want viewers to experience when they interact with your work?*

When I choose to paint an image, it's usually because it sparked something in me. I look at something and I either like the shapes, or the way the light hits, and I try to reproduce it in a painting, and hopefully it generates the same reaction in the viewer as it did in me.

When I do shows, or interact with viewers, the feedback I receive is usually that my work makes them feel calm. I try to paint things in the way that I wish the world was. I bend reality a bit to make it as pleasant as possible.

*You paint exclusively in watercolors. What is it about this medium that speaks to you?*

I have always been drawn to good watercolor paintings. There is fluidity in watercolors that you do not get in oil. I appreciate other mediums, but when it comes to actually painting, there is a tactile sense of putting the brush into water, picking up the pigment, and putting it on paper, there is an immediacy to it that does not exist in oil, pastel or other forms. When a watercolor is done well, it almost looks effortless. It makes everything look like it was inevitable, and that the artist did not struggle over it. Watercolor gives me that opportunity.

Lately, I have been painting with opaque watercolors called gouache, which is simply the Italian word for opaque. This medium has been around since watercolors, and it is what I used to create the *Polish Christmas* painting for this holiday card project. The way gouache works is that by adding more water it becomes more fluid, and by adding less water it becomes more like an oil. So, it is kind of like the best of both worlds, offering the fluidity of watercolor but it can be applied thicker to get a different effect.

When working with traditional transparent watercolor, if you put a dark paint down, there is only one way to lighten, by adding water and try to lift up the pigment. But with gouache, you can actually paint lighter value on top of darker, so it gives me greater freedom to experiment and try different colors. But even when I am painting in gouache, I still use traditional watercolor techniques.

*You painted Polish Christmas for the first edition of the Polish American Arts Association's Holiday Card project. What does this painting mean to you?*

I have actually never been to Poland. My daughter, a sculptor, currently lives in Warsaw, and we were scheduled to go a few years ago but COVID derailed our travel plans. For this project, I tried to create an image that I thought represented a quaint little Polish village, with that old traditional architectural feel to it. I made the image fairly simple so as not to over complicate things and focus the viewers' attention on the cart carrying the Christmas tree. I incorporated snow because it's pretty, and even if people do not like snow, they typically like looking at snow.

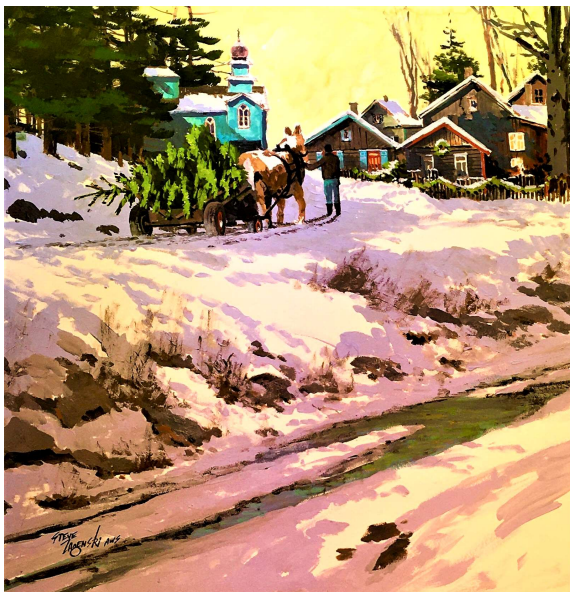


*How does your artistic output look like now?*

I am semi-retired now, so I do a lot less traveling to distant art shows, but I still paint actively, continuing to do what I do for the past 50 years. I also teach. This coming fall I will lead a series of one-day workshops at the Center for Contemporary Art in Bedminster, NJ. I teach students and amateur artists skills so that they can learn and perfect their work. My artwork is exhibited at the Patricia Hutton Gallery in Doylestown, PA.

*Thank you, Steve, for the conversation and for participating in our inaugural PAAA Holiday Card project.*

## PAAA Holiday Card Project



The PAAA is excited to announce the inauguration of our Holiday Card Project. This year's card features a wonderful, Christmas-themed painting by Polish-American artist Steve Zazenski. These one-of-a-kind cards created especially for PAAA Members will be sold in sets of 8 for \$25 dollars. Included in each set are high-quality gold envelopes and a custom-made gift box. We encourage our members to purchase a set to send out to your friends and family this holiday season, or consider gifting an entire set to a relative who would enjoy sending out Polish themed Christmas cards to their network. All proceeds will benefit the PAAA Scholarship Fund. The cards will be on sale during our October General Membership Meeting, as well as on our website [paaa.us](http://paaa.us) in the coming weeks. Thank you for your support!

# PAAA Scholarship Grants for 2022

The PAAA Scholarship Committee headed by Mary Beth Sowa and including, Dr. Renata Greenspan, Dr. Laura Kafka-Price, Rose Kobylinski, Matthew Stefanski and PAAA President Cecilia Larkin as ex-officio member, selected three outstanding students to receive a total of \$8,000 in scholarship awards for 2022. The Committee applauds the hard work and dedication of our scholarship recipients, who have been faced with the additional challenge of studying under abnormal conditions caused by the pandemic. We wish them continued success in their studies and professional careers, and look forward to their involvement in our organization in the future.



**Anthony DeGrado** is a senior at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business pursuing a bachelor's degree in finance with minors in global business and economics. Son of Polish immigrants, he has taken Polish language classes at Georgetown and has researched Poland's economy as part of his business studies. "Ultimately, my

goal is to have a positive role in developing Poland's economy through financial development, as the financial sector in Poland has grown tremendously," he wrote in his application. Originally from Greenwich, Connecticut, Anthony has been active in the Georgetown Knights of Columbus, where he served as President. He spent last summer as an investment banking analyst with Guggenheim Partners in New York City. Informed of his scholarship, Anthony wrote, "It is both a pleasure and an honor to call myself a Polish American Arts Association Scholar."



**Casey Ladd** is a sophomore at the University of Virginia where he is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in engineering. Casey is a cellist and has performed with the Bay Youth Orchestras of Virginia and is currently part of the Cavalier Symphony Orchestra, a student-run organization that plays music across Charlottesville. He also founded Rx Strings, a volunteer

effort to play music in the community, and during the height of the pandemic he played his cello outside in

public spaces so that all nearby could hear the healthful benefits of music. "Music is an art that expresses emotions,... it brings people and cultures together to create spectacular experiences." Casey's unique blend of artistic creativity and STEM studies impressed the scholarship committee. His Polish roots date back to his great-great-grandparents who emigrated from Poland at the turn of the century and settled in Shamokin, Pennsylvania.



**Sara McDaniel** is in her second of six years at Jagiellonian University's Collegium Medicum in Krakow, Poland, where she is pursuing medical studies. She has been involved in the Polish American community in Baltimore her entire life. Graduate of the Cardinal August Hlond Polish Supplementary School, she was a volunteer instructor there,

teaching youngsters the fundamentals of Polish language. She served as a lecturer during Polish mass at Holy Rosary R.C. Church and danced with the Wislanie Polish Dance Group in Baltimore. This past year, in the wake of Russia's barbaric war on Ukraine, Sara volunteered with *Caritas*, Poland's Catholic relief organization, helping prepare meals for the numerous Ukrainian refugees seeking safety in Poland. Of her studies at the Jagiellonian she wrote: "It was important to me that this school was in my homeland as I have a deep connection with it, and I would like to nurture this connection further throughout my time here." Sara's lifelong dedication to Polonia, her humanitarian-focused academic pursuit, and her commitment to return to the United States led the scholarship committee to waive the requirement which limited scholarship recipients to studies within the United States.

The **Polish American Arts Association Scholarship Program** has been one of the pillars of our organization since it was first established in 2001. Thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters, as well as the significant donation by Mr. Leonard Karpinski in 2008, the PAAA has been supporting young Polish Americans in their academic pursuits, as part of our mission to strengthen cooperation and understanding between the United States and Poland in the fields of art, culture and education. The scholarship committee invites qualified students to visit our website for updates on the 2023 grants and application instructions.

To date, the PAAA scholarship program has recognized over 70 students, helping support their academic pursuits. This has been made possible thanks to the continued generous support of our members and supporters. Please consider making a donation to our scholarship fund today. To do so online, please go to: <https://www.paaa.us/scholarship>

Thank you for your continued support.



## Coming Up: Events of Interest

### Two Young Polish Pianists at the Arts Club of Washington Friday Noon Concert



Anyone who heard Antoni and Evelina Kleczek will agree that they are extraordinarily talented young pianists. This past June, Antoni won the International Chopin Piano Competition for Children in Szafarnia, Poland. He not only received the First Prize in his category but he so impressed the judges that they gave him the rarely awarded Grand Prize. In July, Evelina received First Prize in her category in the 7th Rosalyn Tureck International Bach Competition for Pianists. Both are laureates of numerous other competitions. The brother and sister live with their parents in Vienna, Virginia, and are students of Dr. Martin Labazevitch

Antoni and Evelina Kleczek will appear in recital on **October 28, 2022** at the Arts Club of Washington's Friday Noon Concert. The Friday concerts are a regular event at the Arts Club and are free and open to the public. The address is 2017 I Street, Washington, DC 20006. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend to show support to these talented young Polish American artists. More details will be posted on the PAAA Facebook.



### Sanctuary City Comes to Washington, DC

Martyna Majok is a Polish-born American playwright who received the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for her play *Cost of Living*. Washington, DC's Arena Stage, in association with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, will present *Sanctuary City*, written by Majok, from **October 21 to November 27**. The play presents the powerful story of two young DREAMers who fight to establish a place for themselves in America, the only country they know as home. Learn more at [arenastage.com/sanctuary](http://arenastage.com/sanctuary)

### Kosciuszko Foundation Jazz Series



The Kosciuszko Foundation has partnered with Washington DC's most prominent jazz club, the Blues Alley, in creating a new concert in-person series titled **The Kosciuszko Jazz**. The series premiered on September 12, showcasing Polish guitarist Paweł Ignatowicz. Please join us in celebrating and supporting great Polish musicians each month for an incredible performance and night out in Washington, DC!



**PAAA Wigilia**



**Save the Date: December 18, 2022 at 4:00 PM  
at the Arts Club of Washington**

Please mark your calendars and check the PAAA website for details.

## *From Near and Far, They Sing and Dance at Wianki*



Over the years, the PAAA presented many Polish folk dance and song ensembles from near and far at its annual Wianki Festival in the front yard of the nation's capital as the National Mall is sometimes called. Among them were *Wschodnia Galicja*, *Dawne Tańce*, *Ojczyzna*, and *Krakowiaki* from nearby Baltimore, *Michaś* from Virginia Beach, *Maki* from Columbus, New Jersey, PKM from Philadelphia, and for the first time this year, *Mazury* from Atlanta, Georgia. And, of course, our very own Joyful Skrypczuk Duo, formerly part of the Brothers-in-Law Band, is a fixture at Wianki and other PAAA events. Usually we just let pictures tell the story, but this time we'd like to say a few words about the groups that took part in this year's festivities on June 25th. For a broader picture story, please go to <https://www.paaa.us/events> and click on the link for the PAAA [Facebook](#) where you will find a Wianki Album.

### *Stasia and Olek; The Joyful Skrypczuk Duo*

Whether performing in their wonderful Polish costumes at Wianki or Wigilia, or dressed up in evening finery at a banquet, Stasia and Olek, known as the Joyful Skrypczuk Duo, are bound to be admired by all who hear them. Stasia has always loved dancing and singing, starting as a child in Poland in church choirs and then as a member of various folk song and dance ensembles. A talented and versatile violinist, Olek has played in various community symphonies, theater orchestras, as well as folk group ensembles, including some he joined while posted overseas. Both of them are members of the Polish Dance Group Michaś in Virginia Beach. They have performed regularly at PAAA events and have been a fixture for many years at the Festival of Wreaths. In the past, they were joined by their brother-in-law Richie Popso on accordion and at times Richie Junion on bass. This year, they brought along some younger members of their musical family: daughter Teresa McCourt on violin, granddaughter, Anya on violin, and grandsons Braeden on guitar and Kellen on drums.



### *PKM - Polskie Kółko Międzykolegialne*



The PKM Polish Folk Dance Ensemble from Philadelphia is becoming a regular feature at the PAAA Wianki; this past June they appeared for the fourth time.

The group has a rich history going back to 1915 when it was originally founded as "P.K.M - Polskie Kółko Międzykolegialne" (The Polish Intercollegiate Club of Philadelphia) - a Polish social, educational, and cultural organization. The Folk Dance Ensemble was established in 1960 to allow PKM members to celebrate their Polish culture through Polish Folk Dance & Song while sharing its richness and beauty with the community. The group performs at local and distant festivals, cultural events, and private events (weddings, anniversaries, banquets, birthday parties, etc.). They make their home base at the Associated Polish Home in Northeast Philadelphia where they meet to work on their dances.

## Mazury Folk Dance Ensemble

The Mazury Folk Dance Ensemble, a Polish group based in Atlanta, Georgia, is a newcomer to Wianki, appearing for the first time this year. The group is known for its commitment to the preservation of Polish culture and traditions through its vibrant performances that include international folk dances, traditional instruments, and authentic costumes. Mazury was founded in January of 2022, under the direction of Maciej Smusz and with the help of the Polish Club of Atlanta.

Maciej Smusz recently moved to Atlanta from Salt Lake City where he directed the Karpaty Polish Folk Dance Ensemble. He has been teaching Polish dance for close to ten years, and works with multiple universities, ethnographers, and choreographers in Poland to coordinate research, gather new resources and music, and ensure that what he's teaching is true to the region. <https://www.facebook.com/mazuryatlanta/>



## Membership Renewals for 2023

The activities of the Polish American Arts Association are made possible thanks to our strong membership. If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2023, or if you are interested in becoming a member, you can now pay your dues online via PayPal. Please visit [paaa.us/membership](http://paaa.us/membership), fill out the form and click Pay Dues via PayPal. Next, select PAAA Membership Dues and enter the amount that corresponds to your desired membership level. Please note that there is a small processing fee associated with online payment, we kindly ask each member to cover the cost of the transaction.

You may also wish to consider making an additional donation to the PAAA for its cultural activities. With the return to in-person activities, we plan to expend our activities that promote and celebrate Polish art and traditions. Your generous support will make it possible. PAAA is a non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.

If you prefer to make your payment by mail, please fill out the below form and send along with a check made payable to PAAA to: Connie Donnelly, 300 Kent St., Falls Church, VA 22046

Please share this information with your friends and family and invite them to join the PAAA.

### Join the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, DC

Please use the below form or apply online: <https://www.paaa.us/membership>

Name/s \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Would be willing and able to help with:

Newsletter    Hospitality    Publicity    Fund Raising    Membership    Special Events

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Dues:**      **1 year**      **2 years**      **3 years**

Individual:    \$35       \$60       \$85

Couple:       \$50       \$90       \$130

Student:      \$20       \$35       \$50

I would like to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ for PAAA cultural activities

Check# \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to PAAA and mail to: Polish American Arts Association, Connie Donnelly, 300 Kent St., Falls Church, VA 22046

## Upcoming Events

### **PAAA General Membership Meeting**

October 23, 2022 at 2:00 PM  
at the Kosciuszko Foundation

### **Pianists Antoni and Evelina Kleczek**

at the Arts Club of Washington Friday Noon Concert  
Friday, October 28, 2022 at 12:00

### **PAAA Wigilia**

Sunday, December 18, 2022  
Arts Club of Washington

[PAAA Facebook](#)

[paaanewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:paaanewsletter@gmail.com)

<http://paaa.us/>

Polish-American Arts Association  
P.O. Box 9442  
Washington, DC 20016

