

POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION

of Washington, DC

Fall2021 - Winter 2022

NEWSLETTER

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

ACPC 2021 CONVENTION

Celebrating Polish Culture in the Nation's Capital



The theme of the this year's American Council for Polish Culture convention in Washington, DC, was *Celebrating Polish Culture in the Nation's Capital*, which is also the PAAA's motto, and it was echoed in lunchtime presentations and the centerfold article in the convention souvenir program book. The convention book's cover seen above depicts 16 images illustrating examples of objects and events marking the presence Polish culture in our city, from the statues of Kosciuszko, Pulaski and Jan Karski in the most prominent public spaces, through Abakanowicz sculptures in the National Gallery garden, works by Jan de Rosen and Gordon Kray in churches and other places, a very large collection of Polish posters at the Library of Congress, Polish films at the National Gallery and the historic Avalon Theater, performances of works of Polish composers and by Polish artists at the Kennedy Center and other venues, the Polish Library, cultural events at the Polish Embassy, etc. The image of a PAAA *Wianki* dancer hovering over the Reflecting Pool next the Washington Monument became part of the convention logo.

The Polish American Arts Association of Washington, DC, waited a long time to welcome the ACPC Convention, having offered to host it at the 2019 gathering in Warsaw. The original date of July 2020 had to be rescheduled due to restrictions imposed by to the worldwide pandemic and the final date was not confirmed until mid summer of 2021. What was to be an annual event now had to cover two years so to keep chronological consistency it became the 72nd/73rd or simply the 2021 Convention. Finally, on September 21st all was ready and the first arrivals gathered in the Hotel Lombardy lounge for a welcome reception. The PAAA hosts, including convention chair President Celia Larkin with co-chairs, First and Second Vice Presidents Tom Payne and Rose Kobylinski, Cecilia and Ray Glembocki, and Ted Mirecki mingled with out of town guests exchanging news and sharing experiences from the past two very unusual years.

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PAAA Scholarship Turns 20

By Matthew Stefanski

During the 55 years of its existence, the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, DC, has been dedicated to promoting Polish culture and supporting greater cooperation and understanding between the United States and Poland in the fields of art, culture and education. Over time, a prominent avenue through which the PAAA has worked to deepen ties between Poland and the United States has been by investing in the education of Polish-American students with the PAAA Scholarship.

The first PAAA Scholarship grant was awarded in 1999 by the then president Verna Lopatkiewicz, who for years has been promoting the idea of establishing a program to provide financial support to young student's of Polish descent. Two years later, President Estelle von Wachtel Torres formally established the PAAA Scholarship Program which this year marks its 20th anniversary. Over the course of those years, 67 academically gifted and often artistically inclined Polish-Americans have been awarded scholarships through this program, myself included. A few months ago, I was asked by the current PAAA president Celia Larkin to try and contact previous scholarship recipients and ask them for an update on their academic and professional lives and any Polish activities they may be involved in. It's an ongoing project and you can read the first responses starting on page six.





Message from the President

Dear fellow PAAA members and friends.

It will be six years in May since I was first elected president of the PAAA. What I intended to be a one, or at most two term tenure, grew to the full six years allowed by our bylaws, for reasons beyond what could be imagined in 2016. Like the rest of life, six years may be viewed as a very long time or just a blink of an eye, depending on from which side you look at it. The danger of being in a leadership position for too long a term is that you can get a sense of

ownership which may become detrimental to both the organization and to its leader. I hope you will judge that I acquitted myself well as your president and that I'm leaving a good legacy for my successor.

At times, the last six years seemed like a roller coaster ride. We started on a high note in 2016, getting ready to celebrate the PAAA's 50 years of existence, an end of one era and beginning of another. We celebrated in style and then moved on with the business in a seamless fashion. My three-term predecessor Tom Payne stayed on as the First Vice President and new board members blended well with the old guard. We held annual Chopin Concerts, celebrated Wigilias, and held most of the membership meetings at the historic Arts Club of Washington with which we have developed a strong relationship. Our Wianki on the National Mall were as popular as ever with our members and with visitors from all over the world. We pursue common goals with the Kościuszko Foundation and cultural cooperation with the Polish Embassy.

In keeping with the times, I established our presence on Facebook with news, announcements, and pictorial reports on our events. We have a PAAA YouTube channel and our website is being upgraded.

Now to the roller coaster part, that is, the situation brought on by the worldwide pandemic, which started in early 2020 and upset even the best laid plans for the next two years. In 2019, we began laying plans for hosting the 2020 American Council for Polish Culture Convention, just to see it cancelled by springtime. Everything came to a halt and we had to content ourselves with occasionally meeting via Zoom. Not the same, but better than nothing. Still, by December 2020, we were able to organize a virtual Wigilia in which many participated, followed by a virtual Chopin Event in March 2021, both of which can still be viewed on our YouTube. Things improved by summer 2021 as people were getting vaccinated and restrictions on gatherings relaxed. So we were finally able to hold the Wianki Festival and host the ACPC Convention.

During the height of the pandemic in 2020 a force majeure was declared and our board remained in place until 2022. Hence my third term as president. But now it's time for a change. We have always fretted about insufficient numbers of the younger generation in our ranks and I often wrote about it in my messages in this newsletter. Seeing young people at our events was always a joy and I was very happy when one of them, our past scholarship winner, became a regular presence at our meetings and events. He organized Polish students at American University about ten years ago and now showed willingness to work with us. He joined our board two years ago, is on the scholarship committee and is working on our website, in addition to being a regular contributor to this newsletter. I hope that Matthew Stefanski and others like him in the younger generation will pick up the work of the current leadership and make this organization their own. The old guard, including myself, will remain, but we hope to move more to a supporting role and let the new guard

It has been a privilege to serve as your president.

Celia Larkin

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Haley Myles and the Chopin Nocturne Project

Beginning in February 2021, Haley Myles started the Chopin Nocturne Project and until June 2021, she shared a Chopin nocturne each Friday until completing the set. Inspired by the intimate salon aesthetic prevalent in Chopin's time, Haley recorded and produced a two-disc album on her Steinway and Sons M at her home in Lyon, France. 'The Complete Nocturnes' is a natural extension of the Chopin Nocturne project. As a result of delving deeply into these works, she recorded the album in three days.

As a Young Steinway Artist, Haley prides herself on maintaining an international performance schedule. Her appearances to-date include recitals in the United States, France, Germany, Austria, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. She



has participated extensively in various high-profile international music festivals, both domestic and foreign. She is also a laureate of seven international competitions and has appeared on radio shows throughout Europe and America.

Haley holds certifications from distinguished institutions including the Mozarteum (Austria), Imola Piano Academy (Italy), and Freiburg International Piano Academy (Germany). Remarkably, she has already performed the complete two- and three-part inventions by Bach.

She achieved a Bachelor in Piano Performance at the University of Arkansas in 2016 where she was a recipient of the Stella Boyle Smith scholarship. Haley also holds a Master in Piano Performance (with first-class honours) from the London College of Music, where she received the Mona Blackman scholarship. In 2019, Haley received a postgraduate diploma from Trinity Laban Conservatoire as a Cross Funds Scholar.

Haley is most proud of her extra-curricular activities, involving continued work with individuals on the autism spectrum. Having authored a United Nations honoured book dedicated to helping children with autism, the cause remains a constant passion visible in her everyday life.

To learn more about Haley and hear her music, visit: https://www.haleymyles.com/

The Polish American Arts Association is pleased to announce that Haley Miles will perform at its 2022 Chopin Concert benefiting the PAAA Scholarship Fund.



The Annual PAAA Chopin Concert

Pianist Haley Myles

Sunday, March 6, 2022 at 3:00 PM

Arts Club of Washington 2017 I Street NW Washington, DC 20006

Tickets and information at http://paaa.us/

or call: 703-356-5198

The following morning, Celia Larkin welcomed attendees in the main gallery of the Arts Club of Washington and the convention was officially opened by ACPC President Raymond Glembocki, who introduced the keynote speaker, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Polish Embassy Adam Krzywosądzki. Substituting for the then Ambassador Piotr Wilczek, who was fulfilling an out of town obligation, Mr. Krzywosądzki thanked the ACPC for promoting Polish culture and enjoined those present to "maintain their intense passion for building strong, genuine bonds between Polonia in the United States and Poland." Later in the morning, the Arts Club President Henry Sienkiewicz welcomed convention attendees and encouraged them to feel at home in the historic mansion that once was the residence of President James Monroe and for the past hundred plus years served as a gathering place for artists and art lovers.

Full report on the convention proceedings and events is provided in the latest issue of the Polish Heritage and photos from the event can be found on the ACPC website and on ACPC and PAAA Facebook pages. Below are just some salient points focusing on PAAA members and their roles in the ACPC and at the convention.

The convention program featured luncheon speakers accomplished in the world of music but also well versed in other aspects of Polish culture. Dr. Laura Kafka-Price, a soprano, musicologist, and music and language educator, is on the faculty at the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. She is the originator of a multi-dimensional project, *Rymy Dziecięce*, dedicated to teaching non-Polish speaking singers how to sing in Polish. Her lecture on Wednesday, *A Few Things You Might Not Know About Speaking and Singing In Polish*, was co-presented with pianist Tom Robak and violist Maksymilian Krzak, both of whom made a contribution to the *Rymy dziecięce* project.

The convention's theme was expounded upon by the Music Director and Conductor of the National Philharmonic, Piotr Gajewski, who was the luncheon speaker on Thursday. He provided a brief historical perspective and then went through a list of examples (noted above and more) that mark the presence of Polish culture in the Washington, DC, which also includes his own very prominent ensemble with which he champions Polish music and Polish performers. It was an inspiring and very informative presentation.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the ACPC Marcella Kochańska Sembrich Competition and this fact was highlighted by two concerts during the convention. First, on Thursday evening, this year's winner of the Sembrich Award, soprano Magdalena Kuźma, accompanied by pianist Martin Labazevitch, sang in a concert at the Arts Club, attended by convention delegates and music lovers from the local community.

The Friday Noon Concert at the Arts Club Featured two former Sembrich laureates from the Washington are: soprano Laura Kafka-Price, First Prize winner in 1997, and tenor David W. Cook, Second Prize winner in 2017. They were accompanied by pianist Eileen Cornett.

















Clockwise from top: ACPC President Raymond Glembocki introduces keynote speaker, DCM of the Plish Embassy Adam Krzywosądzki; Arts Club of Washington President Henry Sienkiewicz and PAAA President Celia Larkin; Convention Co-chairs Tom Payne and Rose Kobylinski; Wednesday luncheon presentation with Maksymilian Krzak, Dr. Tom Robak and Dr. Laura Kafka-Price; Thursday luncheon speaker Maestro Piotr Gajewski; Jaroslaw Golembiowski, Laura Kafka-Price, Eileen Cornett, David Cook and Celia Larkin at the Friday Noon Concert at the Arts Club; 2021 ACPC Sembrich Competition Winner, soprano Magdalena Kuźma at Thursday evening concert with Martin Labazevitch at the piano.

Photos: Dick and Celia Larkin











Banquet and Sembrich Concert photos: Jacek Wojnarowski





The awards for 2020 were presented to: Alice Laning, Founders Award for her many years of dedicated work on behalf of the organization; pianist Brian Ganz, Cultural Achievement Award for his contribution to promoting Polish music by playing all the works written by Fryderyk Chopin in a series of concerts over a ten-year period; Marek Chodakiewicz, Distinguished Service Award for his contribution in promotion of the history of Poland as professor at the Institute of World Politics, where he holds the Kosciuszko Chair of Polish Studies; and Marcia Lewandowski, Jan de Rosen Award for her lifetime achievements in creating and promoting Polish art, especially in the area of dance, theater, and folk art forms. Brian Ganz was away on a concert engagement and his award was accepted by Maestro Piotr Gajewski.

ACPC award recipients were from the Washington area and PAAA members.

The ACPC Awards Banquet was held in the historic University Club of Washington, DC, which was established in 1904 and whose first president was the then Secretary of War and later President of the United States William Howard Taft. The banquet was set in the beautifully appointed Taft Room on the first floor of the historic building. Since there was no convention last year, the awards for 2020 were presented along with those for the current year. Most of the

Two 2021 Awards were presented to: Laura Kafka-Price, Cultural Achievement Award for her work on the multi-dimensional project dedicated to teaching non-Polish singers how to sing in Polish and thus making operas and songs by Polish composers more accessible to singers and audiences; Elżbieta Chłopecka Vande Sande, Distinguished Service Award for her promotion of the Polish art through organizing exhibits of works by Polish artists, concerts, and other events, and contributions to sustaining such institutions as the National Philharmonic and others. Mary Flanagan, longtime PAAA member and former president, received special recognition for her lifetime of dedication and work on behalf of the Polish community and Polish culture.

The PAAA continues to be well represented in the ACPC leadership: Raymond Glembocki was reelected for the second term as president, Tom Payne will continue as treasurer, Rose Kobylinski is on the Election Committee along with Ted Mirecki who is also the Parliamentarian and Financial Secretary. Cecilia Glembocki, Marianna Eckel and Richard Poremski are on the Board of Directors. Celia Larkin continues as the Music Committee Chair and Polish Heritage copy editor. Laura Kafka-Price and Dick Larkin are on the Music Committee; Dick also serves as Assistant to the Auditor. All the new and reelected officers and board members were sworn in during Friday's banquet by the former ACPC Legal Counsel and past PAAA president Stefan Lopatkiewicz.

As we bid farewell to the out of town participants on Saturday morning, the convention was proclaimed a great success. Of course, it didn't happen by itself but was the result of many months of hard work by a number of our members. In addition to Celia Larkin, Rose Kobylinski and Tom Payne (who also acted on behalf of the ACPC Convention Committee). Ted Mirecki was essential in accepting and keeping track of all reservations. Members who contributed to the smooth running of the event included Cecilia Glembocki, Eve Marie Szczepanski, Ann Margaret Zelenka, Bożenna Buda and others. Thank you also to the Arts Club of Washington for allowing us the use of its historic house, Henry Sienkiewicz, President, Yann Hanrotte, General Manager, Maître'd Abbas Aryee, Chef Patrick Orange who fed us delicious lunches and the entire staff. Special thanks to The Honorable Mary Ellen Williams for acting as member host for our banquet at the University Club.

A big round of applause goes to Stasia and Olek Skrypczuk, the Joyful Duo that entertained us at the Awards Banquet and sent all who attended the festivities off with a song in their hearts.

PAAA Scholarship Turns 20

By Matthew Stefanski

The PAAA Scholarship Committee, currently headed by headed by Mary Beth Sowa, continues to actively promote the program and select the most promising from among many applicants each year to receive scholarships.

Many PAAA scholarship recipients have gone on to pursue advanced degrees, establish themselves in their trades, or blaze a career in their field. To mark the Scholarship's 20th anniversary, we have reached out to past recipients asking for an update on their lives. Below is a selection of responses from past PAAA scholarship recipients.



Ross Waleng (2006)

Following the receipt of the PAAA scholarship, Ross Walenga graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in 2007, with a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts in Painting & Printmaking and Art Education. Subsequently, he pursued a career in education for three years, before deciding to go back to VCU to earn a PhD in Engineering with a Mechanical Track, which he did in 2014. His dissertation focused on computational fluid dynamics (CFD) modeling of orally inhaled drug products as a means for improving device efficiency.

After receiving his PhD, Mr. Walenga worked as a postdoctoral fellow at VCU for seven months before taking a position at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the Office of Generic Drugs. He began his career as an Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) Fellow in 2015 and obtained a federal position as a Chemical Engineer in 2017, continuing in that role to this day. His research at the FDA includes CFD modeling of orally inhaled drug products and other product areas. Mr. Walenga has co-authored 26 scientific journal articles and one book chapter and given several public presentations.

In 2007, he married his wife Amanda and they now have two wonderful daughters. Mr. Walenga has continued painting and hopes to contribute to a group show in the next year or two. A few years ago he started learning Polish, and he hopes to go to Poland one day to visit. "To trudny język, ale lubię się uczyć!" he said.

Justine Tobiasz (2007)

Justine Tobiasz graduated from the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington, DC, with a BFA in Photography in 2010. She became professionally interested in audiovisual archives and preservation and went on to get a master's in Library and Information Science from Wayne State University in 2015. Over the years, she has consulted and worked on translations for various cultural institutions including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Women and Leadership Archives at Loyola University. Currently, Ms. Tobiasz is located in Chicago and manages the archives at WBEZ, the Chicago NPR station.

Furthermore, Ms. Tobiasz has an active art practice centered on documentary photography and image making. She has exhibited and taken part in artist residencies locally and internationally. Much of her personal work focuses on documenting current and former Polish waves of migration around the Great Lakes region and the relationship to a changing Poland. She is also a founding member of the Chicago arts collective APO Studios, which aims to amplify the experiences of children of immigrants. To view her work visit justinetobiasz.info





Katlyn DeGraw (2007)

Katlyn DeGraw g raduated from the Peabody Conservatory in 2009 on the Dean's List and went on to receive her master's degree in Cello Performance from Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Since then, she has established herself as a performer and teacher in the Baltimore region. Ms. DeGraw serves as Associate Principal Cellist of the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, performs in chamber music series in the region with her ensemble the Ann Street Trio, and teaches cello at the Baltimore School for the Arts as well as in her private studio. To view her recent performances, visit www.katlyndegraw.com

Ms. DeGraw is incredibly grateful to the PAAA for making her education possible, stating, "I truly wouldn't be where I'm at today without the support of associations like yours."

Sarah Kuchinsky (2010)

Sarah Kuchinsky earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Butler University in 2012, and then spent time interning at a wildlife center in Boston and the Indianapolis Zoo before earning a fellowship position with the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research in the Division of Veterinary Services in 2013. She then moved to a small mountain town in Western Maryland where she earned a Master of Science in Applied Ecology and Conservation Biology from Frostburg State University in 2017. Her thesis was on the prevalence of the Lyme disease causing bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi* in wild caught rodents and Black-legged ticks in a local state park. Ms. Kuchinsky then spent a year teaching biology and anatomy & physiology at a

community college in Cumberland, MD. Since 2018, she has been a PhD-DVM dual-degree candidate at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, in Blacksburg, Virginia, where her PhD research focuses on the pathogenesis and enzootic transmission of Usutu virus, an emerging mosquito-borne virus that impacts human and wild avian health.

Christopher Siuzdak (2011)

Christopher Siuzdak works as a canon lawyer in the ecclesiastical tribunal of the Diocese of Portland. After graduating from the Catholic University of America in 2012 (Phi Beta Kappa) with majors in history and psychology, he completed a Master of Theological Studies at Boston College and then earned a License in Canon Law at Catholic University. He recently served as president of the Eastern Regional Conference of Canonists (2020-2021), which involved organizing a successful professional development conference. He is an active member of the Canon Law Society of America and belongs to the Stowarzyszenie Kanonistów Polskich. He enjoys writing book reviews for the *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* and is finishing a booklet about the art and architecture of Saint Joseph's Basilica in Massachusetts, the first Polish-American parish in New England.





Kelsey (Hutchison) Eustace (2011)

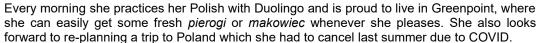
Kelsey Eustace graduated summa cum laude in 2013 from Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, with Bachelor of Arts degrees in English and Dance while also fulfilling the requirements for a minor in Creative Writing (Phi Beta Kappa). During the four years of her undergraduate studies, she worked as the marketing dance coordinator for the Theatre and Dance Department. Currently, she is a graduate student at the University of Maryland Global Campus pursuing a Master of Science in Management with a specialization in Marketing. This is in addition to her full-time arts marketing job at the University of Maryland College of Arts & Humanities. Previously, she worked for almost five years at the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, Maryland. She served as the chair of the City of Laurel Arts Council from its founding in 2017 through the

end of her three-year appointment in 2020.

A fierce advocate of arts education, Ms. Eustace taught dance for over ten years. She had to stop dancing and teaching dance in early 2020 due to a chronic pain condition. In order to express her artistic side, she is hoping to start playing piano again. She played piano up until high school and also played in bell choir at church, where she met her husband, Thomas Eustace. She is an active member of the Polish National Alliance in College Park, and has previously arranged an outing for the College Park Polish Club to see a classical music concert featuring Polish composers at the University of Maryland.

Katherine Rivard (2012)

Katherine Rivard graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in Culture and Politics. Although she specialized in Eastern Europe, she has since realized an interest in urban policy. After receiving the Henry Hart Rice Urban Fellowship, Katherine completed a master's degree in Urban Planning from the NYU Wagner School of Public Service in 2021. During her master's program, Ms. Rivard received the Gallatin Global Fellowship in Urban Practice, allowing her to work with practicing urban planners at the Pratt Institute for Community Development last summer. Incorporating her love for all things Polish into her studies, Ms. Rivard even devoted one of her class projects to researching the potential to update *bloki* in Katowice to be more energy efficient. Ms. Rivard is currently working as a research assistant at the NYU Furman Center, and is excited to pursue new opportunities to focus on urban planning and housing policy in New York City.







Paul Brazinski (2014)

Paul Brazinski earned degrees from Bucknell University (BA Classics), the University of Cambridge (MPhil Archaeology), and The Catholic University of America (PhD History & Religion). He is currently a teacher and coach (football) at Woodberry Forest School, an all-boys all-boarding school in beautiful central Virginia (about 70 miles southwest of DC). He has given lectures at The Catholic University of America, published a pamphlet on the Relics of St. John Paul II, and serves as the Assistant Director of Summer Sports Camp at Woodberry Forest as well.

Katherine Kucharska (2017)

Katherine Kucharska graduated with a master's in Security Studies from Georgetown University in 2018 and completed a capstone on the electoral system in Poland. She then relocated to New York City in late 2019, where she is currently working as a Senior Domain Expert focusing on Eastern Europe at Dataminr, a real-time Al alerting platform. Specifically, she serves as a subject matter expert on Poland within the department.

While still living in DC, Ms. Kucharska was involved with the Polish Civic Association, a group advocating for the defense of democracy in Poland. She enjoyed attending concerts at the Kosciuszko Foundation as well as the Wianki festival. Since moving to the New York area, she has organized a solidarity protest for the Women's Strike (*Strajk Kobiet*) in Connecticut, advocating for reproductive rights in Poland.



David W. Cook (2017)

After graduating from Frostburg University with a degree in Philosophy, David Cook continues to develop his singing career. He is a tenor whose work has been described as both dynamic and versatile, distinguishing himself as a rising artist. Recently, he appeared in concert, singing as tenor soloist in Mozart's Coronation Mass with the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, and in Beethoven's Choral Fantasy, Op. 80; he will also perform in Handel's Messiah, summer of 2022. David made his debut as Alfredo in Verdi's *La Traviata* with La Musica Lirica, in Baraboo, Wisconsin, and is currently preparing the role of Rodolfo for his European debut in Puccini's *La Boheme* in Novafeltria, Italy. Previously, he appeared as Ernesto in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, with the Hub Opera Company, and has also sung the roles of Spoletta in Tosca, and Bill in the American opera, *Hand of Bridge*. He is the recipient of the Gold Award for voice from the World Classical

International Music Competition; the first prize winner for voice from the North International Music Competition based in Sweden; and the third prize winner of the Da Capo International Music Award based in Romania. He is the recipient of the Shirley Rabb Winston encouragement award given by the National Society of Arts and Letters. In 2017, David was the second prize winner in the American Council for Polish Culture Marcella Kochańska Sembrich Vocal Competition. In September 2021, he sang in the Friday Noon Concert presented by the Arts Club of Washington commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Sembrich Competition during the ACPC Annual Convention hosted by the PAAA. David performed in recital during a PAAA membership meeting and sang at Wigilia in 2018.



We hope the above set of updates is only a beginning and we will publish stories on other former students who received scholarship grants from the PAAA. If you're one of them, please contact me at stefanskimatthew@gmail.com as we would love to hear from you.

From the editor: We would like to make a note of several scholarship winners who were and continue to be especially involved in specific Polish cultural activities that were featured in past issues of our newsletter, as well as those who took part in programs sponsored by the PAAA. Tom Robak (2016), performed in the PAAA Chopin Concert in 2017 (PAAA Newsletter Fall 2016-Winter 2017). He continues to work with Laura Kafka-Price on the Children's Rhymes Project and was a co-presenter at this year's ACPC Convention (see article in this issue). Work of illustrator Patti Pogodzinski (2015) was described in the 2017 Spring-Summer issue of the newsletter, noting her participation in the Children's Rhymes Project by providing artwork for the project's publications and website (PAAA Newsletter Spring-Summer 2017). Pianist Martin Labazevitch (2019) performed in the 2019 PAAA Chopin Concert (PAAA Newsletter Winter 2019) and more recently was the accompanist in the Sembrich Concert during the ACPC Convention. He is currently the Artistic Director of the Kościuszko Foundation's Chopin Piano Competition. Hanna Bondarewska (2018) and her Ambassador Theater were the subject of an article in the Winter 2015 issue (PAAA Newsletter Winter 2015). Hanna was in Poland when the pandemic struck and remained there due to travel restrictions. She currently appears in a TV serial there. In 2019, Hanna took part in the PAAA's premiere of the song Szklana góra, reciting the words of the song by Polish poet Lidia Kosk (PAAA Newsletter Spring-Summer 2019). While in Poland, she established contact with the poet, participating in programs with her as well as producing a film about her life. Violinist Christopher Jasiewicz (2018) also performed during the 2019 membership meeting. Matthew Waskiewicz (2013) performed on a trumpet during the PAAA Wigilia in 2013. And, of course, let's not forget the 2011 winner Matthew Stefanski, who has contributed a number of articles to this newsletter over the past few years, including two in this issue. He is currently a member of the PAAA Board of Directors, serves on the Scholarship Committee, and is updating our website. We first wrote about his lifelong involvement in the Polish community in 2014 (PAAA Newsletter Winter 2014).

THANK YOU FOR 20 YEARS OF SUPPORT OF THE PAAA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

PAAA Scholarship Grants for 2021

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, reviewed twelve applications for the PAAA Scholarship Grants for 2021 and selected four outstanding students to receive a total of \$12,000 in scholarship awards. The Committee is happy with the selection of these deserving young students of Polish origin. They all exhibit pride in their heritage and use it to influence their life interests. They are all local residents of Maryland and Virginia. We do expect these awards to further the growth and appreciation for Polish culture in the areas of politics, science, literature, music and art.



Teresa Deskur is a senior at the Peabody Institute where she is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Music Education and Horn Performance as well as a minor in Historical Performance. She is the recipient of the Peabody Institute's 2021 Presser Undergraduate Scholar Award and won the first prize at the World Bach Competition (Instrumental University Category). She hails from Vestal, New York, outside of Binghamton, and has been involved in the past with the Kopernik Observatory and Science Center (KOSC), which was established in 1974 to mark Nicholas Copernicus' 500th birthday. As Teresa prepares for a career as a performer and educator, she hopes, "to advance Polish culture through performing and rediscovering notable works by Polish musicians."

Gavin Moulton is a PhD student at the University of Notre Dame where his research interests include the intersections of national identity in immigrant art and architecture, and in particular the development of a unique style of Polish American religious complexes. In his application, he wrote, "I aim to demonstrate how connections between literary and political histories influenced architecture, such as sgraffito paintings of Adam Mickiewicz or depictions of Haller's Army in Detroit church murals. I am particularly interested in investigating transnational exchange between Poland and the diaspora, as well as painters such as Jan Henryk de Rosen who frescoed churches in both Europe and the United States." Previously, Gavin earned a Bachelor of Arts, magna cum laude with highest honors in the field, from Harvard University with a major in History of Art and Architecture and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and a minor in Italian. Recently he has served as assistant editor of the Polish American Historical Association's *Guide to Polish American Historical Sites in North America*.





Julia Stefanska is a sophomore studying Psychology and Business Economics at the University of Chicago. She serves on the board of the Polish American Student Association, and in the past attended Polish Saturday School. She decided to study in Chicago due, in part, to its pronounced Polish community, writing, "Being surrounded by all-things Polish has given me a sense of security. I've always been confident in my background and [I'm] excited to share it with others. I want to create and foster a joint community for Polish people now and later in life." Julia was raised in the Washington, DC, area and is an alumna of the Washington International School.

Ann Margaret Zelenka is a PhD student at the University of the Cumberlands studying Leadership. She intends to prove with her study that, "women are natural born leaders by the very nature of their births" and plans to use examples of Eastern European women. Ann Margaret is a previous PAAA scholarship recipient, having been awarded in 2014 while pursuing her undergraduate degree. Since then, she has earned her bachelor's degree in Jurisprudence, magna cum laude, and master's degree in Negotiations and Conflict Management from the University of Baltimore, as well as a second master's degree in Law, Specialization in Administrative & Regulatory Law from Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Ann Margaret is highly involved in Baltimore's civic society as well the Polish American Community, especially in the Polish Heritage Association of Baltimore where she previously served on the board of directors.



The acts of tangible support that PAAA provided to dozens of students over the years would not be possible without the generosity of its many members, donors, supporters and benefactors. It is especially important to mention Mr. Leonard Karpinski who in 2008 made a donation of \$100,000 which tremendously bolstered the PAAA's scholarship capabilities.

We hope reading the updates from past recipients and about the accomplishments of those from last year inspires you to consider making a donation to the PAAA Scholarship Fund so that we can continue to support the new generation of Polish Americans in pursuing their dreams and encourage them to take an active part in the Polish community and Polish culture.

Please make your checks payable to PAAA and mail to: Ted Mirecki, 900 N. Taylor St. Apt 617, Arlington, VA 22203.

For more information on the PAAA Scholarship Program visit http://paaa.us/scholarship/

Literary Corner



Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka https://danutakk.wordpress.com

Stanisław Lem (12 September 1921 – 27 March 2006) was a Polish writer of science fiction and essays on various subjects, including philosophy, futurology, and literary criticism. He was the most widely translated and best-known science fiction author outside of the English language, translated into over 50 languages. Many of his science fiction stories are of satirical and humorous character. Among his best-loved works the most-often cited are Solaris, The Cyberiad, Peace on Earth, The Star Diaries and The Futurological Congress.

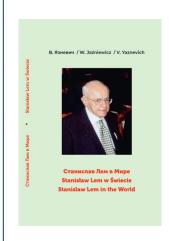
The following excerpt is from Stanisław Lem's Cyberiada (The Cyberiad); Opowiadanie "Wyprawa pierwsza A, czyli Elektrybałt Trurla" ("The First Sally (A), Or Trurl's Electronic Bard)." The Polish original is followed by two English renditions, from among the many multilingual translations of the excerpt featured in Станислав Лем в Mupe/ Stanisław Lem w Świecie/ Stanisław Lem in the World, edited by Victor Yaznevich.

[Konstruktor Trurl zbudował Elektrybałta – maszynę, która pisała wiersze. Maszyna otrzymała zadanie:

- Niech ułoży wiersz o cyberotyce! Żeby tam było najwyżej sześć linijek, a w nich o miłości i o zdradzie, o muzyce, o Murzynach, o wyższych sferach, o nieszczęściu, o kazirodztwie, do rymu i żeby wszystkie słowa były tylko na literę C!!

 (\dots) Cyprian cyberotoman, cynik, ceniac czule Czarnej córy cesarskiej cud ciemnego ciała, Ciagle cytra czarował. Czerwieniała cała, Cicha, co dzień czekała, cierpiała, czuwała...

...Cyprian ciotke całuje, cisnawszy czarnule!!



Victor Yaznevich, author of numerous articles about Lem's works, books on his biography, world bibliography, and philosophical heritage. Translator of 4,000 pages of Lem's short stories and non-fiction into Russian and Belarusian. In 2021, commemorating Lem's Centennial, he published Stanisław Lem Non Fiction. Bibliografia i Personalie, a full bibliography of Lem's nonfiction and Stanislaw Lem in the World. He holds Ph.D. in Technical Sciences, specializing in computers and IT. He resides in Minsk, Belarus.

Antonia Lloyd-Jones, UK

[Engineer Trurl has constructed the Electribalt – a machine that writes poetry. It is given the following task:]

"Have it write a cyber love poem! Not more than six lines, about love and betrayal, about music, coloured people, the upper classes, unhappiness, incest, with rhymes, and only using words that start with the letter C!!"

Cynical cyber-Casanova Carlo carnally craved Chloë, Caesar's chaste, curvaceous, coffee-coloured child; Catching Carlo's canoodling cello chords, Chloë cringed coyly, Consecutively crimson, cold, compliant, chilled. Curtly, contrary Carlo chucked Chloë! Caught caressing Caesar's cousin, Countess Clarissa – copper-chip cad!

Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka, USA

[Trurl, the constructor, has built Elektrybałt, a machine that could write poems. The machine was given an assignment:]

- Compose a poem about cyberseduction! No more than six lines; about love and bTetrayal, music, blacks, high society, misfortune, incest; cleverly rhyming, and each word beginning with the letter C!!

Cyprian cyberseducer, cajoles cynically, cleverly Countess Charlene's charming carbon-color cheeks. Continues cittern caresses, chivalry. Calmless Charlene constantly camouflages consenting, cravings...

... Calamity comes: Cyprian's cheating -- changes course, caresses closest cousin's captivating calves. Catastrophe!

Antonia Lloyd-Jones has translated works by several of Poland's leading contemporary novelists and reportage authors, as well as crime fiction, poetry and children's books. This year, her translation of *The Truth and Other Stories* by Stanisław Lem was published by MIT Press. She is a mentor for the Emerging Translators' Mentorship Programme, and former co-chair of the UK Translators Association.



https://www.paaa.us/scholarship

Applications for 2022 Scholarship Grants

The PAAA Scholarship Committee announces that applications for this year's PAAA scholarship grants will be accepted through March 30, 2022. Winners will be notified in late April 2022, and will receive their grants at the PAAA General Membership Meeting in early May 2022. Please visit our website for application forms and instructions.

Are you proud of your Polish heritage and inspired by the many Poles who made significant contributions in all areas of arts and sciences?

Eligibility Requirements

- Applicant must be an American citizen and of Polish or Polish-American descent.
- Consideration will also be given to permanent residents who express a desire to one day become United States citizens.
- Applicant must be a resident of Washington, DC, Maryland or Virginia and a currently matriculated student at a college or university in the U.S. If not a resident of the local region, applicant must be a matriculated student at an institution in one of these jurisdictions.

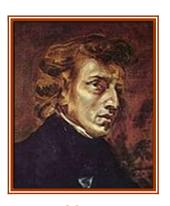
Some Factors for Consideration

Candidates will be evaluated on:

- artistic, academic, civic and cultural contributions
- participation in Polish-American cultural activities
- scholastic performance
- financial need

NO APPLICATION FEE

Application Deadline: March 30, 2022



Music (Fryderyk Chopin)



Science (Marie Skłodowska-Curie)

Remembrances



Józef Surowiec, Baritone (1958 - 2021)



We heard him many times at *Wianki* and at *Wigilia*, at the Polish Embassy and at concert halls, on opera stage, at festivals, and in church. His rich baritone voice was instantly recognizable and his colorful personality and boisterous spirit left an indelible mark on all who crossed his path. Józef Surowiec left us suddenly on November 30, 2021.

Baritone Józef Surowiec was born to sing and music has always been his passion. However, it was not until his late twenties that he considered singing as a career. After receiving a master's degree in Food Technology from the University of Warmia and Mazury in Poland, where he was also a soloist of the University choir, inspired by a colleague, he decided to pursue his passion. He was accepted to the renowned Moniuszko Academy of Music in Gdańsk, where he studied voice with Alicja Legiec-Matosiuk. After moving to the United States, he continued his studies at the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University, earning a Bachelor of Music Degree and then a Master' of Music degree in opera performance from the University of Maryland in College Park.

Józef was the winner of the American Council for Polish Culture Marcela Kochańska Sembrich Vocal Competition in 1992. He has performed as a soloist in numerous concerts in Poland, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Turkey and Hungary. He appeared on Polish National Television. Audiences in the Baltimore and Washington Metropolitan area heard him perform as soloist and a chorister with Baltimore Lyric Opera and Washington Opera companies, as well as in numerous recitals and concerts. The Baltimore Sun has called his singing "a feast for the ear". Polish audiences in the area are especially fortunate to hear Józef's warm baritone in intimate settings, such as the Polish Embassy, local festivals and many special Polonia events. Most recently he served as the organist at the Holy Rosary Church in Baltimore.

Józef Surowiec is survived by his wife Ewa Surowiec, and children, Justyna Surowiec Jayne, Sylwia Surowiec Lambert and Adam Surowiec.



Józef Surowiec leads kolędy singing at PAAA Wigilia in 2014

Julian Kulski, Architect and Author (1929-2021)



Julian E. Kulski was the son of the Mayor of Warsaw and was ten years old when World War II began. Even at this young age, he joined the Polish resistance and witnessed the Ghetto Uprising of 1943. He was caught and jailed by the Gestapo. After being released, he fought with the Polish Home Army in the heroic Warsaw Uprising in August and September of 1944. Captured once again, Kulski was sent to a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany before he was sixteen. Liberated by the Americans, he found himself in Great Britain where he wrote the chronicle of his wartime experiences based on the diary he kept during the five years under German occupation. Transcribed into English, the diary was published in 1979 under the title *Dying We Live*. A new edition of the story was published in 2014 under the title *Color of Courage: a Boy at War - the World War II Diary of Julian Kulski*, with a foreword by Lech Wałesa.

After World War II, Kulski studied architecture in England and the United States, graduating from Yale in 1954 with a Master of Architecture degree. In 1966, he received a doctorate from the Warsaw Institute of Technology. He was a fellow of the American Institute of Architects, a professor of Urban and Regional planning, and worked extensively in developing countries throughout the world as a consultant architect for several United Nations Agencies. His more that 3,000 buildings have had a significant influence in shaping the developing world. His books on architecture include *Land of Urban Promise*, which became a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, and *Architecture in a Revolutionary Era*. Kulski is listed in *Who's Who in the World, Who's Who in America, and Who's Who in Polish America*. He is a recipient of Poland's Cross of Valor, Silver Cross of Merit with Swords, Polish Army Medal (4 times) and Cross of the Warsaw Uprising. In 1979, he was appointed Honorary Admiral by the Governor of Alabama.

Mr. Kulski lived in Washington and was a long time member of the PAAA. He is seen above at the PAAA Wigilia in 2019 with his wife Catherine Yerkes Kulski.

Remember This: Jan Karski's Life and Legacy on Stage

By Matthew Stefanski

Outside the National **Archives** building in Washington, D.C. stands an unassuming block of marble dedicated to the memory of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This modest erected memorial was accordance with the president's wishes, as he described them to his friend Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter: "If any memorial is erected to me... I should like it to consist of a block about the size of this (putting his hand on his desk) and placed in the center of that green plot in front of the Archives Building. I don't care what it is made of, whether limestone or granite or whatnot, but I want it plain without any ornamentation, with the simple carving, 'In Memory of..."

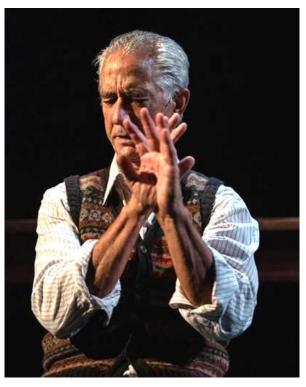
This past October, just street from up the nondescript **FDR** memorial stone, a series of absorbing performances were held at the Shakespeare Theatre Company's Klein Theatre which prominently featured both aforementioned dignitaries.

Remember This: The Lesson of Jan Karski is based on the life of legendary Polish Underground Resistance courier

and his fateful mission to inform the Western world about Nazi Germany's systematic extermination of Jews across occupied Europe. The production is a work of art, a priceless educational lesson, and a call to remembrance.

Academy Award nominee David Strathairn (most recently seen in Best Picture winner *Nomadland*), brings Karski to life through a magnificent solo performance. With minimal props and some dynamic lighting to help create the desired theatrical production, it is Strathairn, who through his masterful delivery, his embodiment of Karski's mannerism, and his care for reflecting Karski' demeanor, re-creates a physical manifestation of Karski on stage, and with it a world-class theatrical experience for audiences.

Strathairn leads the audience on a captivating tour through Karski's life, from his upbringing and diplomatic ambitions, to his induction into the Polish Underground and his secret mission to be an eyewitness to the



Oscar-nominated David Strathairn leads the audience on a captivating tour through Jan Karski's life and his secret mission to be an eyewitness to the Holocaust. Remember This:

The Lesson of Jan Karski at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC.

Photo by: Teresa Castracane

Holocaust. Each chapter of Karski's harrowing journey seems more urgent than the last. Viewers experience a whirlwind of emotions, from shock as they hear Justice Frankfurter explain his inability to believe the testimony Karski delivers, to disbelief as President Roosevelt seemingly expresses more interest in Poland's horse stock than in Karski's accounting of the Holocaust. Through the intimate setting and delivery created by Remember This, audiences experience as if they are hearing Karski first-hand, with pain in his voice and a frenzied delivery, as if relieving the ghastly memories with each what it must elicited syllable. An unforgettable experience, and one not experienced by many, as Karski did not revisit his wartime memories often later in life.

"There are no such things as good nations or bad nations. There are individuals, and everybody has the infinite capacity to do good or the infinite capacity to do evil" says Karski. This reminder is needed as much today as it was in 1943. Perhaps it is only through reflection and introspection, the kind that takes root as one departs, speechless, from *Remember This*, that one can begin to take stock of one's own individual actions and appreciate whether we are all reaching our infinite capacity to do good. As we

walk out of the theatre, FDR's white marble slab down the street seems to have slightly less shine to it.

Jan Karski has over the years accumulated numerous epithets from humanity's hero to the messenger of truth. But the words he used to describe himself are much less boastful: "insignificant, little man." Anyone who sees this performance or has read Karski's autobiography *Story of a Secret State* knows that that is far from accurate. Karski is, as *Remember This* depicts, a messenger for our time. "Hopefully [audiences] will walk away with something that will influence — however minuscule or in a large way — their own lives" said Strathairn.

Remember This: The Lesson of Jan Karski, written by Clark Young and Derek Goldman and directed by Goldman, was produced by The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics at Georgetown University. Washington, DC, was the debut of its national tour, which subsequently played in Chicago in November.





2021 Wianki Pelebration

It was a beautiful day and it was good to be together again. The 2021 PAAA Wianki Festival took place during a reprieve from the restrictions on gatherings as people got vaccinated and the coronavirus has subsided in the middle of 2021. And we were all outdoors which is a big plus. There were families with children, who seemed to have a time of their lives, especially the girls who quickly took to adorning their heads with flowers and greenery, putting on white gowns or prancing in their Polish costumes and laying their colorful Wianki (Wreaths) by the waters of the Reflecting Pool at the culmination of the festivities. As usual, the evening included performances by the Joyful Duo in the persons of Stasia and Olek Skrypczuk, and Laura Kafka-Price, who led the singing of the national anthems and later performed several Polish art and folk songs. There were fewer dancers because travel by large groups was still difficult. We are grateful to the small group of dancers from Polskie Kółko Międzykolegialne or PKM from Philadelphia who came to entertain us with their beautifully executed krakowiaki, kujawiaki, mazury and other Polish dances, and lead the polonaise after the Wianki procession at the end of the evening. Some of the youngest members of the audience joined individual dancers in spinning around and learning some new steps. This is what we want to show primarily in the photos on this page.

Thank you, Marianne Eckel, for once again organizing a fun and inspiring event. We look forward to meeting again this year at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial near the Reflecting Pool on Saturday, June 25

Photos: Dominik Mikołajczyk









Scholarship Awards at Wianki Festival

Due to the restrictions on gatherings, we didn't hold our usual membership and scholarship awards meeting in May of 2021, but we invited the students who were in the Washington area last June, to come to the PAAA Wianki Festival and receive their certificates in an open air ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial. Being congratulated by PAAA President Celia Larkin are, left to right: 2021 winners Julia Stefanska and Ann Margaret Zelenka, and Jakub Lipowski who received a grant in 2020.

Kinga Augustyn: Turning in Time



The name of violinist Kinga Augustyn is well known to members of the Polish American Arts Association and classical music lovers in our area. The PAAA was one of the sponsors of her album *Turning in Time* which was released in 2021. As a thank you for our support, Kinga performed a virtual concert for the PAAA on June 3, 2020, in the midst of the pandemic when it was most needed to fill our hunger for beautiful music while sequestering in our homes. We look forward to hearing her live hopefully in the not too distant future. In the meantime, we can enjoy her albums.

Like other recordings made by Kinga, *Turning in Time* includes music by Polish composers, which is always close to her heart. Recently, she sent us this message:

"The 'Turning in Time' album is doing really well in terms of reviews. Many critics mention that the album is

helping to popularize the music by Grażyna Bacewicz, since it includes her work as well. I am so happy and so grateful to you and to all the Board members of PAAA for helping to bring it to fruition. Your support is incredible!"

Below are some quotes from recent reviews:

"Heritage and training play significant roles in Kinga Augustyn's remarkable recording of unaccompanied violin works by 20th- and 21st-century composers. The Polish-born musician, who studied at the Juilliard School and lives in New York City, performs pieces by compatriots Grażyna Bacewicz and Krzysztof Penderecki alongside works by American composers Elliott Carter and Debra Kaye and two other contemporary masters, Luciano Berio and Isang Yun." *Donald Rosenberg. Gramophone. July 2021*

"Kinga Augustyn, while performing the selected repertoire, discovered an immeasurable variety of qualities, presenting herself as a violinist of exceptional technical efficiency, and an excellent musicianship at the same time. (...) We are pleased with the presence on the disc of Grażyna Bacewicz's Sonata No. 2, an excellent work, though not often played - considering the international activity of the violinist, the inclusion of Bacewiczówna's Sonata in the repertoire should significantly contribute to the popularization of the composer's work, which in recent years has been painstakingly gaining recognition in the world." (*Kurier Muzyczny, January 2022*)

"The name of Kinga Augustyn will certainly keep coming back, surrounded by superlatives - she is an extremely skilled virtuoso." (*Piotr Mika. Ruch Muzyczny. October 2021*)

Full reviews can be found on Kinga Augustyn's website: https://kingaaugustyn.com/

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 □ \$50 □ \$90 Couple: □ \$130 □ \$20 □ \$35 Student: □ \$50 Check# Date I would like to contribute \$ for PAAA cultural activities

Make check payable to PAAA and mail to: Polish American Arts Association, P.O. Box 9442, Washington, DC, 20016

Upcoming Events

PAAA Chopin Concert

March 6, 2022 at 3:00 PM Arts Club of Washington

PAAA General Membership Meeting

May 1, 2022 Arts Club of Washington

Wianki Festival

June 25, 2022 Reflecting Pool at Lincoln Memorial

PAAA Facebook paaanewsletter@gmail.com http://paaa.us/

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

