



# POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION of Washington, DC

Winter 2023

NEWSLETTER

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



## National Philharmonic and PAAA: Partnership for Music and Scholarship With the Artistry of Brian Ganz

Each year, the Polish American Arts Association sponsors a Chopin Concert to benefit our Scholarship Fund. At the invitation of the National Philharmonic Artistic Director and PAAA Honorary Board Member Piotr Gajewski and with generous offer from the Philharmonic's Board of Directors, this year our members and friends will have the opportunity not only to enjoy the music of Fryderyk Chopin performed by top notch artists in a great hall of the Strathmore Music Center, but also help us continue to provide scholarship grants to Polish American students.

The PAAA is excited to partner with the National Philharmonic in promoting Polish music and scholarship for our youth. Your ticket purchase to the Brian Ganz concert on February 25, 2023, will benefit the PAAA Scholarship Program when you use the code: **GANZ23**.

Widely regarded as one of the leading pianists of his generation, Brian Ganz is well known to music lovers in our area and is especially respected in the Polish community because of his special love for the music of Chopin which is so close to all our hearts. In 2011, he began a multi-year project in partnership with the National Philharmonic in which he is in the process of performing complete works by Chopin at the Strathmore Music Center.

*"There isn't much about Chopin that Brian Ganz doesn't know...his delight and wonder in his music seems to grow, apparently without bounds as time goes on."*

*The Washington Post*



## Message from the President

Dear fellow PAAA members and friends,

Can you believe it is February already? It seems like just yesterday we were exchanging opłatek and singing Christmas carols at our Wigilia. I am glad so many members and supports joined us this year, and I hope you will enjoy reading about the festivities in the newsletter. Please make a note in your calendar to join us next year!

While January is now in our rear-view mirror, it is by no means too late to make – and keep – a New Year resolution. At my workplace, and I am sure at many others, we set SMART goals for professional development. That means a goal is **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely**. I encourage you to set a SMART Polonia goal. Make a pledge not just to “be involved” in Polonia in 2023, but be specific, so that your resolution is achievable. How will you be involved? What event will you help with? What talents or passions do you have that could help benefit an organization or cause? Why not pledge to join a PAAA committee or volunteer to help with an event? There is no shortage of opportunities or ways to get involved, and sometimes the hardest part is taking the first step. Since assuming the Presidency, my appreciation for how much work and dedication is required to organize successful events has only continued to grow. So please, get involved, and let me, and PAAA, help you in that process. Email me directly at [PAAA.WDC@gmail.com](mailto:PAAA.WDC@gmail.com) and together we will make sure to identify a way that you can make a positive, and lasting, impact on Polonia in 2023.

I am very excited for all that the coming year has in store for our organization. This year for our scholarship fundraiser we are partnering with the National Philharmonic in promoting their *Evening with Chopin* featuring the always-exquisite Brian Ganz. Thanks to the support of our Honorary Board Member and artistic advisor Maestro Piotr Gajewski and the National Philharmonic’s Board of Directors, tickets to the performance purchased using our unique code **GANZ23** will help benefit the PAAA scholarship fund. I encourage all PAAA members to not only attend this evening of musical wonder, but to personally reach out to family and friends and encourage them to attend as well. Tickets start as low as \$29, and by using our code GANZ23, you can enjoy world-class music while also promoting education for our youth.

Our plans are already well underway for our Spring Meeting on May 7, and I am pleased that our featured speaker will be Professor William Hal Gorby, author of *Wheeling’s Polonia*, which was recognized last month by the Polish American Historical Association with the Oskar Halecki Award. The presentation promises to be a very informative, so please save the date and spread the word.

Dear members, PAAA exists thanks to you. I look forward to a fun and accomplished year together! I hope to see you all soon at one of our upcoming events, and please be sure to check our website regularly for further announcements.

Do zobaczenia,  
Matthew

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**The PAAA is a Non-Profit Organization tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) since 1966**

# Concert at Strathmore to Benefit the PAAA Scholarship

## Chopin: The Great Chamber Music

February 25, 8pm at Strathmore



Carter Brey, Cello



Brian Ganz, Piano



Laura Colgate, Violin

Pianist Brian Ganz continues his journey through the complete works of Chopin! For this concert he is joined by cellist Carter Brey, principal cellist of the New York Philharmonic, and violinist Laura Colgate, concertmaster of the National Philharmonic.

### CELLO / PIANO

Introduction and Polonaise in C major, Op. 3  
the rarely heard Grand Duo Concertante on themes from Robert le Diable  
and the masterful Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 65

### PIANO / VIOLIN / CELLO

Trio in G minor, Op. 8

Ganz's phenomenal interpretation of pieces from Chopin's catalog continues to memorably check off more and more works by the Polish Romantic composer from his to-do list in the project he calls "Extreme Chopin." Almost all of Chopin's compositions are for piano solo, but the upcoming concert - 13th in the project - features his complete chamber works composed for piano and strings. Ganz will be joined by cellist Carter Brey, and violinist Laura Colgate.

**Carter Brey** was appointed principal cellist of the New York Philharmonic in 1996. He rose to international attention in 1981 as a prizewinner in the Rostropovich International Cello Competition; His other awards include the Gregor Piatigorsky Memorial Prize, and an Avery Fisher Career Grant. Mr. Brey is faculty member of the Curtis Institute of Music, He is also cellist in the New York Philharmonic String Quartet, which performs widely throughout the U.S.

Violinist **Laura Colgate** enjoys a versatile career as a chamber and orchestral musician, soloist, educator, curator, activist, and innovator. She is currently the Concertmaster of The National Philharmonic at Strathmore in Bethesda, MD. She is the Executive and Artistic Director of the Boulanger Initiative, an advocacy organization for women composers based in DC.

**Brian Ganz** is the laureate of the Marguerite Long Jacques Thibaud and the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Piano Competitions, He has appeared as a soloist with such orchestras as the St. Louis Symphony, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the Baltimore Symphony, the National Philharmonic, and many others, and has performed with such conductors as Leonard Slatkin, Marin Alsop, Mstislav Rostropovich, Piotr Gajewski and Yoel Levi.

Ganz embarked on his "Extreme Chopin" project at the suggestion of the Founding Artistic Director of the National Philharmonic, Maestro Piotr Gajewski, who saw it as a way to celebrate the bicentennial of Chopin's birth. Over a dozen years later, the annual all Chopin concerts draw throngs of enthusiastic lovers of the Polish composer to the beautiful Music Center at Strathmore. At other times, Brian can be heard in venues in our area, throughout the country and worldwide. The PAAA was fortunate to have him perform at the Chopin Concert benefiting our scholarship program in 2014 at St. Luke's church in McLean. In appreciation of his contribution to promotion of Polish music, the American Council for Polish Culture recognized Brian Ganz with its 2020 Cultural Achievement Award

## Developing New Audiences - Promoting New Leaders

The National Philharmonic is known for its commitment to developing young artists and audiences with its "**All Kids, All Free, All The Time**" initiative as well as summer institutes, competitions and annual concerts for the area second grade students.

The PAAA is committed to supporting the leaders of tomorrow by providing scholarship grants to Polish American students to help them follow their dreams with the hope that they will one day take over the helm of our organizations and institutions to promote our culture and our values.

Enjoy great music and support the **PAAA Scholarship Program**. Use the code **GANZ23** when purchasing your ticket to the concert on 25 February.

Please consider making a donation to the PAAA Scholarship fund at: <https://www.paaa.us/scholarship>

# Together Again: PAAA Wigilia 2022



Among the Polish traditions, Christmas Eve reigns supreme in the hearts of many. Filled with religious symbolism and steeped in customs handed down generation to generation, *Wigilia* is more than just an annual gathering of friends and family, it is a manifestation of our faith, values, customs and more. Our organization has been hosting an annual Christmas *Wigilia* gathering for over forty years now, and members and friends were eager to resume this festive gathering that had been paused first by the pandemic and last year by a fire at the Arts Club of Washington.

On Sunday, December 18, over fifty PAAA members and friends gathered at the Arts Club mansion for our traditional *Wigilia* dinner and to celebrate Polish culture and togetherness. The Arts Club President Henry Sienkiewicz welcomed all to the stately Cleveland Abbe House as guests took their seats. PAAA President Matthew Stefanski delivered welcoming remarks and introduced special guests including Colonel Romuald Lipinski, a Veteran of the Polish II Corps who fought at the Battle of Monte Cassino during World War II and previously served as PAAA Vice President, as well as representatives of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, Vice Consuls Ewa Pietrasieńska and Edyta Hołdyńska. *Wigilia*, whether held around one's familial dining table or at an organized function, always begins with the sharing of the *opłatek*. It was no different here, as Father Philip Majka blessed and distributed the Polish Christmas wafer and attendees exchanged well wishes for the coming year. Following dinner, which featured *Wigilia* staples such as *barszcz*, herring, baked fish, *pierogi*, *kapusta*, and *makowiec*, guests were treated to a beautiful artistic program organized by PAAA board member and artistic advisor Dr. Laura Kafka-Price.

A well known soprano, Laura Kafka-Price performed a beautiful Polish carol "*Gdy Śliczna Panna*". Pianist Wanda O'Brien-Trefil followed with a rendition of Chopin's Mazurka Op. 7 No. 1 in B flat Major. Berklee College of Music student Rosalinda Sherman captivated the audience with "O Holy Night." Pianist Alvin Smithson accompanied the singers and in a separate solo did an improvisation on the Ukrainian folk song "*Shchedryk*," known throughout the world as "Carol of the Bells." Stasia and Olek, as the Joyful Skrypczuk Duo, performed a popular Ukrainian song "*Chervona Ruta*."

The music from Ukraine in this year's program served as a symbol of our ongoing solidarity with the Ukrainian people. To the Ukrainians now living in Poland, and other welcoming countries and to those huddling in their bombed-out cities and villages or facing the enemy in battle, we send most fervent wishes that *Shchedryk*, the bountiful evening, be soon celebrated in their free homeland.

The artistic program concluded with a group sing-along of Polish *kolędy* and American carols, including "*Oj maluśki, maluśki; Wśród nocnej ciszy, Dzisiaj w Betlejem*," "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", and ending with a resounding "We Wish You a Merry Christmas". The Joyful Skrypczuk Duo led everyone in singing and even some dancing as guests were encouraged to embrace the joy of the season. Many guests left the evening carrying gift baskets with Polish treats won during the raffle donated by PAAA board members, but all guests left with their bellies full and their spirits filled with Polish Christmas charm.

We thank all who joined us for our *Wigilia*, and especially recognize our dedicated *Wigilia* committee chair and members Margaret Butler, Celia Larkin, Rose Kobylinski, Eve Marie Szczepanski, Stasia Skrypczuk and Laura Kafka-Price. Please consider joining our *Wigilia* committee to help plan next year's festivities. We can't do it without you!

Top to bottom: Matthew Stefanski with Celia Larkin and Rose Kobylinski, Margaret Butler, Matthew Stefanski and Arts Club President Henry Sienkiewicz, Father Majka.



*Wigilia performers clockwise from top left: Laura Kafka-Price, Alvin Smithson, Rosalinda Sherman, Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, the Joyful Skryoczuk Duo, Stasia and Olek.*

*Above: A festive Wigilia table at the gallery. Clockwise from top:*

*Vice-Consuls Ewa Pietrasieńska and Edyta Holdyńska of the Embassy of Poland, Stasia Skrypczuk; Rose Kobylinski conducting the raffle. Left: Henry Sienkiewicz shows off the Polish ornament. Clockwise from right: Colonel Romuald Lapinski and Matthew Stefanski; kolędy singing on stage with Stasia, Mathew, Olek and Alvin and by all gathered; Jim and Tess Kulikowski with Emily Kowal who organized Wigilia earlier in December for GWU students; Bożenna Buda with her family; sharing of opłatek*



# PAAA Scholarship Program is Open for 2023

The PAAA Scholarship Committee invites Polish American students residing or studying in the District of Columbia, Virginia or Maryland to apply for the 2023 scholarship grants. Details on eligibility and requirements along with an application form can be found on the PAAA website at: <https://www.paaa.us/scholarship>. The deadline for submission is March 31, 2023.

It is always good to see what our past scholarship winners are doing and we are happy to note that one of them recently had his article published in the SAH ARCHIPEDIA, an online encyclopedia of the Society of Architectural Historians. Gavin Moulton, a 2021 recipient of a PAAA grant, contributed the article on the Mazer-Cressman Cigar Company Plant in Detroit's Poletown. The focus of the article is the 1937 Cigar Strike by Polish women who "formed the backbone of the cigar industry and faced discrimination based on gender and ethnicity." This well researched, interesting article can be accessed at: <https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/MI-02-089-0002>.

Gavin Moulton also assisted with the editing of the recently published book *Footprints of Polonia* edited by Ewa Barczyk and published by the Polish American Historical Association. PAAA President and scholarship recipient in 2011, Matthew Stefanski also contributed to the book.

## A Guide to Polish Sites in the United States

### FOOTPRINTS OF POLONIA

Polish  
Historical Sites  
Across  
North America



Edited by Ewa E. Barczyk

From majestic churches to small roadside chapels, from larger-than-life statues of Revolutionary war heroes Kosciuszko and Pułaski to small plaques honoring Polish workers who died striking for fair treatment, the innumerable contributions of Polish immigrants and their descendants on communities in North America can be seen on monuments, bridges, churches, cultural centers, and cemeteries across the continent. These "footprints" of Polonia (the Polish diaspora), commemorating towering events and figures from history that are a source of great pride among Polish Americans, are cataloged for readers in this unique volume. The Polish American Historical Association (PAHA) developed this guide with the goal of highlighting the important ways in which Polish immigrants contributed to history, politics, arts and society in the U.S., Canada, and parts of Mexico and the Caribbean. Volunteers from Polish organizations all over North America and provided summaries and pictures for over 200 entries. Footprints of Polonia can serve as the perfect travel companion for anyone who wants to learn about the rich history and heritage of the Polish diaspora. It is also an excellent resource for Polish language schools and Polish American organizations who want to learn more about and take pride in sites of interest in their area.



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

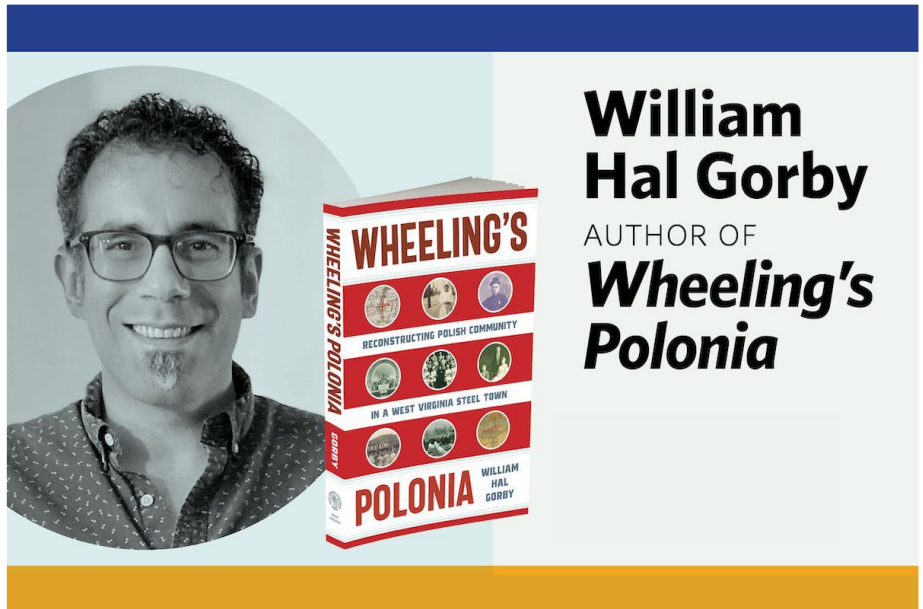
The activities of the Polish American Arts Association are made possible thanks to our generous membership. If you are a member but have not yet renewed your membership for 2023, or if you are interested in becoming a member, you can now pay your dues online via PayPal. Please visit [paaa.us/membership](http://paaa.us/membership) and click Pay Dues via PayPal. Next, select PAAA Membership Dues and enter the amount that corresponds to your desired membership level. Discounts are available for multi-year memberships. You can also still pay by check. Please make the checks payable to PAAA and mail to:

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

We look forward having you as part of the PAAA family and to seeing you at one of our upcoming events.

# PAAA Spring Membership Meeting Guest Speaker: Dr. William Hal Gorby

The PAAA Spring Membership Meeting will take place on May 7, 2023, from 2:00-5:00 PM at the Arts Club of Washington. It will include presentation of PAAA Scholarship grants and a talk by guest speaker Dr. William Hal Gorby.



## William Hal Gorby AUTHOR OF *Wheeling's Polonia*

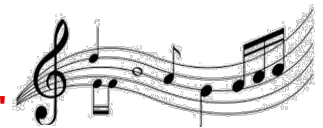
Dr. Gorby is a historian of West Virginia and Appalachia, whose work focuses on the role of immigrants in the state's steel and coal mining industries, particularly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He is a teaching associate professor and director of undergraduate advising at West Virginia University. His book, *Wheeling's Polonia: Reconstructing Polish Community in a West Virginia Steel Town* (WVU Press, 2020) examines the Polish and other Eastern European immigrants in Wheeling, and the process of forging a distinct Catholic working class culture in the wider region. Polish immigrants and their children were one of the most prominent of the new ethnic groups in the Upper Ohio Valley. Their Polish-American culture sustained them during the nativism of the 1920's. The Polish were persistently targeted by dry agents during Prohibition, and many openly violated the law, which targeted their ethnic Catholic culture as un-American. Out of these trying times, the Polish-Americans served as a major catalyst behind CIO union organizing at Wheeling Steel in the 1930's and 1940's.

Professor Gorby was recently awarded the 2022 Oskar Halecki Prize by the Polish American Historical Association in recognition of his work, *Wheeling's Polonia* as an important monograph on the Polish experience in the United States.

During our Spring Membership meeting, Professor Gorby will deliver a presentation on *Wheeling's Polonia* and explore nearly 50 years of rich Polonia history in Wheeling, West Virginia. While the people and places described will be unique to the upper Ohio River Valley, the themes explored can be found in Polish communities large and small across the United States and are sure to be of interest to many of our members.



## "Let's Remember Polish Songs" "Chcemy Pamiętać Polskie Piosenki"



*We are happy to announce a new initiative for those who love Polish songs and want to spend an afternoon remembering old and learning new melodies with old and new friends.*

*You are invited to an afternoon of singing led by **The Joyful Skrypczuk Duo** in Leesburg, Virginia, from 1:00 to 2:30 PM on following Sundays:*

*February 19, April 16, June 11, August 20, and October 15, 2023*

*Open to anyone interested in singing Polish songs. Words will be provided.*

*For details and to reserve your space, send email to Stasia and Olek at: [skryp77@aol.com](mailto:skryp77@aol.com) or call: 703-217-6189*



**Plynie Wisła**



**Folk Songs**



**Patriotic Songs**



## Upcoming Events

### Chopin Concert

February 25, 2023 at 8:00 PM  
Strathmore Music Center

### PAAA Membership Meeting

Sunday, May 7, 2023 at 2:00 PM  
Arts Club of Washington

### Wianki Festival

June 24, 2023  
Reflecting Pool at Lincoln Memorial

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