



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

Ojczyzna: The Fine Dancers from Baltimore



*Albośmy to jacy tacy, ino chłopcy krakowiacy....
Oh, what fine Kraków lads we are....*

The moment they appear in their colorful Kraków finery and take the first turn to the lively Krakowiak music, you know that they are fine lads, and lassies, indeed. The Ojczyzna Polish Dancers from Baltimore, Maryland, have been amazing audiences for years with brilliant dance styles and exquisite costumes. Under the artistic direction of Dennis Klima, they have performed regularly over the past several years, along with other groups from different states, at the Wianki Festival on the National Mall in Washington, DC, an annual event sponsored by the Polish American Arts Association.

They were not always called Ojczyzna (Fatherland) but evolved from other Polish folk dance groups active in Baltimore. First, there was the Trojaki Dance Circle, organized by William (Bolek) Król in 1974, which in 1980 was recognized as the "Most Authentic Group" at the International Polish Folk Dance Festival in Rzeszów, Poland. Before that, the Polish National Alliance Council 21 in Baltimore sponsored a children's group, Krakowiaki, which is still active today. Other groups were formed later, including Oberek, Tysiące Lat, Wschodnia Galicja and Dawne Tańce. Dennis Klima

began dancing in Oberek when he was a teenager. He spent three summers in Poland where he completed training as a dancer and received a certificate as a choreographer of Polish folk dance. In the early 1980s, Trojaki and Oberek were joined and became known as Ojczyzna.

Bolek Król met his wife Jeannette when she came to dance with Trojaki in 1976. After they married and adopted twin boys from Poland, they took a break from dancing. Dennis also put dancing and directing aside to complete his Doctorate in Physical Therapy. As a result, the ensemble closed shop and stored its extensive costume collection for a number of years.

In 2010, Dennis decided to return to his first love of Polish song and dance and took up the position of the

Artistic Director and choreographer of Ojczyzna. The group has since performed throughout the Baltimore and Washington areas at various festivals, cultural and social events, including the Wianki on the National Mall and the ACPC 2013 National Convention. They perform and present educational seminars at community colleges on Polish dance, costumes and other features of Polish culture.

Ojczyzna's varied repertoire includes suites from Rozbarski Śląsk. Łowicz, Nowy Sącz, Kaszuby and Rzeszów, as well as national dances, including the Polonez, Krakowiak, Kujawiak, and Oberek. A crowd pleaser is the whimsical suite, the Old Warsaw Polka. All dances are performed in authentic regional costumes.

When the group was first started, the costumes were made by the members or their families and friends. Eventually, they were all replaced with authentic outfits, handmade and decorated with embroidery, ribbons and beadwork by artisans in Poland. Currently there are about 13 complete sets of regional and national costumes, some more elaborate than others, all stored in the "garderoba," a two room closet space at the Holy Rosary Church in East Baltimore. Each member is responsible for transporting his or her costumes to the performances.

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Message from the President

Greetings once again, as we spring out of spring! We have had a good winter with an intimate Chopin Concert, featuring virtuoso pianist Brian Ganz, which provided a welcome alternative entertainment to America's popular Super Bowl. Likewise, our Annual Meeting and Elections was a rousing success, drawing a large attendance, celebrating the scholastic and community accomplishments of elite Polish-American university students, and enjoying the special ambience of the Arts Club of Washington in the historic residence of former President James Monroe. We also celebrated the canonization of our beloved Polish Pope John Paul II and some of our members were there in Rome to witness first-hand.

There is a Polish proverb, "Komu pora, temu czas." (When it is your time, you must go.) And so after long productive and fruitful years, we sadly express our condolences to the families of Bernadette Wiermanski and Ed Pawlowski. They accomplished much in their lives and left nothing undone at their earthly departure. Both served as presidents of PAAA and I fondly remember their warmth and friendliness shown to me as I began to attend PAAA meetings and functions, and then later both served as fountains of encouragement and mentorship at the onset of my presidential tenure.

While we are on the subject of honoring past contributors to our community, I must draw your attention to the life of Lt. Colonel Matt Urban, a Polish-American who is the most decorated combat soldier of World War II. The Matt Urban Memorial Committee asks for your support in getting the name of Lieutenant Colonel Matt Urban added to the list of "notable grave sites" at Arlington National Cemetery. The list is provided to Arlington visitors so they may easily locate the gravesite of this American Hero and learn about his remarkable combat service for our country. Please help by sending an email or letter of support to the History Office at Arlington National Cemetery. Its staff will confirm receipt of your email, consolidate it with similar emails of support and then forward them to the committee which is reviewing all candidates for the "notable graves list". Information on how to do this can be found at <http://matturbanmemorialcommittee.us/>. There will be a commemoration ceremony for Lt. Colonel Matt Urban near his grave in section 7A of Arlington National Cemetery at 9:30 am on August 23, 2014. Your attendance is welcome. Please share this information with your friends and colleagues for their consideration of support.

Tom Payne

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Internal Revenue Service Code
Section 501(c)(3) since 1966**

Ojczyzna

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Currently Ojczyzna comprises some twenty-five dancers. Their experience is varied: some were members of Trojaki, Oberek and/or Ojczyzna; one was in a dance group in Poland; many came with no previous folk dance experience. They are doctors, fire-fighters, artists, musicians, construction workers, plumbers, home-makers, computer specialists, translators, engineers, and teachers. Some of the dancers travel to and from as far away as the Eastern Shore, Washington, DC, and Virginia to the weekly Sunday rehearsals at Holy Rosary Church in East Baltimore. In all, the dancers consider themselves a family.

Bolek and Jeannette Król rejoined Ojczyzna after retiring in 2006, he from the Veterans Administration and she from the Baltimore County School System. He is the Managing Director and she acts as the wardrobe mistress and the chief assistant to Dennis. Bolek also does cameo appearances in the Old Warsaw Polka and as the legendary Lajkonik in Krakowiak. Both of them are present at each Sunday evening rehearsal where the dancers practice their craft under their watchful eye, while Dennis Klima, a professor at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore during the week, makes sure the dance beat is always just right.

So how is this impressive venture paid for? The costume collection is expensive to begin with and needs constant maintenance; some sets need to be replaced as they wear out, altered as dancers turn over, or new ones purchased. Plus, there are travel expenses. Ojczyzna receives a modest donation for a performance. The Holy Rosary Church, with Pastor, Father Andrzej Totzke, provides the rehearsal and storage space. The rest depends on donations from individuals and organizations. If you wish to support them, you can send donations to: Ojczyzna Polish Dancers, c/o Maks Bondyra, Treasurer, 8735A Gerst Ave., Perry Hall, MD 21128. Ojczyzna is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax-deductible.

For information regarding rehearsal and performance schedules please contact williamfkrol@comcast.net
More photos of Ojczyzna by Andrzej Trzeciak at: www.flickr.com/photos/98882362@N06/sets/



Ojczyzna will again amaze audiences with brilliant costumes and spirited dancing at the annual PAAA Wianki Festival at the Steps of the Reflecting Pool at the Lincoln Memorial on Saturday, June 21. Everyone is invited.



Left and above: Jeannette and Bolek Król met while dancing almost forty years ago and are still a constant presence at Ojczyzna rehearsals and performances.
Right: PAAA visitors, Celia Larkin, Marianna Eckel and Rose Kobylinski at rehearsal with Artistic Director, Dennis Klima and Ojczyzna dancers.



An Afternoon at the Arts Club of Washington

PAAA General Membership Meeting on May 4, 2014



The PAAA General Membership and Election Meeting was held on a sunny afternoon May 4, at the Arts Club of Washington in the historic home of former President James Monroe, just a few blocks from the White House. In addition to the election of new PAAA officers and board members, the PAAA Scholarships were presented to outstanding Polish American students. The five grant recipients were announced by the Scholarship Committee

Chairman, Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, who presented certificates to those who were present. Several former scholarship winners were also on hand, including Matthew Stefanski and Monika Gasiorek, the past and the new president of the Polish Student Organization at American University.

Following the business portion of the meeting, members and guests adjourned to the reception rooms where spirited conversation flowed over wine and refreshments prepared by the Arts Club staff. Jameson Freeman, Chairman of the Drama Committee of the Arts Club, welcomed guests and then conducted a highly informative and very interesting tour of the historic mansion. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and productive afternoon. We will be at the Arts Club again this year on December 7, for the PAAA Wigilia.

Photos:

1-3: PAAA members and guests mingle during after-meeting reception; 4: Jameson Freeman of the Arts Club, shows the house to Cecilia Glembocki and Mary Clare Haskin; 5: Leonard Karpinski, major scholarship donor with Matthew Stefanski; 6: Scholarship Committee members, Dr. Edwarda Buda-Okreglak, Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil and Dr. Laura Kafka-Price with students Monika Gasiorek, Paul Brazinski, Ann Margaret Zelenka and Matthew Stefanski; 7: Meeting participants in the Arts Club Gallery; 8: PAAA officers being sworn in by Father Philip Majka - complete list officers and board members on page 2.

2014 PAAA Scholarship Grants



Paul Brazinski of Catholic University, is the recipient of \$3,000 scholarship. Paul is a Ph.D. candidate, studying Church History, specializing in relics. He studies archeology at Cambridge, and on digs in Greece and Italy, and is fluent in Greek. He has contributed to books, published papers, and given presentations about relics and church history. He is a member of the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, DC.



Ann Margaret Zelenka, of the University of Baltimore, is the recipient of \$2,000 scholarship. Ann will be attending a MS program at the University of Baltimore, and eventually intends to earn a JD and practice law. Ann clerks at the US District Court for MD and is a Student Government Senator. She has traveled to Poland, and is on the Advisory Board Council of

the Polish Heritage Association of Baltimore.

Receiving a \$1,000 scholarship each are:



Clarissa Pawlica, a sophomore at the University of Virginia, is studying History, Foreign Affairs, and Economics. She is fluent in Polish, and will be traveling this summer to Otwock, Poland as part of the Teaching English in Poland Program of the Kosciuszko Foundation and the Polish National Committee for UNESCO.



Kristen Rosano, is graduating from the University of North Carolina. She has been a tutor in Genetics and Molecular Biology, and volunteers at UNC hospitals. She has already been admitted to four medical schools. In high school she was an Intel Science Talent Search semifinalist for her research at NIH.



Stephanie Ichniowski from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University is completing her freshman year with a very demanding six-day schedule, studying Drama and Psychology. She is a soprano who played leading roles in nine high school productions.

Stephanie Ichniowski will perform in Maryland this summer in Howard County Community Theater production of *Les Miserables*, July 2-6, and later that month in a Columbia Center for the Theatrical Arts (CCTA) production of *The Addams Family*, where she will play one of the leads. For information see:

www.howardcountysummertheatre.org/current-shows.html and www.cctarts.com/ccta_016.htm

We wish to thank all the contributors to the PAAA Scholarship Fund for their generous donations. A complete list of donors will be published in the another issue of the newsletter.

Brian Ganz's Intimate Chopin



The annual PAAA Chopin Concert took place on Sunday, February 2, 2014 at St. Luke's Catholic Church in McLean, VA. Brian Ganz, who has a special affinity with Chopin and intends to perform all of his compositions within ten years, gave a brilliant performance. Truly, a world class artist performed the music of one of the world's greatest composers. Ganz fully engaged the audience with his playing and with a discussion between the numbers, answering questions and taking requests. Audience members had a chance to participate beyond discussion of the music. When the question whether Mazurkas can be danced was explored, Stasia Skrypczuk demonstrated the basic step of the traditional Mazur. When Ganz noted that Chopin's four Ballades were based on the ballads of Adam Mickiewicz, Dr. Richard Okręglak stood up and recited part of the poet's *Reduta Ordona*. Brian Ganz clearly enjoyed interacting with the Polish audience, who, in turn, enjoyed the new depths of understanding of what Ganz brought them.

Ganz referred to Chopin as a "great storyteller" and "poet of the piano" who within the opening notes of a piece, creates immediate visceral engagement. With sound, he then weaves a plot, pacing each composition through development to climax and catharsis. And, the content of his story is often a courageous exploration of the dark places of human emotion. Expressiveness was at all times the ultimate goal of Ganz's masterful technique.

In addition to the four Mazurkas, Variations Brillantes, a Ballade, a Nocturne, and a Scherzo listed in the program, Ganz delighted the audience with additional requests - a Prelude, Etude, and Polonaise. At times, his tempos were surprising; the Mazurka No. 1 in B flat major was played with more rubato, and the Heroic Polonaise No. 6 was played at a faster tempo than this reviewer would have expected. Ganz played not only with great sensitivity, but executed the spirit of the characteristic Polish melodic turns present in the mazurkas and scherzo with the intuition of a native.

Ganz donated his time and artistry to benefit the PAAA Scholarship Fund. Following the concert, the attendees were treated to a reception with a Polish buffet which was underwritten by Ted Mirecki, the Chopin Concert Chairman.

In 2010, Brian Ganz undertook a personal, decade-long mission to perform all of Chopin's works. The inaugural concert in the series, called "Extreme Chopin," took place in January 2011 at the Strathmore Music Center. This year, he has already performed two concerts in the series. To find out about future performances at the Strathmore Music Center visit nationalphilharmonic.org; more information on Ganz is available at www.brianganz.com.

Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, Ph.D.

This year, PAAA lost two of its distinguished past presidents: Bernadette Wiermanski, 1981-1982; and Ed Pawlowski, 2004-2005. In addition to the PAAA, both held offices in other Polish and non-Polish organizations, locally and on national level. Their dedication and the significant contributions they made to the cause of the Polish culture, and to the society as a whole, will always be remembered. Cześć ich pamięci.

Bernadette Wiermanski - Grace and Dedication



Bernadette Wiermanski was a member of the professional staff at the College of American Pathologists. Previously, she taught piano and music has always remained her passion.

If one had to choose a single word to describe Bernadette Wiermanski, it would have to be: class. That she was one classy lady was obvious at the first sight: tall and elegant, she was graceful and refined, with an aura of quiet sophistication. In closer contact, one also quickly discovered that she was extremely smart, talented, knowledgeable, kind and devoted to many causes that she supported throughout her life. Oh, and she was a great cook. That was attested to by her daughter Mary who said in her eulogy that "Mom loved a party." She prepared elaborate meals for her numerous friends, fellow members of clubs and organizations, and her beloved family. There were always some wonderful Polish dishes on the table and holiday traditions were adhered to. A friend described her love of travel to new and far away places, often on a cruise, with her husband Richard and close friends.

Bernadette Melkowski was born on the Northwest side of Chicago, where she was educated by the Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth at St. Ladislaus School and Holy Family Academy. She attended dePaul University and the Mendelssohn Central Conservatory from which she held a BA in Music. While in high school, she met her husband, Richard Wiermanski, and they were married in 1952. They had five children, eight grandchildren and one great grandchild. They lived in Chicago until moving to Washington, DC, in 1978.

In Chicago, Bernadette taught music in school, as well as gave private piano lessons. After transferring to Washington, she made a career change and became a member of the professional staff at the College of American Pathologists, a medical specialty association in the government affairs office.

In Chicago, Bernadette became active in the Polish Women's Civic Club and the Polish Arts Club of Chicago. Upon moving to Washington, the Wiermanskis immediately joined the Polish American Arts Association and soon Bernadette was elected its president (1981-82) and then served on its Board of Directors for many years. She was a member of the Board of Directors of the Polish American Congress. She was a founding member of the John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, DC, and was the president of the Friends of John Paul II Foundation. She has worked with the Polish Embassy on many projects, including, Breast Cancer Awareness and Mental Health for Children in Poland. She had chaired many successful fundraising events for various organizations. For many years, she had been a Board Member of the American Council for Polish Culture, as Financial Secretary, Director, as well as Second and First Vice President. In addition, she was very involved in civic, charitable and church related organizations, serving as president and holding other executive offices.

In 2001, Bernadette, along with her husband Richard, received the Founders Award from the American Council for Polish Culture. Her other awards and decorations include: Award for Dedicated Service, Polish American Congress; the Cavalier's Cross for Service to the Republic of Poland; Pro Ecclesia Medal, The Knight Commander of Saint Sylvester Order, from the Holy Father; Catholic Family Award, the Knights of Columbus; Award for Excellence, College of American Pathologists.



Bernadette and Richard Wiermanski were always present at Polish events and celebrations. Here they are at the plaque commemorating arrival of the first Poles in Jamestown, VA.

Edward J. Pawlowski, Ph.D. - A Life of Service

Dr. Edward Jan Paul Pawlowski is known to us as the modest, genial, ever willing volunteer, always ready to lend his leadership experience to the benefit of various Polish American organizations. The Polish American Arts Association of Washington has benefited from his term as President (2004-2005) and his service with its scholarship, nominating, and Chopin concert committees, and his contributions to the PAAA's newsletter and the ACPC's Polish Heritage quarterly. He has brought his valuable knowledge of world affairs to the PAC Division's Board of Directors and committees for over a decade. Other organizations likewise have benefited from his membership and support.



The youngest of five children of Polish immigrants, Ed grew up fluent in Polish and with a love of Poland. As a young man during WWII, he wrote a dozen letters to newspapers in support of Poland and the Polish Government in exile in London, some critical of the Soviet Union and President Roosevelt's decisions. At 17, he joined the Army, and two years later completed his enlistment as a sergeant in the newly organized U.S. Air Force. He attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, from which he received a B.S. in 1954. He earned a M.A. in Russian Language and Russian Area Studies from Middlebury College in Vermont. In 1968, he completed his Ph.D. in Russian Area Studies at Georgetown University.

During his varied military career, which included intelligence work, among other assignments, Ed was trained to parachute behind enemy lines and reconnoiter enemy troop movements, using his Russian and German language skills. He served at the Army Interrogation Center in Oberusel, Germany, where he interrogated displaced persons and Polish and Czech defectors. From 1961-64, Ed served as Assistant Professor of Russian at West Point.

While working on the Washington-Moscow hotline, established after the Cuban missile crisis, Ed acted as a translator for President Lyndon Johnson and during the period 1966-68, he translated Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin's communications with the President.

Lt. Col. Pawlowski's final military assignment was with the Defense Intelligence Agency in Washington, where he headed a branch of Warsaw Pact defectors from the USSR, Poland, and East Germany, one of whom was the notorious Nick Shadrin. Following his retirement in 1972, after a short stint on Wall Street as an administrator, Ed returned to Washington as a civilian in the Central Intelligence Agency, working in the Directorate of Operations in the Soviet and East European Division. He worked on the case of Polish Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski and then served in West Germany where he used his fluency in the Russian, Polish, Czech and German languages. He was supportive of his

colleagues and had a knack for forming strong bonds. Years after a team he headed disbanded, he continued to organize periodic lunches to share experiences and remember past friendships.

His retirement after 20 years with the CIA was in name only. For the next 20 years, he made a weekly trip to the White House where he volunteered in the Office of Presidential Correspondence. He volunteered at St. Mark's Catholic Church in Vienna as an usher and a Eucharistic minister for shut-ins. And, of course, he gave generously of his time and talents to our area's Polish American organizations, for which we will always be grateful

Ed's family life was very important to him and never compromised by his career and other pursuits. He was the loving husband of Janice Pawlowski, who passed in 1988 of cancer and supportive father of his daughter, Edleen and son Edward, and a loving grandfather to four grandchildren.



Ed Pawlowski at the White House with President George W. Bush



Ed at the PAC dinner in his honor in 2012, with Celia Larkin and daughter Edleen Bergelt. Despite his busy career and varied interests, he always had time for family and friends.

Festival of Wreaths - Wianki



**Annual celebration of Polish traditions of St. John's night
with dancing, singing and making of wreaths**

Live performances by Polish folk dance groups

**Saturday, June 21, 2014 - 6:00 - 10:00 PM
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Information: (703) 255-9645

Save the Date: December 7, 2014, PAAA Wigilia at the Arts Club of Washington

Polish-American Arts Association
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