



# POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION of Washington, DC

Spring-Summer 2018

NEWSLETTER

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

## A Magnificent Concert of Polish Music



Above: Maestro Mirosław Jacek Błaszczyk takes a bow after the performance of Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*; a poster with the Polish flag stands at the Strathmore entrance. Below: Ambassador Wilczek congratulates soloists: baritone Tyler Duncan, soprano Esther Heidemas, mezzo-soprano Magdalena Wór, and pianist Brian Ganz.

A festive throng celebrated the centennial of Poland's regaining its independence at a concert at the Strathmore Music Center on June 2. The National Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorale, directed by guest conductor Mirosław Jacek Błaszczyk, presented a program of great Polish music, including a performance of the Washington area premiere of Karol Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, and the American premiere of Krzesimir Debski's *Hussar's Polonaise*. Pianist Brian Ganz performed Fryderyk Chopin's *Piano Concerto No. 2*. A special moment was Ignacy Jan Paderewski's *Minuet in G*, offered by the pianist as an encore.

The program began with words from Polish Ambassador Piotr Wilczek, and an exhibition of historical events surrounding Poland's rebirth provided context for non-Polish concert-goers who may have been unfamiliar with the significance of the occasion.

At a post-concert party, guests mingled with the artists, diplomats, dignitaries, members of Polish community and music lovers. In brief remarks, Ambassador Wilczek, congratulated Maestro Piotr Gajewski, founding director of the National Philharmonic, who conceived the program and oversaw its execution, on the evening's great success. Bravo and thank you to all the sponsors, coordinators, and above all the artists, for giving us such a musical treat and for letting us take pride in being Polish.

Mary Ann Evan





## Message from the President

Dear fellow PAAA members and friends,

Three new trees have been planted in front of our house to replace a large trunk of a fir that had dried out long time ago and was covered with ivy, which was a good fodder for our visiting deer. The new trees are redbuds and we are already anticipating their blooming glory come springtime. The nursery assured us that redbuds are deer resistant, as are the new pachysandras and bunches of ferns covering the incline along the driveway. But we were also warned that if we want to see the blooms in

spring, we must take care the rest of the summer that the trees are properly watered and the other plants get their required four hours daily from the sprinkler. As it is with everything, in order to get a reward, you first have to put in the necessary work.

Like landscape renewal, each issue of the newsletter gives an opportunity to assess what we have accomplished in the past few months and, more importantly, what needs to be done to ensure that our activities move along. So down the list, in March, we had an opportunity to hear an exciting concert by a renowned pianist, Thomas Pandolfi. Thanks go to Ted Mirecki for arranging the performance and writing a review for this newsletter. At the membership meeting in May, we awarded scholarships to four gifted students, two of whom are devoting their careers to the arts, an actress/theater director and a violinist. Thank you, Bill Klepczynski for doing all the publicity, establishing contacts at universities, collecting all the application materials, as well as chairing the selection process by the scholarship committee. Also at the May meeting, we heard the Polish Cultural Attaché, Jolanta Chojecka, speak about a Polish writer long associated with our city. In June, many among us took part in the concert by the National Philharmonic, celebrating the 100th anniversary of Poland's regaining of its independence. PAAA member Elzbieta Chlopecka Vande Sande, who is on the board of the National Philharmonic, put in a lot of work with the promotion of the concert and the fundraising to make it a reality. *Wianki* on the Mall, again brought together throngs of people, Polish and non-Polish to enjoy our age old traditions, music, dances and camaraderie, even under threatening skies. Thank you Laura Kafka-Price, Stasia and Olek Skrypczuk, and Richie Popso for all your singing and music; Ojczyzna, Krakowiaki and (for the first time this year) PKM dancers from Philadelphia for all the dancing; Krysia Popso for guiding the young girls through *wianki* weaving; and above all, Marianna Eckel, for putting it all together.

For the near future, there is the American Council for Polish Culture Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to attend and meet and exchange ideas with our fellow ACPC affiliates. After that, we will start preparations for the ACPC Fall Board Meeting which the PAAA will host in October. We plan to have a special event on October 12, for our members and out of town guests, so mark your calendars. Before that, there will be a concert by two young Polish cellists at the Arts Club that we helped arrange on October 5.

All that and we haven't yet touched upon our fall membership meeting and the Wigilia planned for December 9. Yes, there is a lot of work, but without it, our garden won't grow and we will wait in vain for the flowers come springtime.

Celia Larkin

### PAAA OFFICERS

#### President

Cecilia Larkin

#### 1st Vice President

Thomas Payne

#### 2nd Vice President

Rose Kobylinski

#### Treasurer

Thaddeus Mirecki

#### Recording Secretary

Mary Beth Sowa

#### Corresponding Secretary

Vacant

#### Board of Directors

Sharon Brzostowski

Bozenna Buda

Cecilia Glembocki

Gloria Klepczynski

Dr. William Klepczynski

Eve Marie Szczepanski

### PAAA NEWSLETTER

#### Editor

Cecilia Larkin

#### Editorial Assistant

Rose Kobylinski

Reprints are permitted, provided credit is given to the PAAA Newsletter, and a copy is provided to the editor.

#### Contact

paaanewsletter@gmail.com

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

# PAAA Annual Chopin Concert

This year's concert was held on March 18, 2018, at the Arts Club of Washington, a beautiful venue in a historic building (former home of President James Monroe) which is becoming a favorite for our events. The pianist was Thomas Pandolfi, a brilliant virtuoso with a special affinity for the music of Chopin, whom he calls his favorite composer. I have heard Thomas on several occasions in the past, and am increasingly impressed with each hearing.

The program was all-Chopin, except for the opening number – that was Richard Addinsell's *Warsaw Concerto*, originally written for piano and orchestra, here performed in a solo piano arrangement by Percy Grainger. It does have a Polish connection, being composed for a 1941 British film dealing with wartime Poland: *Dangerous Moonlight*, re-titled *Suicide Squadron* for its American release. In introducing it, Tom gave a most interesting presentation on the circumstances of its creation, which, entirely by design, evokes the neo-romanticism of Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Verbal presentations are a hallmark of Tom's recitals. Instead of printed program notes, he provides incisive and informative commentary on each work. Here, it was especially apropos in his introduction to the five Chopin

Etudes on the program, giving a description, in layman's terms, of the technical pianistic problem posed by each. They were performed brilliantly, with a superb virtuosic rendition of the *Revolutionary Etude*, Op. 10 No. 12, leading off the set.

The program was a most pleasing panoply of Chopin's styles – from the bravura of the etudes, polonaises and Fantaisie-Impromptu to the delicacy of nocturnes, waltzes and mazurkas. The two polonaises, A Major *Military* and A-flat *Heroic*, were taken at a slower, more stately tempo than I've heard from him (and most other pianists) in the past, which perfectly brought out the spirit of the dance rather than the mechanics of performance. Dances form the majority of Chopin's musical output, yet most of them are highly stylized, meant to be danced not with the feet, but with heart and soul. Tom's renditions fully conveyed the emotional content.

For an encore, Tom played his own arrangement of music from *Phantom of the Opera*, in a brilliant, richly textured style that brought to mind the music of Franz Liszt. All in all, a most satisfying musical experience, for which we are truly grateful.

Ted Mirecki



Photos by Celia and Dick Larkin: 1. Edleen Bergelt, ACPC President Tom Payne, Sharon Brzostowski, Edward Pawlowski, Jr., Dick Larkin; 2. Concert Chairman Ted Mirecki, Rose Kobylinski, pianist Thomas Pandolfi, Celia Larkin; 3. Guests enjoying reception; 4. Tom Pandolfi, Polish Cultural Attaché Jolanta Chojecka; 5. Concert audience; 6. Renata Greenspan, Hanna Siwiec, Elzbieta Chłopecka Vande Sande, National Philharmonic board member.

# New Officers Elected at the PAAA General Membership Meeting on May 5, 2018

## Scholarship Awards and a Presentation by Jolanta Chojecka



The PAAA General Membership and Election Meeting was held at the historic mansion of the Arts Club of Washington on May 5, 2018. The main items on the agenda included the election of new officers and presentation of scholarships to four outstanding Polish America students. Following reports from President Celia Larkin and heads of various committees on the accomplishments of the past year and plans for the future, Dr. William Klepczynski, Chairman of the PAAA Scholarship Committee, introduced the 2018 scholarship winners: Hanna Bondarewska, Dominika Dul, Christopher Jasiewicz and Olga Zeleznik. They were selected from among the applicants by a committee headed by Dr. Klepczynski and including Dr. Renata Greenspan, Dr. Laura Kafka-Price, Rose Kobylinski, Tom Payne, and Celia Larkin as ex-officio member. After presentation of scholarship certificates and checks, participants were treated to a mini concert of music by Henryk Wieniawski performed by the scholarship winner, violinist Christopher Jasiewicz.

Moving on to the elections, Ted Mirecki presented the slate of candidates proposed by the election committee. All the candidates were elected unanimously: President - Celia Larkin; 1st Vice President - Tom Payne; 2nd Vice President - Rose Kobylinski; Treasurer - Ted Mirecki; Recording Secretary - Mary Beth Sowa; and new Members of the Board, Gloria Klepczynski and Eve Marie Szczepanski. Continuing on the board are Sharon Brzostowski, Bozenna Buda, Cecilia Glembocki and Dr. William Klepczynski. New members of the audit and election committees were also elected.

After the meeting, participants heard a presentation on Tadeusz Wittlin, a Polish writer who worked at the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, and was the editor of the United States Information Agency's Polish language publication *Ameryka* which enjoyed a large circulation in Poland. The presentation took the form of a conversation between Celia Larkin and Jolanta Chojecka, the Cultural Attaché at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, and was illustrated with scenes from the film *Tadeusz Wittlin and his Moppet Show* (*Tadeusz Wittlin i jego szopka*). Mrs. Chojecka, who made the film, recalled the time she spent in America while working for Radio Free Europe and the friendship she developed during that time with Wittlin and his wife, Eugenia.

Photos, counterclockwise from top: Reception in ground floor galleries of the Arts Club; Tom Payne congratulates newly elected PAAA officers; Scholarship Chairman Bill Klepczynski and President Celia Larkin with scholarship recipients; Christopher Jasiewicz plays Wieniawski; film title page; Celia Larkin interviews Jolanta Chojecka



# Literary Corner

In place of our regular poetry column written for the PAAA Newsletter by Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka, in this issue we provide a short note and some photos from a literary event which took place at the Arts Club of Washington on June 5, called "Voice as a Bridge, A Multi-language Poetry reading". It was presented by the American Initiative for Italian Culture (AIFIC) as a global poetry evening to celebrate National Poetry Month which is designated in April every year in Washington, DC.. The annual celebration was inaugurated by the Academy of American Poets in 1996. Over the years, it has become the largest literary celebration in the world with schools, publishers, libraries, booksellers, and poets celebrating poetry's vital place in our culture. The program was introduced by Grace Cavalieri, a poet and promoter of literature. There were fifteen presenters, each reading a poem in a different original language and an English translation. Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka read the poem *Szklana góra/Glass Mountain* by Lidia Kosk. She read from the book containing this poem translated into twenty-one languages.



Above collage from the poetry evening was prepared by Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka, who is also a noted photographer. On the photos, clockwise from upper left corner: multilingual poetry readers; Danuta reading her mother's poem and her translation; Danuta with Michael Whelan, Chairman of the Arts Club Literary Committee, Laura Kafka-Price, PAAA president Celia Larkin and Andrzej Kosicki; program poster; Danuta with Celia. <https://danutakk.wordpress.com>

## 2018 PAAA Scholarship Winners



**Hanna Bondarewska** is pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Classical Acting degree at the George Washington University.

"I have been active in many endeavors to promote Polish culture in the USA. When I founded the Ambassador Theater in Washington, DC, its mission from the beginning was to promote the culture of countries around the world and to create an international dialog and understanding."



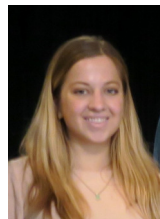
**Dominika Dul** is a student at George Washington University with a major in International Affairs and minor in Business Administration.

"The fact that I did not grow up in Poland has always motivated me to stay closely connected with my heritage. Out of all of my contributions to the Polish community, my most rewarding contribution was volunteering to auction off my paintings for the Miracle for Maria Kutyla Foundation, which was established to help a young girl who had cancer, in my Polish community to pay for her medical expenses. This was the first time that I realized the power of art and that I could use my painting skills to help others."



**Christopher Jasiewicz** is studying violin performance at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University.

"One of my main career goals is to get a job in a major symphony orchestra. Another goal is to become a professor at a music conservatory and to teach privately. As a performer, I'd like to promote music written by Polish composers such as Henryk Wieniawski. In fact, I'm currently working on Wieniawski's *Violin Concerto #2*. My current violin is made of Polish wood by the famous Polish violin maker, Wojciech Topa, whom I met in person during my last trip to Zakopane."



**Olga Zeleznik** is studying Finance and Marketing at the University of Maryland School of Business.

"For the past two years I have participated in an enriching and wonderful experience in Washington, DC, called the Festival of Wreaths or *Wianki*. [This] midsummer Polish tradition has exposed me to the Polish community and traditional Polish dances. I have also volunteered at the 'Kraków in the Capital' event in DC, sponsored by the Polish Embassy and the Polish Parish. It was inspiring to see this event enlighten and enrich through Polish food, music, and bilingual speeches."

# Wianki 2018



The audience gathered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on June 23, 2018, didn't let a little rain get in its way of witnessing one of the most beautiful celebrations of Polish culture in the Washington, DC, area. Despite threatening clouds, the PAAA's annual Festival of Wreaths or *Wianki* celebration once again proved to be a great success. To be sure, there was enough sun and the ground near the Reflecting Pool remained dry for the almost two hours it took for three dance groups to go through the entire program of traditional dances from various regions of Poland. Many in the audience came prepared with ponchos and umbrellas which, fortunately, were not needed until the end. After an introduction by Stasia Skrypczuk and welcome words from PAAA president, Celia Larkin, and *Wianki* chairman, Marianna Eckel, the program was opened with the Polish and US national anthems, beautifully sung by soprano Laura Kafka-Price. Then the Baltimore-based Polish dance group *Ojczyzna* made the entrance with a graceful and elegant *Polonez*, which was followed by a lively *Krakowiak* and a charming *Cieszyn* suite, among other impressive dances.

The hearts of the audience were warmed by the youthful *Krakowiaki* group - also from Baltimore - whose dancers included children as young as three years old. They performed several energetic dances from the Kraków region. Some of the slightly older members of the group have been dancing at *Wianki* for a number of years now and it was a joy to see them grow in their craft with assurance and grace.

A first this year, was the *Wianki* debut by the dancers of "Polskie Kółko Międzykolegialne" (The Polish Intercollegiate Club), or PKM, from Philadelphia. In existence since 1960, the PKM Polish Folk Dance Group showed its talents in exhibitions of Łowicz, Krakowski, and other regional dance styles.

The last and most anticipated activity of the evening was the procession of young girls, clad in white robes, to the edge of the Reflecting Pool, carrying their freshly made wreaths. Once the *Wianki* were laid by the water, the girls were joined by the costumed dancers as well as members of the audience in an encore of the *Polonez*, followed by other dances and singing to the music provided by the Brothers-in-Law Band. It is no doubt that this year's celebration of the beloved Polish tradition in the nation's capital reached across generations and nationalities and that all who were there took a bit of Polish cultures home with them. The rain which fell abundantly at the final dance, only added to the joy of the moment.

Mary Lastowka

# Upcoming Events

## Arts Club Friday Noon Concert will feature two young Polish cellists on October 5, 2018



Two young Polish cellists tied for first place in the **Johansen International Competition** for Young String Players (ages 13-17) at the triennial competition held March 14-17, 2018. **Krzysztof Michalski** (15 years old) from Tarnobrzeg and **Michał Balas** (16 years old) from Kraków have been invited along with other first place winners to perform in a concert on October 7, 2018 at 5 pm at the Church of the Annunciation, 3810 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC as part of the prestigious Roth Series.

In addition, the Polish cellists will perform a short recital on **October 5, 2018**, at the **Arts Club of Washington's Friday Noon Concert**. The Friday concerts are a regular event at the Arts Club and are free and open to the public. They are followed by a lunch for the artists and club members. Information on the concert and how to participate in the lunch will be emailed later as well as posted on: [www.paaa.us](http://www.paaa.us). Or you can write to;

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

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend to show support to these talented Polish musicians.

## PAAA to host the next ACPC Board Meeting

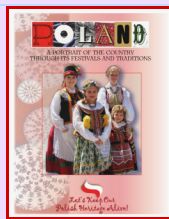
The PAAA will host the next ACPC board meeting in March 2019 at the Hilton Hotel at Tysons Corner, Virginia.

We look forward to hosting our ACPC guests and welcoming them along with the PAAA members and friends.



*Arts Club of Washington, 2017 | St. NW, Washington, DC 20006*

We are already working on the program and plan to have an event at the Arts Club of Washington. Details will be provided later and posted on [www.paaa.us](http://www.paaa.us) To volunteer to help with the event, please write to [paaanewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:paaanewsletter@gmail.com)



**POLAND - A Portrait of the Country Through its Festivals and Traditions**, a children's book published by the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, DC., is a great gift for your family and friends. It is a resource for children, their teachers and parents to help them learn about the customs and traditions of Poland. It is being distributed to various libraries, Polish schools and organizations in the U.S. and in other countries.

To order your copy, please write to:

Mrs. Cecilia Glembocki  
911 Saddleback Ct., McLean, VA 22102  
Email: [polandchildrensbook@gmail.com](mailto:polandchildrensbook@gmail.com)

Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/PolandChildrensBook/>

## Jan de Rosen Monument Fund

Jan de Rosen, was a great Polish artist and patriot, well known for his murals and mosaic works which can be seen in churches and shrines throughout the United States and in other countries, including the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, St. Matthew's Cathedral and The National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. A monument in his honor, designed by sculptor Gordon Kray, stands on the Avenue of the Meritorious at the Częstochowa Shrine in Doylestown, PA.

Now, the Polish American Arts Association has undertaken to place a smaller version of the monument at de Rosen's actual grave at the Columbia Gardens Cemetery in Arlington, VA, where he is buried according to his wishes. We need funds to complete and erect the monument. To contribute, please send your check made out to PAAA, with a note that it is for the Jan de Rosen Fund, to: Ted Mirecki, 900 N. Taylor St., No. 617, Arlington, VA 22203.

## Upcoming Events

### Arts Club of Washington Friday Noon Concert

Featuring two young Polish Cellists  
October 5, 2018

### PAAA Fall General Membership Meeting

Date to be announced

### Wigilia

Sunday, December 9, at 4 PM, at the Arts Club of Washington

Details at: [www.paaa.us](http://www.paaa.us)

**Please remember to renew your PAAA Membership**

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

