



POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION of Washington, DC

Winter 2015

NEWSLETTER

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



PAAA 2015 Chopin Concert

The Annual PAAA Chopin Concert, benefiting the PAAA Scholarship Fund, will take place at the Embassy of Poland on March 8, 2015. The performers will be the very talented young musicians from Baltimore, Elizabeth, Frances and Emmanuel Borowsky.

Hailed by the international press as "Young American Virtuosi," these three siblings have been praised worldwide for their outstanding musicianship, and have won their way into the hearts of millions of people through their concerts in North America, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe; radio and television performances; and numerous recordings. Each began performing at an early age and has accrued an impressive list of professional achievements and awards. In 2004, they jointly received the Erick Friedman Prize for Outstanding Young Musicians and performed their Carnegie Hall Debut. They have performed Pre-Olympic concerts in China, resided as Artists-in-Residence at the Dilsberg Castle as recipients of a grant from the Rhein-Neckar Kulturstiftung (Germany), and performed as soloists in the Beethoven Triple Concerto with the Young German Symphony Orchestra during their U.S. Concert Tour. Recently, under the motto "Music: The Best Bridge for All People" they toured the Baltic States, Mexico, and Cuba. They have been cultural ambassadors and promoters of great music around the world.

More about the Borowskys on page 3



Message from the President

Greetings and Happy New Year to everyone! I hope that as we enter 2015, everyone is one year wiser but not older. The PAAA looks forward to 2015 as a year to enjoy the arts and reward those in the Polish American community who are advancing arts and culture.

First of all, we are happy to be returning after a brief hiatus to the Embassy of Poland to hold our upcoming Chopin Concert, featuring the amazingly talented musical Borowsky family. The PAAA has enjoyed a special relationship with the Embassy over the past 25 years and we are indeed grateful that it is once again our host for this event. We hope that many of you will take advantage of this special opportunity to hear Polish musicians playing on Polish soil among good friends.

We have recently also cultivated a relationship with the Arts Club of Washington, DC, holding some of our events, such as General Membership meetings and Wigilia, at the historic former residence of President James Monroe. We plan to continue this in 2015. The cost of holding events at high class locales has been rising steeply over the years, but we have a great arrangement through one of our members that is affordable. Of course, we always welcome other ideas.

Wianki once again will be held at the Lincoln Memorial this summer; we don't think we can do any better with this location for its majesty and its attraction for tourists, both those from out of town who happen upon the Polish festivities, and those who are acquainted with the unique cultural facets of the Wianki program and attend each year. This event truly advances the purposes of the PAAA.

So I want to thank our organizers for their hard work and steadfastness in planning our various events. Things don't happen on their own, you need drivers to make these things happen, and we have a great cadre of people who know how to make things happen.

In this issue of our newsletter you will find two features about extraordinary artists in our midst: the above mentioned Borowsky musicians from nearby Baltimore, and PAAA member Hanna Bondarewska, artistic director of the Ambassador Theater. I hope you will take the opportunity to meet all of them and be moved by their talents at the upcoming events.

Finally, we look forward to working together with the other local Polonia organizations to our mutual benefit. We are collaborators, not competitors, so we thank organizations such as Polish American Congress, Friends of John Paul II, Polish National Alliance, and Kosciuszko Foundation for their support and promotion of our interests.

I hope to see many of you soon at Polonia-sponsored events,

Tom Payne

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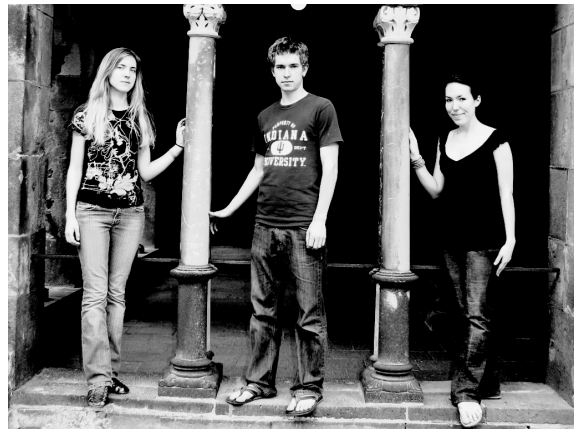
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The Borowsky Family: Born to Make Music

One could say that the Borowsky children were playing music practically from the day they were born. Or, at least, they listened to a lot of it. Not just on the radio or from records but glorious live music that filled their home. Their mother is **Cecylia Barczyk**, a highly respected cellist, with countless concerts to her credit, and a prize winner at cello competitions throughout the world. She is the Professor of Cello and the founder and director of the international Cello Festival at Towson University in Maryland. She was born in Bytom, Poland, and began studying cello at a young age. She studied at the Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw and the Moscow Conservatory of Music. In 1977, she went to study at Yale School of Music and in 1981 applied for political asylum in the United States saying that "I can't live in a country without democracy. My hopes have been with the Solidarity movement. To this end I have given many concerts in its support. And I want to continue my mission to assist the people of Poland in their struggle." The children's father, **Charles Karol H. Borowsky**, a social scientist, has organized many international conferences and festivals dedicated to the promotion of music as a tool for cultural, social, and economic progress. He also plays the harmonica and occasionally performs with his family. Together the family traveled and performed around the world. On Sunday, March 8, we will be able to hear the three younger Borowsky's at the Polish Embassy, performing in the PAAA Chopin Concert.

Elizabeth Borowsky enjoys a versatile musical career as a solo and collaborative pianist, composer, educator, speaker, and recording artist. "Elizabeth's performance and personality dismiss any preconceptions of classical music as elite, or being music of the past. She is a vibrant and engaging performer and can draw even the most reluctant audience member into her spell." She has been a featured performer at such distinguished venues as Carnegie Hall and The Kennedy Center, and has performed recitals and concerts as soloist with orchestras in the United States, Europe, and Asia. She is a member of faculty and the Executive Director of the International Music Institute and Festival USA. She has taught at Indiana University, Morgan State University, and Towson University. She is the Director of Piano Prodigies, LLC.

Cellist **Frances Borowsky** performed her New York Debut at Carnegie Hall at the age of twelve as a recipient of the Erick Friedman Prize for Outstanding Young Musicians. She has performed in over twenty countries. In 2011, she performed the Dohnanyi Piano Quintet with renowned pianist Brian Ganz. Her many awards include the Grace Clagett Ranney Prize for excellence in chamber music at The Peabody Institute (2013), first prizes in the Mary Graham Lasley Concerto Competition (2013), Baltimore Music Club Competition (2010), and Peggy Friedman – Yale Gordon Competition (2008), as well as top honors in other competitions. Frances studied at Honors College of Towson University on a full scholarship. She completed her graduate studies at the Peabody Institute and subsequently entered a post-graduate program at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, Germany. She was heralded by the press as "a brilliant young musician with a great personality."



"It's hard to find a family more musically gifted than the Borowskys. They've been given a rock star reception in countless countries. International press has given them rave reviews. It takes a while to realize when reading the glowing testimonials, however, that the music they're playing isn't the next big thing. It's classical." (The Towerlight)

Emmanuel Borowsky has thrilled crowds around the world since a young age. At age ten, he performed Vivaldi's A-minor concerto before a sold-out audience of over 9,000 people in Washington D.C.'s National Shrine and was rewarded with a massive standing ovation and the Antonio Vivaldi Medal. At age thirteen, he represented North America at the UNESCO World Child Prodigies Concert in Amman, Jordan, and was honored with the distinguished Cultural Achievement Award. At fifteen, he was selected to perform on the prestigious International Public Radio Show "From the Top." His performance was aired by over 250 stations in the USA and abroad. At eighteen, he performed for an audience of over 100,000 people at the World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany. Among the awards Emmanuel has received are the Pro Musica Award, Merit Award from the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, and Best Classical CD 1999 (for Pearls of Music). He is the winner of the Maryland Young Talent Competition and the Montpelier Performing Arts Center Classical Recital Competition. Emmanuel has studied at the Icelandic Academy of the Arts and Indiana University Bloomington. He is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Music degree at the University of Maryland.

Hanna Bondarewska: Ambassador on Stage

By Kasia Raniś

When you first meet Hanna Bondarewska, the Artistic Director of the Ambassador Theater International Cultural Center (ATICC), you see her as a typical artist: spontaneous, energetic, passionate, perhaps slightly disconnected from reality... yet, full of practical ideas that can turn a seemingly impossible dream into reality.

She grew up in Warsaw in a home where attending theater, concerts and cultural events was part of regularly practiced family traditions. As a child, she performed in dance groups and school theater productions where her native talents were quickly recognized and she soon appeared on professional stage. She took her first acting steps in the Ochota Theater in Warsaw, under the watchful eyes of the prominent Polish film and theater director Jan Machulski and his wife Halina, known from multiple film and theater roles. Pursuing her passion, Hanna received her acting diploma from the Polish Ministry of Culture and incarnated various roles on stages throughout Poland, from Warsaw, Białystok, Olsztyn, Katowice to Toruń, among many others.

When eventually life took her to America in early 1990s, she continued to hone her acting, as well as directorial and management, skills in Washington, DC, Florida, and New York. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Mt. Vernon College of the George Washington University and later worked as Executive Director at the Institute for Education. She performed at Washington Shakespeare Theater, Synetic Theater, Spectrum, The New York Polish Theater, Hippodrome and Acrosstown Theaters in Florida, to name a few.

However, Hanna's lifelong dream was to open her own theater and in 2008, she turned that dream into reality. While she was teaching acting to young students, one day, a four-year old pupil overheard the conversation his teacher had with his parents, wishfully "dreaming" out loud: "If only each person living in America spared one dollar for my theater...". Little Thomas came up to her, pulled a dollar bill from his pocket and said "Here is my dollar Miss Hanna, please start the theater". She dared

not to disappoint such hope and inspiration from a child.

The establishment of Ambassador Theater International Cultural Center was truly a leap of faith. In a city like Washington, which teems with theaters big and small, each competing for audiences and financial support, it was indeed an act of courage to pursue such an endeavor. Yet, it was done and after more than five years, Hanna's theater continues to exist and is recognized as an important cultural institution. ATICC partnered with various embassies as well as organizations such as Institute for Education, Kosciuszko Foundation, American and George Washington Universities, to name a few. What started with that one dollar bill attracted others to join and become regular contributors. Of course, there is a constant need to develop more support in order to thrive and present interesting works from around the world and develop an international cultural dialog.



*Hanna Bondarewska as Negma Sadiq
in "The Visitor" by Alfred Farag*

The Ambassador Theater and its performances target audiences of all ages while the ATICC's education arm embraces children and youth. Its first highly recognized undertaking was a year-round in-school program put together with collaboration of Hanna Reiter, the wife of former Ambassador, Janusz Reiter at the Polish Embassy, the Washington Performing Arts Society, Embassy Adoption Program, and DC Public Schools. It culminated in the production called "Poland the Beautiful: An Imaginary Flight."

At the initiative of Poland's First Lady, Maria Kaczyńska, the students were rewarded with a trip to Poland, where they visited Warsaw, Krakow, Toruń, Mazury, climbed the Sudeten Mountains, and performed at the Presidential Palace, as well as at other places across the country. Today, the center offers participation in drama classes, summer camps, in-school outreach programs and educational workshops. Its mission is to help students become well educated through the use of interactive learning method through theater games and art, and to develop essential communications skills. ATICC's work also comprises discussions, play readings, bare bone productions and Literary Cafés projects, offering evenings of poetry and music.



Scene from "Summer at Nohant" by Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz

Hanna's Polish roots are often reflected in ATICC's activities. The first theater production at the Ambassador was the DC premiere of Sławomir Mrożek's Polish masterpiece "Out at Sea" (*Na pełnym morzu*). As of today, the theater boasts fifteen premieres, including many Polish plays, such as "The Forefathers" (*Dziady*) by Adam Mickiewicz, "The Madman and the Nun" (*Wariat i Zakonnica*) by Stanisław Witkiewicz (aka Witkacy), or "The Third Breast" (*Trzecia Piersć*) by Ireneusz Iredyński. The next production will feature "The Trap" (*Pułapka*) by the internationally acclaimed and highly respected Polish poet, Tadeusz Różewicz, who died in April 2014.

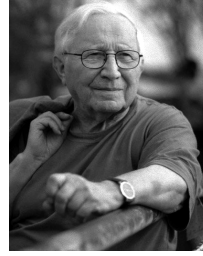
As the head of ATICC, Hanna Bondarewska wears many hats: she is a business manager, developer, artistic director, box office manager, house manager, production manager, marketing director, PR and an actress herself. She says her acting skills, determination and enormous energy derived from her parents and God: "I believe, they were essential to get the Ambassador Theater on its feet and steadily proceed with its mission. I believe in honesty and love; these are the main driving forces behind it all. Passion!!!!!"

Hanna Bondarewska is a member of the Polish American Arts Association. For more information about her, the ATICC and all the wonderful people involved in it, see: <http://www.aticc.org/home/> If you like what you see and want to invest in this endeavor, there is a "Donate Now" button you can click on and make your tax-deductible contribution.



Hanna with young actors after the performance of "The legend of the Wawel Dragon"

Tadeusz Różewicz



Tadeusz Różewicz was born in Radomsko, Poland, on October 9, 1921. During World War II, he was a soldier in the Home Army, the underground resistance movement in occupied Poland. For two years, he fought in a guerrilla unit and wrote his first poems. After studying the history of art at university in Krakow, he began to publish both poetry and plays. His first volumes of poetry were *Anxiety* (1947) and *The Red Glove* (1948). After 1956, he primarily wrote plays, including *The Card Index*, *The Witnesses or Our Little Stabilization*, and *The Old Woman Broods*. In 1999, he published a collection of poems, family documents, photos and essays entitled *Mother Departs*, which won the Nike prize, the most eminent Polish literary award. He died on April 24, 2014, at the age of 92.

Tadeusz Różewicz is widely considered one of Poland's most important and influential writers. His works tend to focus on universal themes, but speak particularly to the generation of Polish adults whose memories of youth, like his own, are filled with the horrifying experiences of World War II. Różewicz often scorns the conventional techniques and philosophies of literature and frequently questions the validity of poetry itself. Różewicz explored the life of one of his literary heroes, Franz Kafka, in the loosely biographical play *The Trap* (1982). The play also depicts the demise of artistic creativity, played out against visions of the impending "final solution"—Hitler's largely executed plan for the systematic murder of all Jews in Europe.

Washington audiences will have the opportunity to see *The Trap* in a production by the Ambassador Theater, scheduled for May-June 2015. It will be presented in the original translation by Adam Czerniawski, Polish poet, essayist, and author of short stories, now living in Wales.

The Ambassador Theater presents
"The Trap"
by Tadeusz Różewicz

May 28 - June 21
Thu-Sat at 8 pm, Sun at 2 PM

George Washington University, Building XX
814 20th Street NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20052

<http://www.aticc.org/home/upcoming-the-trap>



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Photos: 1, 3, 9: Reception and dinner; 2. Richard Wiermanski and Bozena Plawner; 4. Kasia Kaczmarek sings kolędy with her daughter; 5. Ted Mirecki and Rose Kobylinski welcome guests; 6. Cristina Mielczarek, Celia Larkin and Sharon Brzostowski; 7. Richard Okreglak and Jim Trefil; 8. PAAA President Tom Payne with Spencer Meyer and Hanna Siwicka; 10. Father Majka distributes oplatek; 11. Barbara Saunders, Cristina and Waldemar Mielczarek; 12. Basia and Marta Kaczmarek announce raffle winners with Connie Donnely; 13 Alvin Smithson and Józef Surowiec perform; 14. John and Marianna Eckel, Rose Kobylinski; 15. Cassandra Metzger, Cecilia Garmandie, Justyna Siwica, Maria Quas Penno, Susanne Lotarski; 16. Sylvia Surowiec and Michaela Smithson listen to their fathers perform.



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Wigilia at the Arts Club

The Arts Club of Washington provided a festive setting for the Polish American Arts Association's annual Wigilia celebration on December 7, 2014. PAAA members and guest sipped wine and mingled in the parlors of the historic Monroe House, elegantly festooned with Christmas decorations. When it was time to start the Wigilia supper, Father Philip Majka, in keeping with the Polish tradition, asked the youngest child in the room to look out of the window to see if the first star has appeared. He then blessed the opłatek and passed it around for everyone to share while exchanging special wishes before setting down to enjoy the feast. The traditional Polish dishes, prepared by the Arts Club staff, included mushroom soup, herring salad, noodles with poppy seed sauce, fish, sauerkraut and pierogi. The poppy seed cake, piernik and fruit compote satisfied everyone's sweet tooth.

Following dinner, our guest artists took the stage for a musical program. Alvin Smithson, well known to theater and concert going audiences around Washington, performed several pieces on the piano, including the spirited Minuet in G by Ignacy Jan Paderewski, some of his own music, and an arrangement of Christmas music in the style of Fryderyk Chopin. He was then joined by Józef Surowiec, baritone known to many of those present from

his past appearances at the Polish Embassy and other venues around Baltimore and Washington, performed several Polish songs by Moniuszko, Rutkowski, Karłowicz and Niewiadomski. The audience rewarded the two artists with boisterous applause and then joined them in singing a full repertoire of traditional Polish Kolędy.

There was also a raffle, organized by Sharon Brzostowski, with gifts donated by PAAA board members. The winners were announced by the very youngest Wigilia attendees, Basia and Marta Kaczmarek. All those who came appeared to enjoy themselves tremendously and we heard many remarks about the warmth and home-like atmosphere of the Arts Club, the wonderful food and great entertainment. I would like to thank the Wigilia Committee members: Marianna Eckel and Rose Kobylinski for help in making arrangements, Sharon Brzostowski for bringing opłatek and making lace angels for guests to take home, Ted Mirecki for overseeing reservations and Eve Marie Szczepanski for donating the exquisite table centerpieces. Special thanks go to Jameson Freeman, our Arts Club host, Christopher Glenn, General Manager, and Kevin Kievit, Executive Chef. And, of course, thank you all for being there and keeping the Polish traditions alive.

Celia Larkin, Wigilia Chairman

Photos on preceding page by Christopher Glenn and Celia Larkin

Dear PAAA members and Friends,

As we make plans to celebrate the Polish American Arts Association Golden Jubilee in 2016, we would like to ask you to share with us any mementos, photographs, or simply memories you may have collected over the years as you participated in the many events sponsored by our organization. Whether you are a long time member or just joined recently, your memories and stories of what being part of PAAA means to you are equally important. Do you remember a special person you met through the PAAA? Maybe you found a great friend for life, even a spouse. Yes, it happens sometimes. Did you join because some person invited you and that made you learn more about and appreciate Polish culture? Tell us about that person and the experiences you had. Did you know a past president of PAAA who is now gone but who made a difference in the organization and in your life? We will be publishing the most interesting stories in the newsletter throughout the year and beyond.

We are also interested in old programs from events and other mementos, especially photographs. The PAAA is trying to supplement its archives with materials that may have been lost but which some people may have kept. If you are one of those, please let us know. Hard copy photographs will be scanned and originals returned to you if you wish.

Please send your stories and photos to: paaanewsletter@gmail.com. Other material can be sent to: Polish American Arts Association, P.O. Box 9442, Washington DC 20016

Thank you all. We look forward to hearing from you.

Upcoming Events

Chopin Concert

Benefiting the PAAA Scholarship Fund
Sunday, March 8, 2014 at 4:00 PM, at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland
See article on the front page for details.
For information and tickets call: 703-241-1149

PAAA General Membership and Election Meeting

Sunday, May 24, 2015, at the Arts Club of Washington.

Ambassador Theater presents The Trap by Tadeusz Różewicz

May 28 - June 21, 2015, at George Washington University
See details on page five.

Wianki

Annual celebration of Polish traditions of St. John's night with dancing, singing and making of wreaths. On the National Mall, Saturday, June 20, 2015

Please remember to renew your PAAA Membership

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

