



POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION of Washington, DC

Winter 2018

NEWSLETTER

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

Remembering Jan Henryk de Rosen

By Mary Lubienski Flanagan

Jan Henryk de Rosen is one of the great mural artists of the 20th century. He was born in Russia occupied Warsaw, Poland, on February 25, 1891, to a wealthy Jewish family that had converted to Calvinism in the 19th century. Later in life, Jan Henryk converted to Catholicism. His father was a Polish historical and genre painter who worked at the court of the Czars of Russia but whose work was dedicated mostly to Polish military history. Jan Henryk went to live in France early in his childhood and later attended the universities of Paris and Lausanne, Switzerland. During the First World War, he enlisted in the French Army where he served as a liaison between the French and British forces and as military attaché to the Polish government. For his military services he was awarded the Polish *Virtuti Militari* Cross of Valour, French *Légion d'Honneur* and *Croix de Guerre*. After the war ended, de Rosen became a military advisor and deputy to Ignacy Jan Paderewski (who was a distant relative) involved in the Geneva Peace Talks.

In October 1921, his military service ended and he began working in the Foreign Ministry in Warsaw. In his spare time he took steps to perfect his artistic talent. After two years, he left the diplomatic service to devote his time fully to his art. In December 1923, he joined several other artists (Grupa 12) in an exhibition in Warsaw. As a result he was recognized as a talented artist and given his first commission, the beautification of the Armenian/Byzantine-style Cathedral in Lwów. That, in turn, led to a commission from Pope Pius XI to paint two murals for his private chapel in Castel Gandolfo near Rome. He soon became a successful, established artist.

Jan Henryk came to the United States in 1938 at the request of the Polish Ambassador Count Jerzy Potocki to paint murals at the Polish Embassy in Washington showing King Jan III Sobieski at Vienna, and was also commissioned to paint two murals for the Polish Pavilion at the 1939 World's Fair in New York. When World War II began with the invasion of Poland by the Nazis, he stayed on in America and was unable to return to his homeland after the communist takeover when the war ended. From 1939 until 1949, he was a research professor of liturgical art at Catholic University of America. He did paintings in the Washington Cathedral and in churches in the Washington area and elsewhere in the country, and an enormous mosaic at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.



Detail from "Poland Ever Faithful" mural originally painted for the Holy Family Church in Pittsburgh, now at Our Lady of Czestochowa Shrine in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

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Message from the President

Dear fellow PAAA members and friends,

This year, the Polish American Arts Association joins other Polish organizations and Poles everywhere in observing the 100th anniversary of Poland's independence, which was regained in 1918. For 123 years before that, Poland's place on the map was marked with names of occupying powers. They remained occupiers because try as they may, they could never become true rulers of the nation that steadfastly resisted obliteration of its language, history, culture and national identity. In that sense, Poland has remained independent throughout its more than one thousand year's of existence. Whether in its own occupied land or abroad, Polish culture remained alive throughout: Fryderyk Chopin composed *mazurkas* and *polonaises* in France, Adam Mickiewicz wrote his *Pan Tadeusz*, Henryk Sienkiewicz his *Trilogy* and the Nobel Prize winning *Quo Vadis*, artists painted, actors acted, and singers sang in Polish while in exile.

Even during the last one hundred years, independence was fragile. Twenty years after the end of World War I, after Poland returned to the map, new occupiers, first the Nazis and then the Soviets, tried to squash the nation, and many Poles found themselves in exile again. This is illustrated by what happened to painter Jan de Rosen, the subject of our front page article, a man who was an accomplished painter in Poland but then found himself in America and was not able to return because of war and occupation. He used his tremendous talent and skills to create some of the most magnificent paintings and mosaics in churches and other buildings throughout the U.S.

At the PAAA meeting on May 6, Jolanta Chojecka, the Cultural Attaché at the Polish Embassy, will speak and show a film about the Polish writer Tadeusz Wittlin who lived and worked here in Washington and who wrote books that could not be published in Poland, among others, *Time Stopped at 6:30* about the Soviet murder of Polish officers at Katyń. Like Wittlin, Mrs. Chojecka also worked for several years at Radio Free Europe in the U.S. and France, before returning to Poland after the fall of communism.

Yes, it does behoove us to join in the celebrations of Poland's hundred years of independence, as well as its thousand plus years of history, culture and indomitable spirit. Go to the concert at Strathmore on June 2, and listen to the glorious music of Fryderyk Chopin, Karol Szymanowski and Krzesimir Debski. Go to an exhibit and listen to a lecture on poet Zbigniew Herbert planned for this fall. Attend *Wianki* at the Lincoln Memorial and soak in the joy of the Polish folk traditions, songs and dances. Attend the banquet where Poles will gather to enjoy each other's company and contemplate the part they play in the Polish community here and in Poland. Support these endeavors financially but, most of all, with your presence.

Independence of the nation has not always been easy to maintain but, as the history of Poland shows, it can survive in the hearts of its compatriots.

Cecilia Larkin

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Contact
paaanewsletter@gmail.com

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PAAA Chopin Concert at the Arts Club Of Washington Pianist Thomas Pandolfi

The featured artist at PAAA's 2018 Chopin Concert, pianist **THOMAS PANDOLFI**, is an exciting virtuoso who, with each passing season, is becoming more and more sought after by audiences worldwide, and showered with superlatives by critics for his passionate artistry and amazing technique.

A Washington, D.C., native, Pandolfi is a prolific performer, appearing regularly in this area and throughout the country. During the 2017-18 season, he is making his debut with the Piedmont Symphony and the Evanston Symphony, and performing in return engagements with The Wilson Symphony, The Ohio Valley Symphony, the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, the McLean Symphony and Symphonicity; he continues a very busy recital touring schedule from coast to coast as well, encompassing more than 20 states.

International concerts have carried Thomas across the globe to China and Europe; last season, he also made his Canadian debut in British Columbia.

In addition to performing the great masterworks of the piano literature, Thomas is a masterful crossover artist--his performances of Simon Proctor's *James Bond Concerto*, Richard Addinsell's *Warsaw Concerto*, and George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* are regularly in demand. Pandolfi is a gifted arranger, and his own virtuosic transcriptions of music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, Leonard Bernstein, Burt Bacharach and others are immensely popular with concert presenters and audiences alike.

A graduate of The Juilliard School, Pandolfi earned both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees as a scholarship student. He has recorded and released 11 CDs, and is the proud father of a wonderful son and daughter.

The program on March 18 at the Arts Club of Washington includes an array of favorite compositions by Fryderyk Chopin, as well as Addinsell's *Warsaw Concerto*.



Cultural Attaché Jolanta Chojecka Guest Speaker at the May 6, 2018, PAAA Membership Meeting



Jolanta Chojecka, the new Cultural Attaché at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, will be the guest speaker at the Polish American Arts Association's Membership Meeting on May 6, 2018, at the Arts Club of Washington.

During the 1980s, Mrs. Chojecka worked as a journalist at Radio Free Europe in New York and later in Paris. In 1991, she returned to Poland and continued working as press journalist, eventually branching out to screenwriting and film making. She wrote scripts for and produced films for Polish TV, mainly on historical topics, such as: *Casimir Pulaski – the Hero of Two Nations*, film about Radio Free Europe, Colonel Ryszard Kukliński, Jan Nowak Jeziorański and others. In 2001, she took a diplomatic assignment in Switzerland as a cultural attaché and later worked as a diplomat in the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations Office in Geneva. Since January of this year, she is the first counselor in the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington, D.C., dealing with cultural, science and information affairs.

At the PAAA meeting on May 6, Mrs. Chojecka will provide a short lecture about 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. Mrs. Chojecka made a film about him, entitled *Tadeusz Wittlin and his Moppet Show* (Tadeusz Wittlin i jego szopka). She will show some scenes from this film and recall her friendship with Wittlin and his wife, Eugenia.

Everyone is invited to attend the meeting which will also include presentation of PAAA scholarships and election of officers. A reception at the conclusion will give an opportunity to meet and talk with Mrs. Chojecka.

PAAA and KF Wigilia 2017

The Polish American Arts Association Wigilia on December 10, 2017, was celebrated jointly with the Kościuszko Foundation's Washington Office. The reason was simple: there are more Polish organizations in our area than there are pre-Christmas weekends in December, and many people who belong to more than one of them, want to gather with their friends and fellow members during the holiday season. So a joint gathering was a logical solution and worked perfectly. The festively decorated, but at the same time cozy Arts Club of Washington, welcomed close to a hundred guests who enjoyed the Christmas decorations on two floors of the James Monroe House and then sat down to dinner at tables set in two downstairs parlors. PAAA President Celia Larkin welcomed guests and introduced her co-hosts from the Kościuszko Foundation, Director Barbara Bernhardt and President of the D.C. Chapter, Cecilia Kocinski-Mulder, and representatives of other Polish organizations, Brian Buckoski of the Polish National Alliance, Ted Mirecki, President of the Polish American Congress and Tom Payne, President of the American Council for Polish Culture. The latter two are also longtime officers of the PAAA.

We had a number of families with young children, so there was no problem keeping the tradition of the very youngest ones looking out the window to see the first star before supper could be started. Of course, being in the middle of the city, our *duszpasterz*, Father Philip Majka, gave dispensation and allowed for a nearby street light to serve as the star.

Before calling for food to be served, Father Majka blessed the traditional *oplatek* for all to share while exchanging wishes.

The evening's entertainment was provided by soprano Laura Kafka-Price, whose performance included several Polish *kolędy* and *pastorałki* arranged especially for her by composer Dennis Ritz. She was beautifully accompanied by pianist Alvin Smithson and oboist Caleb Bradley. At the end, the artists on stage asked all those present to join them in singing traditional Polish *kolędy* and Christmas songs in English. Everyone sounded delightful and delighted.

In the spirit of gift giving, each child received a copy of the PAAA published book *Poland, Portrait of the Country* and everyone was treated to a bag of Polish candy donated by Krystyna Ahrens of the Kielbasa Factory. Additional copies of the book were available for purchase for Christmas giving, as well as copies of several KF publications. The beautifully arranged evening was the result of hard work by Wigilia Chairman Renata Greenspan and committee members: Basia Bernhardt - KF publicity; Rose Kobylinski – overall assistance with arrangements; Celia Larkin - invitations and program; Ted Mirecki – reservations; and Eve Marie Szczepanski - centerpieces. Special thanks to Father Majka for his gift of *oplatek* for sharing and to take home. We also thank Yann Hanrotte, General Manager of the Arts Club and Ken Kievit, Executive Chef, and Polish Market of Vienna which provided the delicious Polish pastries.



1. KF DC Office President Cecilia Kocinski-Mulder, Dick Larkin, Bozenna Plawner, Connie Donnelly and Mary Piergies greet guests at the display of PAAA and KF publications; 2. PAAA President Celia Larkin, KF Director Basia Bernhardt and Wigilia Chairman Renata Greenspan; 3. Father Majka passes *oplatek*; 4. A family poses in the upstairs parlor; 5. Alvin Smithson, Laura Kafka-Price and Caleb Bradley on stage; 6. Wigilia guests enjoying the evening.

Photos by Celia & Dick Larkin. More photos at www.paaa.us/photogallery.htm

Święconka

The Legend of the Red Egg and Easter Basket

Święconka, meaning “the blessing of the Easter baskets,” is one of the most enduring and beloved Polish traditions on Holy Saturday.

We asked the Reverend Canon Philip S. Majka to give us his take on the Easter basket tradition and here is what he said.

“Legends convey a concept to be pondered. When St. Mary Magdalena went to Christ’s tomb that first Easter morning to anoint His body, she brought along a basket of food which contained some boiled eggs to eat. When she arrived at the tomb, the stone was rolled away and when she looked at her basket, she saw that the eggs were red. Thus, the custom of the Easter breakfast basket began. Its contents have a special meaning: the egg is a symbol of life, creation and new birth; the Easter bread is Christ the bread of life; the blessed salt symbolizes our challenge to be the salt of the earth and the candle, to be the Light of the World. The main item in the basket is the Lamb, molded from butter or made of sugar, the symbol of Christ as the Lamb of God. There is also a bottle of water, to be blessed as a symbol of the holy Baptism and the second coming of Christ.”



The Święconka tradition and many other Easter customs are described in PAAA’s children’s book *Poland, Portrait of the Country Through its Festivals and Traditions*. For information on how to order, write to:

polandchildrensbook@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/PolandChildrensBook/

Concert Celebrating 100th Anniversary of Poland’s Independence

Elżbietaa Vande Sande

Year 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of Poland’s independence. This is a very important milestone. It seems almost unimaginable today that Poland was totally wiped off of the face of the map for 123 years, before reemerging as a free nation in 1918. And yet, it happened. And the story might not have had a happy ending but for the efforts of such statesmen as the great Polish pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski (who became the reborn Poland’s first prime minister) and, of course, the American president, Woodrow Wilson, who articulated the “Fourteen Points” necessary for enduring peace, including that “an independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Poland’s independence, National Philharmonic’s Polish-American Maestro Piotr Gajewski has put together a program of great Polish music to be performed on Saturday, June 2, at the Music Center at Strathmore. Included on the program are Fryderyk Chopin’s *Piano Concerto No. 2*, with pianist Brian Ganz; the Washington Area premiere of Karol Szymanowski’s *Stabat Mater*, with soprano Esther Heideman, mezzo-soprano, Magdalena Wór and baritone Tyler Duncan; and the American premiere of Krzesimir Debski’s *Hussars’ Polonaise*, from the epic Polish film *With Fire and Sword* - all under the direction of conductor Mirosław Jacek Błaszczyk, the general and artistic director of the Silesian Philharmonic, and also the artistic director of Podlaska Philharmonic and Polish Orchestra Sinfonia Iuventus.

This is an impressive effort and a most fitting way to mark the milestone anniversary. It is also an opportunity for members of Polonia to come together and celebrate Polish culture and Polish music. Bravo to Maestro Gajewski and the National Philharmonic for this tremendous undertaking.

We need to remember, though, that such effort needs a substantial financial input. While the Polish Embassy has pledged some support for this program, in the American tradition, the National Philharmonic’s centennial celebration primarily relies on individual sponsors and contributors. Many in the Polish community have already contributed handsomely; however, it is up to all of us to do our part and show support for this important celebration. The easiest way to contribute is online at:

<http://www.nationalphilharmonic.org/support/donate-now.aspx>

Simply select the amount of your contribution, and be sure to include a note “IN SUPPORT OF POLAND’S INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION” in the comment tab. (Alternately, you can mail a check to National Philharmonic, Attn: Poland’s Independence Celebration, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda, MD 20852.)

While your contribution is very much appreciated, it just as important that everyone in the Polish community attend the concert on June 2. Please reserve your seat and join us in celebrating a milestone in Poland’s history with its great music.

To order tickets go to: www.strathmore.org/events-and-tickets/np-polish-independence-anniversary

Literary Corner by Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka



Polish-born poet Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka is the author, translator, and editor of several books of poems in English and Polish, including the most recent *Szklana góra/Glass Mountain*. She has translated poems by Lidia Kosk and other Polish, American, and Catalan poets. She is co-editor of the literary journal *Loch Raven Review*. Her book *Oblige the Light* won the fifth Clarinda Harriss Poetry Prize. <https://danutakk.wordpress.com>

Wisława Szymborska was a Polish poet, essayist, translator, and recipient of the 1996 Nobel Prize in Literature. On Oct. 3, 2016, I attended a very special event at “Astoria,” the writers’ lodge in Zakopane - a resort town in the Polish Tatra mountains - where 20 years earlier Szymborska had received news of having been awarded the Nobel Prize. On this occasion, actors with the “Scena A2” Theater performed 40 of Szymborska’s poems. Michał Rusinek, her secretary of 15 years, the president of Szymborska Foundation, a writer and translator, shared with us his most recent book *Nic zwyczajnego. O Wisławie Szymborskiej* (*Nothing Ordinary. About Wisława Szymborska*). Lively discussion and audience participation followed. I shared how the poet and the place are close to my heart: I have vacationed at “Astoria” many times. When Szymborska died in 2012, we at the *Loch Raven Review* celebrated her with four poems, selected from her collections spanning three decades, and their English renditions by five different translators, including mine: <http://www.lochravenreview.net/2012Spring/szymborska.html>

A Note

Life — the only way
to grow leaves,
catch a breath on the sand,
rise on wings;

to be a dog,
or to stroke a dog’s warm fur;

to tell pain
from everything that is not pain;

to inhabit events,
get lost in the sights,
look for the smallest among mistakes.

An exceptional chance
to remember for a while,
what was discussed
when the lights were out;

and to trip over a stone
at least once,
get drenched in some rain,
lose keys in the grass;

and let the eyes follow a spark in the wind;

and perpetually not to know
something important.

Notatka

Życie – jedyny sposób,
żeby obrastać liśćmi,
łapać oddech na piasku,
wzlatywać na skrzydłach;

być psem,
albo głaskać go po ciepłej sierści;

odróżniać ból
od wszystkiego, co nim nie jest;

mieścić się w wydarzeniach,
podziewać w widokach,
poszukiwać najmniejszej między omyłkami.

Wyjątkowa okazja,
żeby przez chwilę pamiętać,
o czym się rozmawiało
przy zgaszonej lampie;

i żeby raz przynajmniej
potknąć się o kamień,
zmoknąć na którymś deszczu,
zgubić klucze w trawie;

i wodzić wzrokiem za iskrą na wietrze;

i bez ustanku czegoś ważnego
nie wiedzieć.

From the collection *Chwila (Moment)*
Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2002

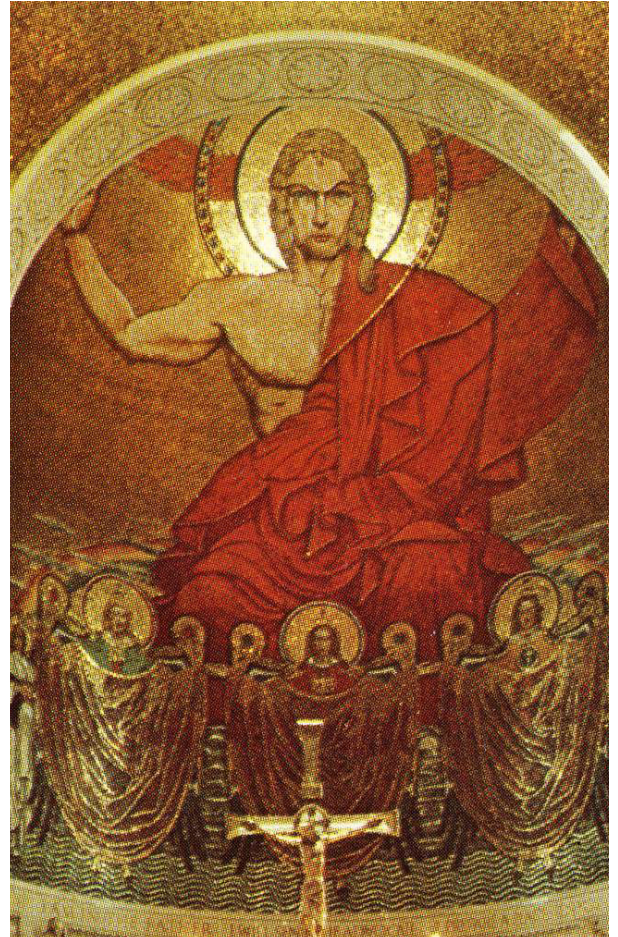
Jan de Rosen *Continued from page 1*

Throughout, he was interested and involved in Polish American organizations. He was a founding member of the Pittsburgh Polish Arts League and when he moved to the Washington area, he was made an Honorary Member of the Polish American Arts Association.

De Rosen's life is a story of one born to great wealth and privilege who had to leave much of it behind and make a life in a foreign land. He began as an artist in Poland and continued his work in the United States. Despite a prolific artistic output, he died without amassing any wealth. He never lost his humility and gentleness. He was an intellectual and a very talented artist who always remained true to his principles. Although he died in poverty, he was a wealthy man in his accomplishments and legacy.

A member of PAAA until his death in 1982, Jan de Rosen worked and participated in many of our events, as often as his health and strength allowed. He is one of the great mural artists of the 20th century. His beautiful works can be found in churches and public buildings from coast to coast where they inspire admiration and spiritual experiences in the viewer.

An expanded story of the life of this fascinating artist can be found in the beautifully illustrated book *With Paintbrush and Sword, The life and Works of Jan Henryk de Rosen*. Copies of the book are available for a donation of \$25 or more to the Jan de Rosen Memorial Fund. See the box below on how to contribute.



Above right: Christ in Majesty by Jan Henryk de Rosen. This centerpiece of the Great Upper Church of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., at 3,600 square feet and containing nearly 3 million tiles, is one of the largest mosaics of Jesus in the world. De Rosen designed the image in the Eastern Christian tradition, in keeping with the Byzantine architecture of the Basilica, with distinctly post-Renaissance character more familiar to the Western Church. Jesus' strong youthful face and expression are consonant with the earliest images in the Roman catacombs. Below right: Jan de Rosen working in his studio in Washington, D.C.

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

PAAA Chopin Concert

Benefiting the PAAA Scholarship Fund
Sunday, March 18, 2018 at 4:00PM at the Arts Club of Washington
See article inside for details

PAAA General Membership Meeting

Sunday, May 6, 2018 at the Arts Club of Washington

Wianki Festival

Celebration of Polish traditions of St. John's night, June 23, 2018
The Reflecting Pool at the Lincoln Memorial

Details at: www.paaa.us

Please remember to renew your PAAA Membership

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

