



Polish Journey

Newsletter of the Polish Cultural Council • Vol. 16 • Winter/Spring 2018

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,
As a volunteer run organization, it's impossible to survive without the financial and time support of our members. In November, we staged a Polish Film Festival at the Regent Square theatre. I wanted to give all of you an update as to how we did.

For this project, we were able to raise approximately \$8,000 from individuals as well as institutional donors. Twenty-five members and three organizations stepped up to the plate in order to make this possible. Remember, a donation to the PCC is a federal tax-deductible gift.

So what does it cost to put on a film festival? Each of the five films this year costs about \$1,000 to present, plus transportation costs. We welcomed two Polish directors from festivals in Denver and Rochester. Their costs included a small honorarium, as well as airline travel, meals and hotel, and two receptions. These important guests help to distinguish

the Polish Film Festival from other festivals and make it more interesting. Since the Three Rivers Film Festival was cancelled this year, we had to hire our own promotion team who produced all of the printed and electronic ads, which added about another \$1,000. Although final numbers are not in, we basically broke even.

So, was the festival a success? Our stated mission is to showcase the best in Polish culture. Our annual involvement in Polish film gives many people of non-Polish background their first glimpse into experiencing Polish cinema, culture and art. About 50% of the attendees were not of Polish-American background and they came to the festival to discover Polish cinema. The PCC's outreach through "Meet up", website and printed materials helped in introducing well over 300 people to Polish cinema. In addition, we had a number of people volunteering their time to help transport our directors, work on

technical film issues, buy and prepare the food for the receptions and make sure everything met not only our expectations, but also our members' and the public's. We also got very nice feedback regarding the talks by the two directors.

Kudos to Maria Staszkiwicz and her committee for making sure everything came together successfully. From film selection, to transportation, to arrangements to technical aspects, Maria is where the buck stops. Without her, there is no Polish Film Festival in Pittsburgh.

So, to you, our donors, a heartfelt thank you on behalf of the Festival crew, the board and the membership. You keep our dreams alive. And to those who have not donated, please consider a tax deductible-donation for our next project.

Best of luck and happiness in the New Year,
Rick Pierchalski



Saturday, February 10, 2018 • 7:00 pm – 11:30 pm

Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, The Marshall Building Galleries
6300 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Event price: \$95 per person if payment received by Sat. Feb. 5th
\$110 per person anytime after

Cocktail or creative attire welcomed!

For information call 412.871.3347 or e-mail pccorg.ms@gmail.com

This premier Carnival event returns to warm you up in the midst of Winter!

**Enjoy the festivities with Master of Ceremonies
Jim Cunningham of WQED FM:**

- Polish Culinary Table
- Vodka tasting and other tempting libations
- Exciting silent auction items
- Live music by the Continental Dukes

The Beetle Does Not Destroy Puszcza. The Harvesters Do.

by Magda Rybka, Warsaw

I have not travelled much for fun lately. I have too much work and too many activities going on in Warsaw. Well, I did make a short trip to Australia and visited heavenly Wolongong, but this was actually for work, too.

Still, I want to write a few words about the most important Polish forest, which is situated in the eastern part of the country. Wrong, it is not Polish. It is European and, in fact, it belongs to the whole world, since it was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979, and extended to include its Belorussian part in 1992. This decision was based on knowledge that the area has exceptional significance for conservation because of the scale of its old growth forests. These forests include extensive, undisturbed areas, where natural processes are on-going. A consequence is the richness in dead wood, standing and on the ground, and, consequently, a high diversity of fungi and saproxylic invertebrates. The property protects a diverse and rich wildlife, of which there are 59 mammal species, over 250 bird species, 13 amphibian species, 7 reptile species, and over 12,000 invertebrate species. The iconic symbol of the property is the European Bison. There are approximately 900 individual Bison in the whole of Puszcza. They



European bison in Białowieża

comprise almost 25% of the total world's population of Bison and over 30% of wild Bison.

Yes, I want to remind you about our Puszcza.

Białowieża Forest is pretty much the last large piece of primeval forest. You have there such pearls as swamps, peat marshes, hard to penetrate tree growth and the decay of uncounted generations. It is also one of a few places in Europe where you may meet wild wolves. There live also numerous, rare birds and insects that you may not find anywhere else. Many of them nest on magnificent old trees which are now being mercilessly cut.

The Forest, split between Poland and Belarus, has (roughly) three "rings".

1. Strict preserves ("do not enter").
2. National Park ("do not manage, mostly").
3. Forest tree plantations with special preservation-friendly rules of management. This part is roughly 50% of the Polish part of the Forest.

The general idea is that the specially-managed plantations form a protective ring around the "do not touch" parts, reasonably extend the "wild" ecosystems, while providing some economic benefit (timber and related jobs).

The controversy is about the change in the management rules for the plantation part of the forest (Polish part). Changed rules allow for more intensive logging. The core parts (preserves and Park) of the complex are not affected.

Until 2015, the trend for

the plantation part was that of gradually less and less logging, and less management in general. The design was to change, piecemeal, the remaining "plantation" status into "National Park" status, in line with the local economy converting from a pure timber-related to a tourist/eco-tourist one. The plan was working, with a rapidly increasing number of local businesses catering to tourists. There are oodles and oodles of rare wildlife to be seen.

The key thing to understanding the current controversy, is that natural forests do change, with the naturally-changing environment. Until the mid-19th century, the water table in the forest was unfavorable to spruce, so there were fewer spruce trees growing. There were tons of other tree species instead. A change in the water table (19th century), plus plantings in the managed part, had allowed the mix of natural tree species to include spruce, in a significant proportion.

Today, the water table is changing again. A significant number of spruce trees, of all ages, are therefore weakened. They do not thrive in the new water levels. The European spruce bark beetle took advantage of this situation. As a result, massive numbers of beetles weakened the spruce trees.

There is, however, no stopping this beetle infestation (according to a majority of scientific opinions). All weaker spruce trees are doomed. This is a natural process. Something else will grow on their carcasses. Some spruce trees are already chomped through, most spruce are still healthy, but many are on death row. From what I saw in Puszcza, and from what the ecologists argue, I could conclude that the healing of the forest has never been a real issue, but has been only a pretext for cutting. The proof for this claim is that while insects live in the bark no one removes the bark from the forest after the trees are cut. Tiny creatures may actually do what they

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"The opinions expressed by authors do not always reflect the views of the PCC."

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want and jump from spruce to spruce while the logged wood is being sold. Moreover, the foresters save money by removing healthy spruce trees before they are inevitably infected.

When I was in Puszcza, I saw piles of healthy wood waiting for transport. The Puszcza fighters witnessed trucks coming from many parts of Poland to carry the wood away and sell it. A list of companies buying and trading Puszcza trees has been prepared and published. This business, which is a source of income for many people, is not new; but it has never before been so open and widespread. It happens in spite of the well-known fact that taking the wood from the forest changes the character of the managed forest.

A 200+ year old forest, even if planted, already has something resembling a “natural” ecosystem. So it is a good transition from civilization outside, to primeval growth at the core. That is why ecologists want the whole Puszcza to be part of the National Park, just as it is in Belarus. The current trend is different, because now, the old trees are being cut, essentially to “cut them before the beetle gets them”. Also, a lot of sick trees are cut, in an effort to fight the infestation. Most scientists say that one cannot successfully fight the infestation. The cutting of the trees uncovers the overwhelming hypocrisy of those who use the pretext of the beetle in order to make vast profits on the sale of the wood.

The result is, instead of gradually diminishing logging, done carefully, we have today increased logging, in a much more invasive and disruptive way (an emergency in the eyes of the foresters). Because the Białowieża Forest and plans of expanding it had already been committed to the European preservation rules, those changes in the logging policies are in a direct conflict with the European law. This illegal logging is done against logic, against European institutions, and in disagreement with UNESCO. Harvesters, who can destroy 200 trees a day, do their best to do it. Foresters

attack, sometimes brutally, brave activists who risk their physical health to defend the trees. The activists are fined and are threatened. Still, they are persevering. These usually young people devote their lives and their full energy in order to rescue our common treasure.

The cutting is also harmful for the local population, who used to benefit from Puszcza agro-tourism. Nowadays, tourists do not come to Puszcza, because when you visit the area you see the high piles of cut wood and a picture of extreme devastation. You may also be confronted by rather aggressive foresters who demand your ID, just because you are in the forest. That actually happened to me and my family when we were in Puszcza in the spring. We were just standing on the path reading the sign which prohibited further entrance because of unidentified “dangers”. (That is how the foresters want to camouflage the annihilation of the forest.)

Please do not let be misled. The cutting of the Puszcza, which according to scientists, should be left alone to cope with its own problems, is all about money and power over nature. Wise people show the example of the Bavarian Forest, where the logging was fortunately stopped, and now the forest is thriving. If you have any doubts about this reasoning, I recommend to you a marvelous book: *The Hidden Life of Trees*, by Peter Wohlleben. You will then understand that forests are integral ecosystems and that destroying their elements means the undermining of the whole.

Presently, the harvesters are not in operation any more, but the cutting has not stopped. It is just being done in a more traditional and less extensive manner. Ecologists are going to spend Christmas in their Puszcza camp. I am planning to visit them in order to learn more about their work and the situation in the forest. Environment Minister, Mr. Jan Szyszko, on the other hand is holding talks with European leaders, who are very concerned about the fate of Białowieża ecosystem.



Eva Tumiel-Kozak talks to JAKUB POLACZYK, a Polish composer and pianist living in New York City.

ETK: Four years have passed since you received the Artist Diploma in Composition from Carnegie-Mellon University. Recently there were some “sightings” of you in Pittsburgh. Are you missing the city and friends?

I miss my student time in Pittsburgh. I loved the program at CMU, the faculties, and the College of Fine Arts – the idea of combining 3 art departments in one building. I wish I could come more often. I still have many friends here.

ETK: Please share with us your challenges and triumphs, since you left CMU and the city. As I understand, you have received numerous awards since leaving Pittsburgh, and you have collaborated on many projects. Tell us about your work and your plans in NYC, especially your recent composition for the Cracow Duo on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Kosciuszko’s legacy.

The last few years were quite busy for me. I moved to NYC with my wife in 2015. I started teaching at the New York Conservatory of Music, founded by Dr. Jerzy Stryjniak and Joanna Stryjniak on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. I primarily teach piano performance, but also composition and theory classes. Additionally, I give public lectures on historic and contemporary composers once a month. Outside of teaching, I try to travel and attend conferences or festivals whenever possible. One of the recent was June in Buffalo. It was very inspiring to speak with other young composers and to meet new friends. The other was the International Trombone Festival in Redlands, California, where I met the legendary American brass composer - Eric Ewazen. It was amazing to hear pieces for more than 100 trombones and the level of performance was incredibly high. Most recently I gave also a lecture about Polish music at the MACRO Conference at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Two years ago I was invited to the Sichuan Music Conservatory in China to give a lecture on Polish music. It was a memorable trip!

On the creative side, I experimented with composing film music, such as for the ACM Sound of Silent Film in



Jakub Polaczyk composing

Chicago or in 2015 for Screen and Sound in Poland. Though I love to try out new genres, I still spend most of my energy composing contemporary music. In 2013 the Iron Composer Competition award included writing a piece to be premiered by the Blue Water Chamber Orchestra of Cleveland. Last year I wrote a larger piece, *Missa Apuncta*, to commemorate the 1050th Anniversary of Christianity in Poland. It was written for soprano, choir, guitar, organ, and violin. It was premiered at the St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in Brooklyn, with soloist Vivian Yau, an undergraduate student at Juilliard, and conductor Jan Pellant, who is a graduate of CMU. Most recently I wrote also an ensemble piece for the *Mise-En* residency COLA. The piece, written for the 200th Anniversary of Kosciuszko’s legacy, is titled *Act for T.K.*, and was premiered by Cracow Duo. This piece has three movements; the middle movement symbolizes the Kosciuszko Bridge in NYC, connecting the first and last movement. In this piece I used polonaise rhythms, but in my personal illusory language. I was very happy this piece was premiered here in New York at the Kościuszko Foundation.

ETK:

You’re very active and often travel, participating in interesting, experimental festivals. One of them, Screen & Sound in Krakow, was

especially intriguing. Also you have an interesting installation with your wife, an architectural designer. Could you elaborate?

The Screen and Sound Festival in Kraków invites a few composers to submit recordings of their music, to which animation film makers respond by creating a short animation using each piece of music. I submitted *Floating Skies*, an electronic piece that won the Third Place at the International SongDoor Songwriting Contest in Nashville in 2015. I was pleased to see other creative thinkers, in this case animators, respond to my music with their imagination. My wife and I collaborate via installations as a way to exchange and connect ideas in music with those in architecture. Two years ago, during the 17th International Chopin and Friends Festival at the Polish Slavic Center in Brooklyn, we debuted our first installation: *Two and a Half Pianos*. She designed the spatial arrangement of hanging black and white piano keys so that with each different viewing angle, one will notice a change in the density and ratio of the black and white keys. I created the music that people will hear as they walk around the installation, with pentatonic scale responding to black keys and diatonic responding to white keys. The result is a continuous exchange between pentatonic and diatonic scales, reflecting the viewer’s visual experience of the installation. We hope to collaborate more in the future.

ETK. You have lived in America for some time, but you still consider yourself a Polish composer. Why?

Of course! My music education has roots in Poland, and will always accompany me no matter where I go. Everyone knows me as a Polish composer here in the US; I try to represent my country and my heritage the best I can.

ETK: For over one hundred years no new instruments were introduced to the orchestra and most of the scales are based on major or minor mode; but in composing, you have chosen a different language. At the same time, as a pianist,

you often perform...Chopin. How do you reconcile this dichotomy? How do you classify yourself as a composer, as a musician? Do you consider yourself as avant-garde?

That's right, piano performance is very important to me and Chopin too, but not the only kind of performance. I mostly perform music of living composers and contemporary works that are often atonal. I love to perform live and to improvise. Last year, NYCM had a concert at Carnegie Hall. I wrote a piece for piano, violin and glass, and performed on the piano myself. I also love to make music together with other artists. Collaborating with different artists gives me energy for composing.

I don't know what is the definition of avant-garde music in 2017. Maybe it is just a simple sinusoid sound... However, I don't try to be avant-garde. I like both sides of music - experimentation and also the beauty of tradition. I think my music has both of these elements. I only try to go to the extremes with my expressions.

ETK: Poland has had many outstanding composers. You, yourself, took lessons from Krzysztof Penderecki and Zygmunt Krauze, among others. Which one of them had the biggest influence on your style, if any? Generally speaking, who is your favorite composer?

I don't have a favorite composer because it changes over time. However there are a few that are influential to

my music, they are: Musorgsky, Monteverdi, Mozart and Mykietyn. These are very operatic composers. Interestingly enough, all of their last names begin with the letter "M". I call this my "Musical M". I'm very grateful to have met and learned from Polish masters, such as Penderecki, Krauze, Ptaszynska, Bujarski, and Chyrynski. They all have inevitably influenced my music to some extent, especially Chyrynski, with whom I studied the longest, and who is very open and accepting of my ideas.

ETK: When my programs on Polish music were on National Public Radio, I was introducing the listeners to some of the works of many Polish contemporary composers such as Lutoslawski, Penderecki, Z. Krauze, Gorecki and T. Baird. Do you think that any of their music influenced American music? What and whom do you appreciate in American music? Are there any similarities in style with contemporary European composers?

I think Polish composers did have an influence on contemporary American music; but there were also other influences, for example, aleatoric notation was invented by John Cage. In American academia, students rarely learn about or reference the Polish school of the 60s. I think American music is more straightforward and has open pulsation which might be not so obvious in European music. I think "space" in American and European music is different, which is shown through different instrumentation and form. Personally,

I love the spiritual music of George Crumb and the multidimensional music of Charles Ives, and respect what John Cage and Henry Cowell contributed to piano music.

ETK: I'm always fascinated with the actual process of composing. Could you possibly let us into the secret of creation? What's your inspiration? Do you ever think about the listener when you write new work?

I won't always know the audience; each different audience has different expectations. I only know myself, so basically I write for myself. Anything can be inspiration. I can be inspired by a simple sound, an interesting object, a painting, or this interview. Whenever I have an idea, I take notes, even when I'm in the subway. It is never a boring process. It is just like life; "it is what happens when you are busy making other plans," as written in John Lennon's song.

ETK: What are your plans, your goals and your biggest obstacles? What is your most secret dream?

My biggest obstacle is to choose the best idea out of the many ideas I have; it's a daunting task. I think it is good to keep some of my dreams secret, but I would like to have my own orchestra or ensemble one day, with whom I can work and experiment with dedicated time. Often times my work is a compromise between musicians, time and financial support; it would be great one day if I don't need to make compromises anymore. My current plan is to have a productive year next year, hoping to write and premier more pieces.

ETK: Thanks for sharing. We can only wish to be witnesses in person to some of your achievements. In the meantime, please give us a few examples of your creativity via YouTube.

Thank you for the interview and have a good year. Here are some links that can be found on my website:

www.jakub.polaczyk.com
http://classicalmatters.com/jakub_p.htm
soundcloud.com/jakubpolaczyk
<https://www.youtube.com/user/Imoleczek>



Two and a Half Pianos installation, Brooklyn, New York

Speaking Polish – Piece of Cake

by Veronica Wojnarowski

Idiomy o tematyce zwierzęcej: idioms on the theme of animals

We have pets, we have domesticated animals and we have wild animals. We live with some of them; we observe their appearances, their traits and their characteristics. We apply these observations to the appearances and behaviors of humans. In any language, it is a culturally shared understanding of what we see in animals which creates idioms, many of them cross-cultural. We present some below.

Zwierzęta Domowe – Household Pets

Our furry friends, *dogs, psy* (*pies*, singular) and *cats, koty* (*kot*, singular) who live in our homes provide us joy and companionship. They are also the sources of many idioms.

If something or someone *schodzi na psy*, he or it is *going to the dogs*. This means that someone or something has been in a great decline and will soon be ruined. The origin of this phrase is found in the spoilage of food. When food became unfit for human consumption, it was given to the dogs. *Mieć pieskie życie* is to *lead a dog's life*. Some people interpret this phrase to mean that you are *living a miserable life*, while others think that the phrase means that dogs are so pampered as pets that they *live a lazy life*, with all comforts provided. *Tu leży pies pogrzebany* means *here the dog is buried*, which can be expressed in English as *that's where the shoe pinches*, in other words *I found the cause of that*. If something cannot be described or defined, it is *ni pies ni wydra*, *neither dog nor otter*. In English we would say that it is *neither fish nor fowl*.

In Polish, to say *nie kupuj kota w worku*

translates to *don't buy a cat in a bag*. In English, we would say, *don't buy a pig in a poke*. Both phrases mean that you should always know what you are buying, or what you are getting into.



If you describe a person as someone who always lands on his feet, in Polish you would say *on spada jak kot na cztery łapy*, *he falls like a cat on four paws*, he has come out of a bad or tricky situation in fine form. A falling cat will (almost) always land on all fours. Living together out of wedlock is *żyją na kocią*

tape, *they are living on a cat's paw*.

Dogs and cats come together in one useful, ironic idiom: *żyć jak pies z kotem*, *to live like a dog with a cat*. This phrase describes people who just don't get along well with each other. Another version of this idiom is *kochają się jak pies z kotem*, *they love each other like a dog and a cat*. The sentiment in English is expressed as *they get along like cats and dogs*.

Udomowione Zwierzęta – Domesticated Animals

Among domesticated animals, *konie*, *horses* (*koń*, singular), have given rise to many idioms. To complement someone's fitness, you can say that he is *zdrowy jak koń*, *healthy as a horse*. (He could also be *zdrowy jak ryba*, *healthy as a fish*.) Horses eat a lot, so a *koński apetyt*, *the appetite of a horse*, describes a *huge appetite*. The Polish word for *hobby horse* and for *hobby* is the diminutive *konik*, *a little horse*. *Koniki* originally were toy horses made of a stick with a figure of a horse's head attached. They were usually ridden by children in pageants and dances. If someone *wsiada na swego konika*, he *gets on his hobby horse*. This means that he is constantly talking about something and is becoming boring. In English, we would say the he is *on his high horse* or *on his hobby horse*. Over time, *konik* came to mean a *hobby*, a pastime which is frequently enjoyed.

When you have a big appetite, you can say, *zjadłby (zjadłaby, fem.) konia z kopytami*, *I would (could) eat a horse right down to his hooves*. In English, we don't worry about the hooves; we just say *I'm so hungry I could eat a horse*. There is a cultural reference in the phrase. In many cultures, including Poland, eating horse meat is customarily avoided. Horses are revered for their nobility and for their uses to man as means of transportation and as work-

mates in heavy labor. Eating a horse would be desperation indeed, an act of last resort.

When you respond to someone who has said something that doesn't make sense, you can say *koń by się uśmieał, a horse would be laughing*. In other words, what you have said is so absurd that even an animal can laugh at it. If you receive a gift, *darowanemu koniowi w zęby się nie zagląda, don't check the teeth of a horse you have received as a gift*. In other words, don't complain. In English, we say *don't look a gift-horse in the mouth*. If you have been deceived or swindled, you can say *I was taken for a ride*. The Polish phrase is more specific: *Żrobili mnie w konia, they made me into a horse*.

Some idioms come from *kurczaki* (*kurczak*, singular), *chickens*. A descriptive idiom used as an insult is *kurzy or ptasi mózdzek, the brain (literally cerebellum) of a chicken or a bird, a birdbrain*.

The poor chicken is the source of another insult, with which you ridicule someone's handwriting: *bazgrać jak kura pazurem, to write as if with a chicken's claw, making chicken scratches*.

An also not-so-complimentary phrase is *kura domowa, a domesticated hen, a housewife*. (All chickens have always been domesticated; they have no wild habitat.) A more polite phrase is *Pani domu, the lady of the house*.

Dzikie Zwierzęta – Wild Animals

Idioms which use *stonie* (*stoń*, singular), *elephants*, conjure up the massive size of the animals, and what could result from an encounter with them. *Stoń komuś na ucho nadeprnął* literally translates as *an elephant stepped on someone's ear*. It means that *someone does not have an ear for music*, an idiom which we do use in English, but which can also be expressed as *someone has a tin ear*, since tin, struck anywhere on its surface always produces the same sound. A clumsy person behaves *jak stoń w składzie porcelany, like an elephant in a porcelain shop*. In such a situation, an

elephant could do a lot of damage. English uses another animal, *like a bull (byk) in a china shop*.

To be very cunning in Polish is just as it is in English, *szczwany jak lis, cunning like (or sly as) a fox*. If you are told to let *sleeping dogs lie* in Polish, you are told *nie wywołuj wilka z lasu, do not summon the wolf from out of the woods*. Similarly, we have *o wilku mowa a wilk tu, speak of the wolf and a wolf is here*. This translates to English as *speak of the devil and he will appear*. Besides describing a big appetite using a horse idiom, Polish also uses the phrase *wilczy apetyt, the appetite of a wolf*.

Wylewać krokodyły is to *pour out, or to cry, crocodile tears*, to display insincere emotion, as a hypocrite crying fake tears of grief. This idiom exists in many European languages, having come from Latin. Its source is an ancient anecdote which said that crocodiles would cry when devouring a human. (Scientists now speculate that crocodiles cry in order to lubricate their eyes when they have been out of the water for some time, or that the feeding behavior prompts the tears.)

In English we say *a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush*. Polish uses the expression *lepszy wróbel w garści niż gołąb na dachu, a sparrow in the hand is better than a pigeon on the roof*. Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, coined the phrase *one swallow does not a summer make*, alluding the return of migrating swallows at the beginning of summer. The Polish phrase is *jedna jaskółka wiosny (spring) nie czyni. One happy event does not insure continued happiness*. The quality of *meekness* is described as *siedzieć jak mysz pod miotłą, to sit like a mouse under a broom*. *Mieć węży w kieszeni* is to *have a snake in the pocket, to be stingy or ungenerous*.

And, finally, if you are tempted to, or are asked to, get involved with something which is not your problem or your business, you can say *nie mój cyrk, nie moje małpy (małpa, sing.), not my circus, not my monkeys*.

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TRAVELS IN POLAND, 2017

By John and Karen Petrus

This year; Sunday, September 3rd was our 40th wedding anniversary. We attended Mass and dinner that evening. The Mass was at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. We had dinner at a restaurant recommended by a friend, just steps away from the Pantheon.

We spent five days touring Rome and four days traveling through Poland. This was our second visit. In 2004 we experienced Warsaw, Kraków, Zakopane, the Wieliczka Salt Mine, Jasna Góra Shrine, and Auschwitz concentration camp. This time, we stayed in Gdansk, with side trips to Malbork and the Westerplatte. Our hotel, the Podewils, looked out upon the stare miasto, the old town, in Gdansk. Our room was decorated with fresh cut flowers and had the feel of an 18th-century manor house. It was a short walk to old town Gdansk, with its reconstructed architecture, shopping, dining and nightlife. The dining options in Gdansk were eclectic: a lunch of pierogi; a dinner at the Hard Rock Café (yes, we did buy the tee shirt for our daughter); and a splendid traditional Polish meal at our hotel the evening we arrived. We purchased many classic gift items for ourselves, family and friends, including amber, pottery, glass and silver items.



Old Town Gdansk

tion of Poland. The Castle was meticulously reconstructed after the Second World War. An afternoon of touring only scratched the surface of the history contained within its walls.

Later in the day, we visited the Monument of the Fallen Shipyard Workers, which commemorates those killed during December 1970, when workers rioted in protest to rising prices for food. This monument, which is also known as the Solidarity Monument, is comprised of three tall crosses. It stands outside the Solidarity Center, about which Rick Pierchalski wrote in the summer, 2017 issue of the Polish Journey.

The next day, we went to the West-

and the memorial erected to the defenders, and we took a walk along the Baltic.



The author at the Westerplatte



Malbork Castle

A short train ride and walk took us to Malbork Castle, home to the Teutonic Knights and to Polish kings after them. Built during the 13th Century, this castle was once the largest fortified Gothic edifice in Europe. The Knights held it until 1466. Thereafter, it was a Polish royal residence until 1772, the first parti-

erplatte, an official National Historic Monument. This is the site of the first shots of the Second World War, and the invasion of Poland. Here, the Polish defenders fought for seven days against enormous odds and overwhelming German firepower. During our brief visit, we saw the remnants of the fortifications

The next day, we took a five and one half hour train ride to visit family in Łódź and Rogów. This was a relaxing opportunity to watch the changing landscape. We spent the remainder of our travels with Karen's family. In the company of family we will most likely never see again, we shared stories and enjoyed sumptuous meals. We attended Mass at a country church in the village of Rogów. Our travels ended with an emotional departure and a return trip of twenty five hours..

A truly memorable journey.

COPERNICUS, the Reluctant Revolutionary, Part 2

By H. RICHARD HOWLAND, Ph.D.

COPERNICUS TAKES UP HIS OCCUPATION

In Warmia, Copernicus continued his work for the Church and in astronomy. He studied the works of Ptolemy, whose explanation of the universe was generally accepted, but with some criticism. By 1510, Copernicus viewed the universe with a different perspective, that is, that the earth and planets revolve around a stationary sun.

Copernicus' theory was comprehensive. He described three motions of the Earth. First, the Earth orbits the Sun annually. Second, the Earth rotates on its own axis daily. Third, the Earth's axis of rotation is tilted at a slight angle.

This revolutionary theory ignored the teachings of the Church and the long-held methods for calculating star and planet positions. It was based upon direct observation and mathematical analysis. It demoted humankind from a distinguished position in the universe.

Cautiously, Copernicus published his manuscript, *Commentariolus*, or *Brief Sketch*, anonymously, sending it only to close friends. The manuscripts were copied and became known through public lectures, the mass media of the day. Pope Clement expressed interest.

From 1515 until 1536, Copernicus worked on a detailed exposition of his theory in a book called *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium: On the revolutions of the heavenly spheres*. However, he delayed publication for fear of criticism, on philosophical, astronomical and



religious grounds. Copernicus finally agreed to publish in 1542.

Copernicus died on May 24, 1543, said to have seen the printed work only on the day of his death. He was buried in Frombork Cathedral, without marking or epitaph, as was the custom.

RECEPTION

Reception was muted at first. Publication of 600 copies made the work a best-seller for the time; but the main interest was in Copernicus' calculations. Little attention was paid to the sun as a central object. Approval and disapproval came from both ecclesiastics and astronomers. At that time, there was no reason to accept the Copernican theory except for its mathematical simplicity compared to Ptolemy's theory. Work during the following century, by Erasmus Reinhold, Galileo, Tycho Brahe, and Sir Isaac Newton proved that Copernicus' theories were correct.

Acceptance unfortunately coincided with accusations by the Lutherans that the Catholic Church was ignoring heretical writings. In March 1616, the Roman Catholic Church added the *Revolutions* to the index of forbidden books, suspended until a few objectionable sentences could be corrected. It was all right to read the *Revolutions* as long as you didn't read those particular sentences – some people pasted strips of paper over them. The ban was not lifted until 1882.

The remains of Copernicus were reinterred in a second funeral in Frombork Cathedral on May 22, 2010, in a Mass led by Jozef Kowalczyk, the Primate of Poland. A granite tombstone identifies him as a church canon and the founder of the heliocentric theory, and it bears a representation of Copernicus' model of the solar system, a golden sun encircled by six of the planets.

A Tartan for Kraków

In the spring of 2017 a competition was held for the design of a new tartan in order to commemorate and to celebrate the long cultural associations between Edinburgh and Kraków. The competition was sponsored by the cities of Edinburgh and Kraków, the Scottish-

Polish Cultural Association, and the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Edinburgh. For more information about this beautiful cloth and the historic cooperation between Scotland and Poland, see the article on the PCC web site, www.polishculturalcouncil.org.

Polish Film News

This year, Polish film director, Agnieszka Holland, will be directing the first Polish language series produced by the streaming service Netflix. Holland previously directed several episodes of Netflix' House of Cards. Holland's daughter, Kasia Adamek, will co-direct the new production. This eight-episode series will be filmed in various cities and regions of Poland.

Following the traditions of the Cold War Era spy thrillers, the action takes place in an alternative reality in which the Iron Curtain never fell. Netflix published this advance information: "Now in 2002, 20 years after a devastating terror attack in 1982 that halted the course of Poland's liberation and the subsequent downfall of the Soviet Union, an idealistic law student and a disgraced police investigator stumble upon a conspiracy that has kept the Iron Curtain standing and Poland living under a repressive Polish state."

The American Kennedy/Marshall Company and House Media will be producing the series, which is projected to be available world-wide in 2018. Frank Marshall and Robert Zlotnowski will be executive-producing, along with Polish producer Andrzej Besztak. Holland said, "We are really happy that we'll be able to combine the wonderful experience of the Netflix team, our great American producers and writer, with Polish talent and a Polish sensibility".

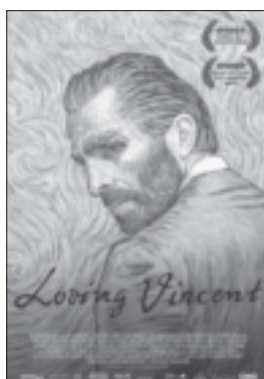
EUROPEAN FILM AWARDS FOR POLAND



Pokot (Spoor), Best Costume Design

This film, directed by Agnieszka Holland, was Poland's choice for its best foreign film nomination for the Academy Awards. While it was not accepted by the Academy in the final cut, *Pokot* received the European Film Award for best costume design. The designer is Katarzyna Lewińska.

Spoor means the track or trail of an animal which is being hunted. The film tells the story of retired engineer, Janina Duszejko, who lives a quiet life in the Sudety Mountains close to the Czech border. One winter night, she stumbles upon the dead body of her neighbor, who was a poacher. The only visible tracks around his body are the tracks of a deer. Duszejko starts an investigation into the mystery of the man's death, and thereby, herself, becomes a suspect.



Loving Vincent, Best Animated Film

Directed by Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman, the film is the first ever full-length painted film. Using frames designed to look like paintings of Vincent Van Gogh (65,000 of them), this film tells the story of the famous painter's mysterious death.

One hundred twenty five artists worked to bring Van Gogh's story to life.

Komunia (Communion), Best Documentary

Anna Zamecka directed this film, which shows coming-of-age as a time of the shattering of illusions. It tells the story of Ola, a 14-year old girl, her autistic brother, and their father, who has trouble coping with life. It is a story of a girl's dream about reconciling her shattered family, a story of disappointment and pain. The film has collected many prizes and has received wide critical acclaim.

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, MONTREAL



Polish filmmaker, Maciej Sobieszczkański, won the award for Best Director, at the International Film Festival in Montreal, June 2017. The film *Zgoda*, (*Reconciliation*) is his feature film debut.

The film is set in 1945 in a labor camp which was established for the Germans, Silesians and Poles by Poland's newly-installed communist regime at the site of a former auxiliary camp at the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex. One of the main protagonists, Franek, joins the communist secret police, deluding himself into believing that he will be able to trick the system, in order to save Anna, a woman he loves. He does not know that his friend, Erwin, a German who has long been in love with Anna, is also an inmate in the camp.

The cast includes up-and-coming stars, Zofia Wichłacz and Jakub Gierszał. They have both been named Shooting Stars by the European Film Promotion Network. The film had its Polish premier in September at the Polish Film Festival in Gdynia and was released in October. *VFW*

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PAC Corner By Rick Pierchalski



Dr. Rick Saccone

Representing the 39th House District in Pennsylvania, Dr. Rick Saccone is running for former US Congressman Tim Murphy's seat in the 18th District during a special election on March 13th. He has a keen interest in international affairs, particularly of Poland. He has a doctorate in International Relations from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, was actively involved in the Middle East in

anti-terrorism for the US government, lived in North Korea during the Clinton administration as a diplomat and also teaches International Relations at Saint Vincent College. I had a chance to speak with him recently and asked him one of Polonia's eternal questions: ***Why isn't Poland part of the visa waiver program?***

Rep Saccone: From what I have determined, it seems that Poland has been unfairly excluded, even though they are a strong ally, and a trading partner with strong ethnic ties to Western Pennsylvania. As a country, Poland has the sixth largest EU economy, and we should welcome more open trade and make it easy for family and tourists from Poland to enter the US.

Rick Pierchalski: Why do you think Poland has been excluded?

Rep Saccone: The current sentiment on the Hill is to wait for total immigration reform, especially for current programs.

However, President Trump did make a promise to the Polish people in October of 2016 at a meeting with the Polish American Congress (PAC) Executive Committee, stating that he would push through Visa Waiver within weeks of his inauguration. He hasn't done it yet. I am in touch with the White House and will be in Washington in a few weeks and I assure you this is on my agenda as there are many Polish Americans in my district that care deeply about this issue.

Rick Pierchalski: Former Congressman Tim Murphy, whose mother was a Polish American, was Chair of the Polish Caucus in the House. Are you aware of the workings of the caucus and the PAC?

Rep Saccone: Well, my mother is Slovak-American! Of course I know of the caucus as it educates Congress on Polish-related issues. It's one of the many ethnic caucuses and in the case of Poland, helps us understand our allies. Western Pennsylvania has a large Polish-American community and I am getting to know them. By the way, during my academic years, I traveled to Poland (Kraków and Warsaw), representing Saint Vincent College, where I met with government, academic and business leaders. We must acknowledge Poland's long fight against communism and Russian aggression in the region in the form of being part of Visa Waiver.

Rick Pierchalski: Thank you Rep Saccone for you time.