

# Polish Journey

Newsletter of the Polish Cultural Council • Vol. 20 • Winter 2022

## *From Our Home to Yours*



**A Merry and Healthy Holiday Season!  
Życzymy Radosnego i Zdrowego  
Sezonu Świątecznego!!**

Ring in the New Year of 2023  
with lots of JOY and  
hopeful New Year's resolutions!

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## **OSTATKI 2023 - WE ARE BACK!**



After a 3-year hiatus, we all  
look forward to our FUNtastic OSTATKI,  
Polish Mardi Gras Pittsburgh,  
on **SATURDAY,**  
**FEBRUARY 18TH, 2023.**

Mark your calendars and Save the Date!  
Ostatki will be celebrated at the stylish  
**Edgewood Club** – in the heart of Edgewood,  
1 Pennwood Ave, Pittsburgh 15218





## Concert by the Karuzela Chorus

Poland is known for many beautiful Kolędy (Christmas Carols) and Pastorałki (pastoral carols) that charmingly treat the birth of Christ as if it had occurred on Polish soil. The Karuzela Chorus, under the direction of Dr. Neil Stahurski, will present a concert of these carols at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Polish Hill, on Saturday, January 7, 2023, after the 4:30 PM Mass (at approximately 5:30 PM). A free-will offering will be taken. For further information, please email [DrStahurski@Comcast.net](mailto:DrStahurski@Comcast.net).

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

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# Autumn in Pieniny

by Aleksandra Kaniasty



Aleksandra and Krys Kaniasty in Pieniny

Since my husband and I immigrated to the US in the early 1980s, visits to Poland have focused on summer months, primarily to fit into our academic calendars. However, this year's trip was quite different. After a long pandemic-related hiatus from Poland, my husband Krys and I arrived in Pieniny in the latter part of August. We decided to spend the following six months in Krościenko Upon Dunajec, thanks to my retirement and Krys's sabbatical work with Polska Akademia Nauk (PAN).

Krościenko na Dunajcu is a very old settlement on the main route between Nowy Targ and Nowy Sącz, with municipal rights granted by King Kazimierz Wielki as far back as 1348 (<http://www.kroscienko.eu/historia-kroscienko/>). Early attempts at turning Krościenko into a spa destination failed because of competition from nearby Szczawnica ([www.uzdrowiskoszczawnica.pl](http://www.uzdrowiskoszczawnica.pl)). This actually may have helped in preserving its ambiance and the look of an old time hamlet. While one

will not come across many significant historical structures or monuments in Krościenko, with the exception of the fifteenth century wooden church in neighboring Grywałd, the town continues to serve well its role as a hub for launching excursions into Pieniny, Gorce, Spisz, or even Beskid Sądecki. Situated in the valley of the Dunajec on the very edge of Poland's first national park (Pieniński Park Narodowy established in 1932, (<https://www.pieniny-pn.pl/>)), the town benefits from its location, surrounded by relatively unspoiled mountain ranges covered by mature forests.

For us, autumn proved to be especially attractive in Pieniny with summer tourist crowds thinned out, gorgeous sunny weather and the breathtaking colors of changing foliage. The absolute highlight of our stay was an early October rafting trip down the Dunajec Gorge with local raftsmen referred to as Flisacy (<https://flisacy.pl/>). (Poland's rafting tradition, including the trip on the Dunajec, is on the list of UNESCO





Rafting on the Dunajec

Cultural Heritage.) Although it was not our first journey on these traditional wooden rafts, this was absolutely the best time to appreciate the pristine mountain slopes, along

with Trzy Korony, Sokolica and surrounding Červený Kláštor on the Slovak side of the river, all dressed in brilliant hues of yellow, orange and red. And while some might not view this very touristy activity as interesting or challenging enough, it is quite enchanting to embark on rafts from Sromowce-Kąty guided by Flisacy dressed in traditional, richly embroidered blue vests (though now paired with jeans and sneakers for convenience). Throughout the two to three hour trip they amuse visitors with local legends and pointing out interesting rock formations, local fauna and flora, often intertwined with spicy jokes.

If, on your next trip to Poland, you do make it to Pieniny (hopefully

outside the high summer season to avoid crowds), and you crave touring historical structures, add to your itinerary a visit to the Niedzica Castle (<https://zamekniedzica.pl/>) Czorsztyn, and Dębno with its beautiful Gothic fifteenth century wooden church, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (<http://debno.jdm.host/historia/>). Then at the end of the day, when you come down from the mountain trails, you will find respite in a wide variety of local restaurants and shops in Krościenko nad Szczawnicą. Should you stay over a weekend, make sure to check out a very special place in Jaworki where Muzyczna Owczarnia (<http://www.muzycznaowczarnia.pl/koncerty.htm>) often hosts world-class musicians and performers.

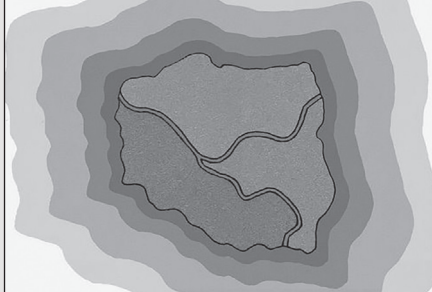
## In the past year...Recovering from the pandemic, PCC has presented:

- A special Summer Nights Magic picnic supporting Ukrainian children in Poland;
- A beautiful concert of Polish music at the Frick Fine Arts Auditorium, featuring Jarosław Gołtembiowski, piano and Krzysztof Zimowski, violin;
- A vibrant, 2-week-long Film Festival; and
- A lavish Christmas Party attended by well over 100 members.



## PITTSBURGH 10.21 POLSKI FILM MULTI-KINO 11.04

Brought to you by the Polish Cultural Council



OCT 21-26

HARRIS THEATER

(DOWNTOWN)

With the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

A Krzysztof Kieślowski

Retrospective:

Three Colours

Blue (1993), White (1994), Red (1994)

Blind Chance (1981)

Documentary shorts:

A: Refrain (1972), First Love (1974),

Seven Women of Different Ages (1978)

B: From the Night Porter's Point of View (1977)

Hospital (1976), Curriculum Vitae (1975)

Talking Heads (1980)

MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT POLISHCULTURALCOUNCIL.ORG

NOV 1-4

ROW HOUSE CINEMA

(LAWRENCEVILLE)

Double Life of Veronique

(Kieślowski, 1980)

EO

(Skolimowski, 2022)

Europa Europa

(Holland, 1992)

Never Gonna Snow Again

(Szumowska, 2021)

Sonata

(Błaszke, 2021)

FALL 2022



# Brick Wonders

by Magda Rybka

Another grim autumn season is playing its tricks on us. We are happy about so much needed rain, but we are slightly fed up with sitting at home and watching TV series, so finally the steel-gray sky inspired us to go and see some supposedly gray industrial landscapes. Since we had never before been to Żyrardów we decided that it would be our goal. This seemingly irrational idea was followed by a prompt action. In about 40 minutes we got to our destination and we quickly realised how mistaken we had been.

Żyrardów is as far from being gray and gloomy as possible. It is rather red and green. The red comes from the color of brick and the green from the parks, and nicely groomed flowerbeds. It seems that the so-called betonoza (concrete substituting for grass and trees) hasn't taken its toll here yet.

Beginning from the early 19th century, Żyrardów was an important center of the textile industry. The first linen factory was established in this area in 1833. Its first director was a famous inventor from Provence, Philip de Girard. He was also the person to whom Żyrardów owes its difficult name. Later in 1857, the factory was bought by two German entrepreneurs, Karol Dietrich and Karol Hielle. They had ambitious plans for their industrial project and made Żyrardów great for the first time. Under their leadership, new factory buildings were raised and the whole



View of a street in Żyrardów.

settlement was designed and developed. There appeared wide spacious streets with neat sidewalks and a drainage system. Housing projects for workers and elegant villas for the management were built. There was a hospital, school, kindergarten and a shelter for women. The center of culture with a theater and a library was opened for the white-collar factory staff. The town was thoroughly and nicely planned and built in red brick. It became a model industrial town and manufacturing center which gained international fame for its high-quality linen products. In 1900, Żyrardów textiles received a Grand Prix at the World Fair in Paris. It was a very prestigious award. Żyrardów textile production was active till 1989. Now, the site has been rather transformed into a place for tourists.

The town is a very nice place to be. I would even say that it is too nice and too charming considering the town history, capitalist exploitation and brutally suppressed workers' strikes. The town

witnessed in 1883 serious protests and the first female workers' strike in Polish territories. There are even organized enactments (performances) based on the reconstruction of dramatic events of a real workers' strike. About 8,000 workers demanded a pay rise, respect for the rights of female workers and a ban of child labor. (How lucky we are that we seemingly do not need to fight for such values and ideas any more.) Now, though, the old spinning houses are transformed into shopping malls, restaurants and hotels which tempt tourists with their mysterious aura, original architecture and decor. Of course, if you leave the main tourist pathways, you may see abandoned buildings, broken windows and a ghost town atmosphere which might be quite "thrilling" after sunset. Still, the place is definitely worth a visit.

On January 4, 2012, the 19th century factory settlement in Żyrardów was granted the Monument of History status by President Bronisław Komorowski. Presently there are attempts underway to add the town to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Most of Żyrardów's monuments can be found in the historic manufacturing center. It is widely believed that Żyrardów's textile settlement is the only complete 19th-century urban industrial complex to be preserved in Europe. There are about three hundreds sites considered as historical monuments. Ongoing revitalisation and visible care for details have converted Żyrardów into a little gem. Besides, for the already



Monument to Philip de Girard



Our Lady of Consolation Church

mentioned buildings, such as the Old and New Spinners, management villas and workers' houses, it is recommended to see many other attractions. No matter from which direction you enter the town, you shall see the magnificent towers of the neogothic Our Lady of Consolation church, designed at the beginning of the 20th century by the famous architect Józef Pius Dziekoński. It is located in the main plaza which was previously called the Square of Liberty and now honors the name of John Paul II. The church is not the only neogothic temple in town, but it is by far the most spectacular. In the same square, you may see many other interesting

buildings, among them the magistrate and the modernistic folk house.

Another place of interest is the Museum of Linen which is praised as fascinating and very educational. Maybe next time we will be able to visit it. The Museum is located in a former textile plant building.

When you get tired of these spinning explorations, I would advise a romantic walk in Dittrich Park. It is extraordinary, with all the old trees, which are nicely labeled and described, the view of the river Pisia Gagolina and charming small bridges over the river. In the park you will also come by the not so small and not quite modest Dittrich Palace which now hosts the Museum of Western Masovia. The Museum has collected thousands of objects illustrating the history of Żyrardów and of textile manufacturing.

I would envy you if you decided to stay in Żyrardów overnight and sleep in a hotel located in an old factory. It must be an interesting experience.

Industrial innovations and modernity of the town inspired many people, among them Henryk Sienkiewicz who wrote about it in genuine awe in *Gazeta Polska*: "What wonders our eyes have seen. What a factory it is...."

I hope you will be also charmed by Żyrardów's buzzing history, unforgettable architecture and hospitable atmosphere. If the walk makes you tired you may always remember that sightseeing is probably much more relaxing than working long shifts in the spinnery.



Old industrial buildings with a new wool yarn mill in the background.

# RENEW TODAY!

Please fill in this form and mail it with your dues to the address shown below. Thank You!

## Keeping Polish Culture Alive!

**Polish Cultural Council**  
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☐ NEW ☐ RENEWAL

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- ☐ Individual (\$30)
- ☐ Family (\$45)
- ☐ Business (\$125)

Polish Speaking? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I would like to get involved in:

- ☐ Ostatki, Polish Mardi Gras
- ☐ Easter Breakfast
- ☐ Film Festival
- ☐ Performing & Visual Arts Events
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Polish Language Classes

Additionally, I would like to support PCC in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to:  
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# DEANNA WITKOWSKI, musician extraordinaire

## in conversation with Eva Tumiel-Kozak

*Have you ever given a thought to the influence of music on our lives, our minds, our bodies? During the pandemic, WQED-FM (89.3), jazz WZUM (101.1) or other stations kept us going and cheerful every day. Music's ethereal quality stimulates and "fires up" our brain activity, and even has the power of slowing down cognitive decline. Music influences our memory and our mood, and stimulates learning and creativity.*



Meet **DEANNA WITKOWSKI**, a synonym for creativity, a jazz musician, composer, an author, and an artist whom we are lucky to have in Pittsburgh. ([deannajazz.com](http://deannajazz.com))

*ETK: Welcome to the Polish Journey Deanna! I'm slightly overwhelmed with all your talents and the ease with which you move between various genres of music. It's amazing! How did it all start? How was your talent discovered? Is everything in your genes?*

**Deanna Witkowski:**

**My family moved a lot when I was growing up. I vividly remember the piano in my kindergarten teacher's**

**class. I was drawn to it. She suggested to my mother that I have a talent and should take piano lessons, which we couldn't afford at that time. My mother, being a visual artist, bartered her painting talent for a year of piano lessons. I didn't have a piano, only a little keyboard with 3 octaves. When I needed more, I went to my neighbor for practice. In grade four, I was playing piano and flute. I always loved music, enjoyed it so much that practice was never a chore for me. Since we moved around, one constant in my life was music. It was my wonderful companion.**

*ETK. Obviously you have some Polish roots. Tell us all about them.*

**DW: I'm Polish from my father's side; he was born in Boston. My grandmother came to Boston in the 1930s, and her second husband also arrived from Poland after WWII. She was always a part of the Polish community. My mom tells the story of how there was one time when we were on a car trip from our home in western New York to Boston, where my grandmother lived. My little brother asked my mom if we were going to another country where people didn't speak English (because the drive was so long). My mom assured him that everyone in Boston would speak English - but when we got there, we went to a party at a Polish church and everyone was speaking Polish!**

*ETK: You have many recordings under your belt. Your latest one, **Force of Nature**, celebrates the legacy of **Mary Lou Williams**, the legendary spiritual jazz musician of the late 1930s and early 1940s. You even wrote a book about her, **Mary Lou Williams: Music***

*for the Soul, for which you received the 2022 Jazz Journalists Association Award. And my warmest congratulations on your recent triumph, the coveted **ASCAP Foundation/Deems Taylor Virgil Thomson Book Award!** AMAZING!!! Why such fascination with her and her music?*

**DW: Over 20 years ago I was invited to bring my group to perform her music at the Jazz Festival at Kennedy Center. I knew of her reputation and decided to learn more about her, called the Archives and listened to all her recordings. And I was hooked! I learned that in her mid-life she turned to Catholicism and started playing and composing church liturgical music. It made quite an impression on me as she was sharing her talent with the masses. She was ahead of her times. Her generosity was proverbial. Although she was from Pittsburgh, following her successful tours, she moved to New York, creating a gathering place in the neighborhood of Harlem. Her place was a haven for many people, some of them musicians, struggling with drug addiction. Not only did she invite them to her home, but she even started a non-profit thrift shop to support musicians. She was even warned by her priest to be careful with those contacts; nevertheless, she made a point of sharing and making her music available to everybody.**

*ETK Obviously she was a fantastic human-being and you followed in her steps! Her impact on musicians of that time and even on current jazz musicians was enormous! You performed Williams' music at Kennedy Center, Duke and Fordham Universities and were a featured guest artist with the Pittsburgh Symphony. As a leading authority on her music, you even*

relocated to Pittsburgh, Williams' home town.

*As I understand, your education is actually in classical music. You even have the recording **Raindrop: Improvisation with Chopin**. You're also a specialist in Brazilian music and even speak Portuguese. Tell us about those bossa nova Brazilian composers who also were influenced by Chopin and improvised on his music?*

**DW:** Yes, I was a classical music major in college. Teachers such as Michael Landrum in high school in Rochester or Dr. Daniel Horn in Wheaton College near Chicago, made quite a mark on my music education. Brazilian pianist, composer, Antonio Carlos Jobim, also known as Tom Jobim, was quite influenced in his work not only by the music of nightclubs and bars, where he earned his living playing this type of music, but also by the modern Brazilian music in the 1930s, and by French composers such as Debussy and Ravel. There is a lot of similarity between the music of Jobim and Chopin. Both used lots of harmonic chromatics. And Jobim's music at the beginning of the film *Black Orpheus* has a lot of similarity with Chopin's last Nocturne (in e-minor). It fascinated me and I remember starting experimenting with Chopin's music around 2003, for example with his Etude in e-flat minor, or one of his Preludes, and other works. The recording was a result of it.

*ETK: The boundaries of jazz are a bit blurred. What are the specific qualities you need to call this music jazz? How much does your imagination play a role?*

**DW:** That's a big question. I have a teaching fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh right now. We just talked about it in one of my classes there. Chopin was a great improviser. So were his contemporaries, such as Liszt. Of course you need to practice and have specific skills, but also lots of imagination to improvise in jazz.

*ETK: Deanna, you're also a prolific choral composer; an expert on sacred music and, as I understand, a graduate doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh. What with you being a recognized virtuoso, and having made so many tours with renowned artists, why have you decided to pursue your doctorate?*

**DW:** Wanting to experience the place where Williams grew up, I chose to live in Pittsburgh in the fall of 2019 for seven weeks. This marked my fourth visit to the city in under a year - each of my previous trips involved performing or teaching (playing with the Pittsburgh Symphony, teaching a mini-course on Williams for the Catholic diocese, leading my trio at East Liberty Presbyterian's Cathedral Concerts). I even wrote a blog post that quickly made its way throughout the jazz community, "The City Where Jazz is Love: Pittsburgh and Mary Lou Williams," and gave interviews for WZUM and WESA. By the end of my stay, I had received an invitation to record an all-Williams album for MCG Jazz (Manchester Craftsmen's Guild). I was falling in love with the people and history of Pittsburgh and moved here one year later. Applying to the doctoral program at Pitt was a way to be able to live here, to generate more academic support for my work, and to develop as a writer-scholar.

*ETK: It's interesting that Pittsburgh had and still has quite a big jazz community. I remember that years ago there were so many places you could listen to jazz. I wonder, how did it happen?*

**DW:** Well, 1930-50s Pittsburgh was a major stop for musicians who were touring between New York and Chicago.

*ETK: Well, that's an interesting comment. Your newest recording, Force of Nature, has remained in the top ten most-played new releases on the Jazz-Week radio chart for over ten weeks. It's quite an achievement. And your recent recognition resulted in many additional performances around town. My friends and I personally enjoyed your performance at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild concert hall on November 19th. Classical questions: Your inner dreams? How would you like to be remembered 100 years from now?*

**DW:** My dream is to be in a place where I have the time and the resources to do things I love the most, such as playing, writing, and composing, and to have the luxury of some rest. I would love to be remembered as someone who brings joy to other people through music!

*ETK: What a noble idea! It was wonderful talking to you. Wishing you top success in your field. May you become as famous and as important as Mary Lou Williams was to the world of jazz. And much, much more!*

**DW:** Thank you!

# Speaking Polish – Piece of Cake by Veronica Wojnarowski

## LEGENDS, FOLKLORE AND FAIRY TALES: LEGENDY, FOLKLOR I BAJKI

The tradition of Polish storytelling, *opowiadanie historii*, reaches back to pre-Christian times and forward to the present day. *Legendy*, *folklor* and *bajki* of Poland, like those of all nations, convey a nation's goodness, wisdom, history and communality. In them, you will find fantastical creatures, *fantastyczne stworzenia*, monsters, *potwory*, chivalrous knights, *szlachetni rycerze*, beautiful maidens, *piękne dziewczyny*, valiant kings, *dzielni królowie* and swift horses, *szybkie konie*. And always, good conquers evil, *dobro zawsze zwycięża zło*. Yet, in every legend, there is a bit of truth, *trochę prawdy*, a lesson to be taught and to be learned.

## WORDS TO DESCRIBE STORYTELLING

The Polish words for *story*, *opowiadanie* and *opowieść*, are related to the verb *opowiadać*, a combination of *o* (about) and *powiadać* (to say). *Opowiadać* means *to tell or to talk about* someone or something. The reflexive, *opowiadać się*, means *to opt for something or to subscribe to*. Other verbs derive from the same root with the addition of prefixes:

odpowiadać	to answer
dopowiadać	to finish saying
podpowiadać	to prompt
przepowiadać	to predict
rozpowiadać	to let know or gossip
spowiadać/się	to confess
wypowiadać	to formulate or express
zapowiadać	to announce

The word *bajka* (bajki, plural) comes from a Proto-Indo European root meaning *to speak, tell, or to say*. A *bajka* is a *fairy tale* or a *fable*. *Bajkowy* is an adjective which means *fabulous*. *Bajkopisarz* is a *fabulist*, a writer of fables, while the verb *bajać* means *to tell stories*, and the noun *baśń* is another word for *fairy tale*.

*Legendy* are larger-than-life stories which get passed down from one generation to the next, living on in stories that people tell to each other. *Legenda* (singular) is of Latin derivation, from the verb *legere, to read*. While the Latin word was originally

limited to written stories, especially of saints, which were to be read in church, it now has an extended sense of a non-historical or mythical story, with or without saints, wonders and miracles.

The word *folklor* was adopted from the English *folklore*. It was coined by British writer, William Thoms, in 1846 to replace terms such as *popular antiquities* and is now used in various spellings by many languages. Thoms imitated German terms such as *Volklehre, people's customs*. A more Polish phrase for folklore is *ludowe opowieści*.

A *storyteller* is *opowiadacz historii*. In their book *Polish Folktales and Folklore*, Michał Malinowski and Anne Pellowski describe the Polish storytellers of the past. They say that from Medieval documents it is known that "various forms of storytelling flourished all over Poland." Storytellers recited epic poetry, "using chant mixed with song. The bards traveled from town to town or were retained as servants by noble households, or in some cases by innkeepers." Traveling beggars called *dziad* (very old man) accompanied their stories with the *lira korbowa*, a guitar-like, stringed instrument, also called the *hurdy gurdy* in English. Village storytellers passed on stories orally, usually after the harvest or on the evenings of feast days and often accompanied by song. The tradition today is still strong in the region of the Tatra Mountains. In 2002 Michał Malinowski founded the *Storyteller Museum, Muzeum Bajek, Baśni i Opowieści* in Konstancin-Jeziorna, near Warsaw. Its mission is to collect legends, folklore and fairy tales from all over the world.

## SOME POLISH LEGENDS

### THE LEGEND OF KRAKUS, WHO SLEW THE DRAGON, SMOK WAWELSKI

Before the city of Kraków existed, Wawel Hill was only rocks and trees and there was only a small settlement of wooden huts. Inside a cave in Wawel hill lived a *dragon, smok* (a symbol of *chaos* and evil, *zło*.) No one must dare to waken it, or there would be dire consequences. Nevertheless, some callow, *nieopierzony*,

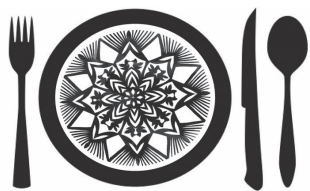
youths entered the cave and awakened the smok. They fled the cave, trying to escape the green, scaly, bellowing smok. From that day on, the dragon appeared daily, capturing a victim. Attempts to rid the village of the smok failed, until the villagers sought the advice, *rada*, of a wise man named *Krakus*. Krakus coated a sheep, *owca*, with a paste made of sulphur and threw it into the cave. The smok ate the sheep along with the sulphur. He had a terrible fire within and came rushing from the cave to the Vistula, Wisła, River. He drank and he drank, until he exploded. The villagers made Krakus their King. The city of Kraków grew up around the Wawel Hill. At the death of Krakus, the villagers erected a mound over his tomb, which can still be seen today.

### THE LEGEND OF LECH AND GNIEZNO

A man named Lech was the first Duke, *książę*, of Poland. He lived many centuries ago as the leader of the western Slavs. Under him, his region flourished, well-defended against the Turks by a strong army. He was an outstanding man, tall and broad-shouldered, with a true, brave heart, *serce*, who valued courage, *odwaga*, in man, *mężczyzna* and beast, *bestia*. One day, while hawking with his court, he took off by himself and discovered the nest, *gniazdo*, of a white eagle, *biały orzeł*, with her eaglets, *orlęta*. Lech decided that he wanted one of the eagles for his own, but the mother eagle defended her nest and her young so bravely, that Lech was repelled. Admiring the eagle's bravery, Lech pronounced the white eagle the symbol of Poland's freedom. Today, variations of the white eagle on a crimson field are on many flags of Poland. Lech built a castle, *zamek*, on the hill where he found the eagle. The city of Gniezno grew around it.







**Kącik Kulinaryny**

**Polish Culinary Corner**

*by Dave Motak*

**GRZYBY**

**Tales of The Polish Mushroom**

Many years ago, when I was a student in Kraków my friend Joanna invited me to join her for what turned out to be a highly unusual and memorable experience. Some of Joanna's family members worked in a local factory that chartered a bus to take interested employees out to the country for a grzybobrania, or mushroom hunt. As Poles are simply crazy over wild mushrooms (grzyby), these sorts of autumn excursions were very common in Poland at that time – and still are. We met at 6:00 a.m. in the factory parking lot. There was a heavy fog in the air and it was impossible to see for any distance. Slowly - like a scene from the movie *Brigadoon* - people began to appear through the heavy mist carrying baskets of every size and shape. Once onboard, the passengers spent their time exchanging stories about past foraging triumphs. No soccer fans could have been more enthusiastic or animated and the enthusiasm was quite contagious. We spent some time driving to a forest and, at one point someone pointed out a mushroom hunter exiting the forest with baskets of freshly picked grzyby. All the passengers quickly ran to that side of the bus to look out the windows, nearly tipping the bus over in the process. Angry voices demanded that the driver let them disembark immediately as they couldn't wait to start their foraging. And so, we did. Joanna found two or three. I found perhaps a couple more, but we weren't too successful. At one point an old peasant fellow passed us in the forest with a basket filled to the brim with his morning's catch. A ravishing red head, Joanna turned on her substantial charm: "Gdzie pan znalazł takie piękne grzyby?" she asked ("Where did you find such beautiful mushrooms?") He responded dryly "W lesie!" ("In the forest"). Apparently, this mushroom picker had his own private spot that he wouldn't divulge to anyone.

Poles love their wild mushrooms and there are few people in Poland who can't at least recognize some of the more com-

mon varieties. In fact, mushroom picking is something of a national obsession and a tradition passed down from one generation to the next. Unlike in some other European countries, Poles are free to forage for mushrooms in the nation's forests and wild mushrooms are often sold along the roadsides and in public markets. Poland even has an "official list" of wild mushrooms approved for commerce and several regional governments offer programs designed to safely commercialize mushroom picking by enabling small businessmen to become certified as wild mushroom experts.

I, myself, was introduced to this custom at a very young age as all my family members would go mushroom picking every fall in the forests around our home in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. We would clean them, can them or string them to dry them. There was never a weekend in the fall when someone didn't bring a basketful of mushrooms home for my mother to clean and process. Unlike our relatives in Poland who picked a wide variety of mushrooms, we only picked one type, which we called "podpinka," the honey mushroom which is common in Pennsylvania and is excellent sautéed in butter and served with steak, in scrambled eggs or in soup. I have continued to pick this mushroom through adulthood until my "special spot" in South Park was disturbed by dirt bikers and the mushrooms decided to move elsewhere.

Mushrooms are ubiquitous in Polish cuisine and were even featured in Poland's national epic poem, *Pan Tadeusz* by Adam Mickiewicz. Mushrooms add flavor and texture to many Polish dishes. Mushroom soup is one of Poland's traditional Polish Christmas Eve soups, the other being red beet barszcz served with uszka – little mushroom-filled dumplings. One of the most traditional pierogi fillings is sauerkraut and mushrooms and this sauerkraut-mushroom combination is also the foundation of the Polish national dish bigos (hunter's stew).

Many Polish cooks preserve mushrooms by drying, pickling or marinating, with each variety prepared in its own unique way according to old family recipes. One of my fondest memories is spending Easter Święconka in the early 1970s at my Wójek Kuba's home in Silesia. The family patriarch, our old Uncle was short on words but generous with hospitality. The table was spread with an amazing array of delicacies that my aunt had prepared and enhancing it all were several mason jars of different varieties of wild mushrooms. In preparing them she had added pieces of carrot, onion and various herbs and spices along with other ingredients. I was enjoying

the various types of grzyby and I felt that I had never had anything quite so exotic. "It's horrible what happened to that family over in Świdnica," my aunt said, turning to my uncle. I looked puzzled. So she explained, albeit somewhat dramatically. "The pogotowie rushed them to the emergency room - a milicjant and his whole family!" Although my Polish language skills at the time were a trifle limited, I understood that her story had something to do with a policeman, his family and an ambulance. Uncle Kuba shrugged his shoulders responding simply: "Nie znali grzybów!" ("They didn't know their mushrooms") and continued with his meal. At the time I thought that his response was somewhat odd, so I chalked it up to our uncle's eccentricity. However, over the years I have come to realize that - to many Poles - not knowing your mushrooms can be seen as somewhat of a national disgrace. This was probably particularly true in the case of the Świdnica policeman who - as a prominent member of the community - was apparently expected to set a better example.

But as I came to understand the Poles and their unique history, I thought perhaps my uncle's attitude had a deeper meaning. Poland has always been located in a dangerous neighborhood and its history is full of triumphs and tragedies. And Poles have often had to learn to survive and protect their national identity, often against tremendous odds. Being a true Pole and preserving one's cultural identity is something passed from one generation to the next, sort of like mushroom hunting. Sitting on the razor's edge of history, Poles have had to fine tune their survival skills. If you learn these skills, you and your culture will survive. If not, well, there is always the pogotowie.

I realize that I often supply a recipe or two with this column, and there is a great mushroom soup that I serve annually for Wigilia that friends and family rave about. The soup is very dark and rich and made with a variety of mushrooms including imported porcini (borowiki). I pour each portion into a soup bowl, and then drizzle cream fraiche (made from sour cream and powdered sugar) over the soup. The merging of the two flavors is fantastic. People have frequently asked me to share my recipe, but that is a secret that I will take to my grave. However, I will share a tip that my readers might find useful. I purchase dried porcini mushrooms at Pennsylvania Macaroni in the Strip District. I brush them to remove any grit then pulverize them in an electric spice grinder. This mushroom powder is a great additive to soups, sauces and stews.

Smacznego!

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Poland helps Ukraine protect its cultural property

Poland's cultural institutions, museums, archives, libraries and numerous art colleges continue to support war-torn Ukraine in protecting its national heritage, as well as offering help to Ukrainian artists. Among the artists finding shelter in Poland were several orchestras and dance groups. Organizations are helping museums to secure their collections, their most valuable pieces of art, and monuments of the Ukraine culture, and also to digitize and inventory their collections. Over 100 Polish institutions are

providing products to help museums protect their collections, such as fire extinguishers, fire blankets mineral wool, and warehouse space, if needed. Just a few of the organizations which are participating include the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Committee for Aid to Museums of Ukraine and Poland's National Institute of Heritage. Poland has also earmarked over EUR 1 million for the support of Ukrainian artists, from accommodation to legal aid to scholarships.

### Polish Government Choses Westinghouse to Build Nuclear Reactors



On September 3, 2022, the Polish Minister of Environment, Anna Moskwa, announced at a press conference, "The Council of Ministers adopted a resolution on the implementation of a nuclear

project in a proven and safe technology in cooperation with the American company Westinghouse Nuclear. Their headquarters are in Cranberry Township north of Pittsburgh. The project will consist of three AP1000 nuclear reactors, with construction to begin in 2026 and the first reactor completed by 2033. The total value of the contract is estimated to be \$20 billion, with the U.S. Export-Import bank providing financing. Poland is in need of domestically produced energy. In 2019, Poland consumed about twice as much energy as it produced. The difference was made up from imports, nearly all fossil fuels, and coal from Russia was most of that. The Polish government announced a long term

plan to reduce reliance on coal by building nuclear reactors. In 2020, Poland signed an intergovernmental agreement with the U.S. and Westinghouse to implement the plan. With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the long term suddenly became short term. A revised government resolution said that the need for independence from energy from Russia is associated with the need to build Poland's energy security. The implementation of the nuclear project will be carried out in cooperation with the government of the United States of America. Further information can be found in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Sunday, November 13, 2022, Business section with reporting by Anya Litvak (alitvak@post-gazette.com).

### Poland's entry for the Oscars



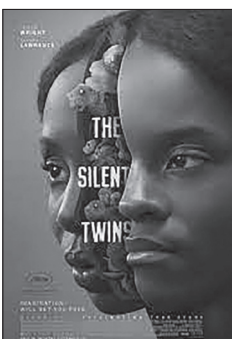
Polish director Jerzy Skolimowski's *EO* is Poland's candidate for next year's Academy Awards in the best foreign film category. The film is a modern interpretation of the 1960s cult classic, *Au Hasard Balthazar* (*Balthazar, at Random*), by Robert Bresson, which follows a donkey as he changes owners, most of whom treat him badly. The co-producer

of the film, the Warmia-Masuria Film Fund, described it as "a better but also warmly humanist paraphrase of a 'road movie'; a panopticon of human behavior towards a defenceless animal". Premiered at this year's Cannes Festival, the film won the Grand Jury Prize. The PCC Film Festival presented *EO* in November.

### Film about 1939 German invasion of Poland wins top prize at festival

*1939 Oblężenie Warszawy* (The 1939 Siege of Warsaw), directed by Eugeniusz Starky, has been named the best production at a film festival that celebrates Poland's struggle for freedom in the 20th century. This documentary received the **Golden**

**Resistor** award of the 14th **Defiant, Unvanquished, Enduring** film festival. It tells the story of Julien Bryan, an American photojournalist and filmmaker, who made the world aware of Poland's suffering during the early days of WWII.



### Top prize at Polish Film Festival

*The Silent Twins*, a drama by Agnieszka Smoczyńska, won the **Golden Lions**, the top award at the 47th Polish Film Festival in Gdynia in September this year. Based upon real events, the film tells the life story of June and Jennifer Gibbons, Welsh identical twins

who refused to communicate with anyone but each other. Jerzy Domański, head of the festival jury said that *The Silent Twins* is an important film about racial and cultural exclusion. The Polish Film Festival has been an annual event since 1974 and is one of the oldest in Europe.



## Dozens of classic Polish films available for free at the website 35mm.online.



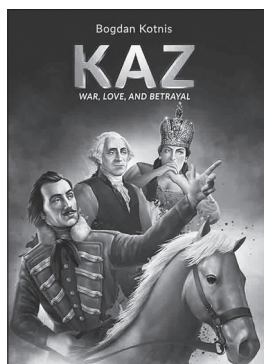
Funded by Poland's ministry and the EU, the website features 160 full-length films, 71 documentaries and 474 animated films and TV series, all with English subtitles. Classics such as Andrzej Wajda's *Man of*

*Marble* and Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Three Colours* trilogy can be viewed, as well as 3,108 episodes of the *Polish Film Chronicle*, a newsreel series which was shown throughout Poland from 1944 to 1995.

### International honor for Polish musicians

The Goldberg Baroque Ensemble and the Goldberg Vocal Ensemble, based in Gdańsk, have received the **Opus Klassik Award** in the **Best World Premier Recording** category for their album *Musica Baltica*. The album features **Oratoria Secundi**, an over two-hour piece

by the 18th century Gdańsk composer Johann Daniel Picklitz. The ensembles were founded by Andrzej Szadejko in 2008, and specialize in performances of vocal-instrumental music from the old Gdańsk and the Pomeranian region, to a consultancy network.



### New Biography of Kazimierz Pułaski

**Kaz: War, Love, and Betrayal**, by **Bogdan Kotnis**, was published recently. It is a biography of Casimir Pułaski (Kazimierz Pułaski), a national hero of Poland and the United States. During the American Revolutionary War, Pułaski offered his service to George Washington, and emerged as a brave soldier, demanding commander and brilliant leader. Before emigrating to North America, Pułaski, a member of the Polish landed nobility, he fought against Russian domination of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In North

America, he organized a legion of cavalry, known as the Pułaski Legion. He is remembered as the *Father of the American Cavalry*. The author was born in Kraków. He holds a master's degree in American literature from Jagiellonian University. He lived for three decades in the United States, where he obtained a Ph.D. degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Kotnis has said that he "tried to introduce Pułaski so that the average American could find himself in his adventures."

### Nike awards

Poet and translator **Jerzy Jarniewicz** has won Poland's prestigious Nike literary prize for his volume of poetry, *Mondo Cane*. Joanna Ostrowska's *Oni, Homoseksualiści w czasach II wojny światowej*,

a study of homosexuality during World War II, claimed the readers' choice award. The Nike prize has been given out since 1997 to authors working in various genres.

### Polish science journalist joins prestigious international body

At the invitation of the Director General of the European Space Agency, **Tomasz Rożek** has joined the High-Level Advisory Group for Human and Robotic Space Exploration for Europe. He is the only representative of Central and Eastern Europe in the group. The advisory group provides assessments and opinions regarding the relevance of human and robotic space exploration. Rożek's focus is on education and science communication.

## Polish scientists confirm link between diet and resistance to COVID-19



Researchers from the Jagiellonian University in Kraków have developed a method to determine if a person's diet boosts the body's resistance to various infections, including COVID-19. Their method uses COLA, a composite indicator which is calculated on the basis of 15 food ingredients, and the amount of

fruits, vegetables and nuts a person eats. The researchers' study, which was published in the journal, *Nutrients*, proved that a balanced diet can, for some people, boost their immune system. The COLA index can be used by doctors and dieticians to advise their patients on healthy eating.

### Hammer throw gold at World Athletics Championships



Poland's Paweł Fajdek won his fifth consecutive world title at the championships which were held this year in Eugene, Oregon. His compatriot, Wojciech Nowicki won the silver. Fajdek claimed victory thanks to a world-leading throw of 81.98 meters (268.96 feet).



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## NEWS BRIEFS



### Polish yacht wins prestigious Baltic Sea Race

*The I Love Poland* racing yacht won the Roschier Baltic Sea Race in Helsinki Finland in July, 2022. Owned by the Polish National Foundation, the yacht set a new race record in the Monohull class, completing the race in 3 days, 27 minutes and 37 seconds. There were 27 yachts with a total of 213 sailors, representing 18 nations. The course was a 630 nautical mile route. The *I Love Poland* is part of Poland's formula for showcasing Poland through its successes, its history, culture and national heritage.

### Polish cake shops among world's best

Ten confectionery businesses from Poland have been selected for the prestigious **La Liste** awards, ranking the best pastry shops for international gourmet travelers. Founded by Philippe Faure, a former French diplomat, La Liste makes its picks by analyzing culinary guides, media publications and user reviews. In this year's edition, ten Polish shops have made the list. **Monsieur Armand**, specializing in *makaroniki* (French *macarons*), from Gdańsk, was chosen as Poland's finest. Of the remaining bakeries, seven are in Warsaw, one in Legionowo, and one in Zakopane. In La Liste's general category, one Polish restaurant, **Water & Wine**, in the eastern village of Drzewce, was included. The list takes into account eating establishments from 200 countries around the world. (Compiled by Veronica Wójnaroski and Richard Howland)

