



# News of Polonia

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## Wiadomości Polonijne

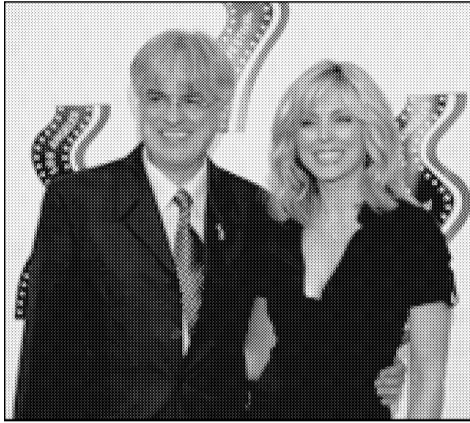
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Free or Home Delivery

### The 10th Polish Film Festival in Los Angeles.

By: *Jadwiga Inglis*



*Jacek Nowaczyński*

Wladyslaw Juskiewicz and Marla Maples

### The 10th Polish Film Festival in Los Angeles.

By: *Jadwiga Inglis*

On April 22, 2009, after another year of hard work from our friend and festival director Wladyslaw Juskiewicz, his board, and all his helpers with their planning, preparation, and viewing of many new feature films, documentaries, and long and short animation films, a very successful Gala opened the 10th Polish Film Festival in Los Angeles in the well known Egyptian Theater in the center of Hollywood, California.

Film directors, producers, actors, composers and musicians (view at [www.polishfilmLA.org](http://www.polishfilmLA.org)) arrived at the event from Poland and California, as well as from other US states. They were warmly welcomed, photographed on the red carpet, and observed by a large group of spectators. In the middle of the courtyard, there awaited for everyone a large table full of Polish culinary dishes creatively prepared by Mrs. Turek of Turek Catering. Wines, beers from Poland, and Król Vodka were served with the dinner. We were just a very few steps away from the Kodak Theater, where Oscar

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### San Francisco's Annual Chopin Birthday Concert

By: *Joanne Winetzki*



Polish poet Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821-1883) got it right in his tribute to Frederic Chopin when he wrote, "By talent a citizen of the world." The San Francisco Chapter of the Chopin Foundation of the USA and Old First Concerts jointly sponsored this year's Chopin Birthday Concert on Sunday, February 22, 2009. Celebrating the 199th anniversary of our beloved composer's birth, Chinese pianist Tao Lin's performance movingly evinced the worldwide recognition of and admiration for Chopin's music. Lin, a slender, reserved and unpretentious pianist wore a black silk Chinese style jacket in place of a tuxedo. The effect set the tone of the concert. Here was another talented citizen of the world proudly displaying his heritage similar to Chopin who often wore Polish eagle shirt studs when he performed in public. Every performer interprets a composer's work in his own way. In turn, each listener responds to that presentation in an individual manner. Lin's recital affirms our Polish son's unique ability to resonate with people of many races, nationalities, and cultures.

Some critics give an inordinate importance to the fact that Chopin lived and worked in Paris during most of his adult life. Yet few of them make an issue of other musicians settling in Vienna or aspiring artists being drawn to Florence, Italy, in the 19th century. It is the same with serious artists today. An actor moves to New York or a potential film director opts to live in Hollywood. They gravitate to the artistic centers of their chosen profession in order to improve both their knowledge and expertise. Chopin's residence in Paris was essential to his career, but an agonizing hardship for him to be exiled from his family and homeland.

Some people, including a few Poles of my acquaintance, denigrate "nationalism." They give the word a negative connotation similar in meaning to "chauvinism, (a) prejudiced belief in the superiority of one's own group." Webster's II New College Dictionary cites the following definition of nationalism as, "Devotion to the interests or culture of a nation." That connotes nothing subversive, threatening, or unfavorable. The musical world generally gives a positive ring to the word. For instance, in the program notes of a recital by pianist Thomas Pandolfi, composer Enrique Granados is described as the "Spanish Chopin." Pandolfi concluded the program with a rendition of George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue. Hearing the audience's spirited response to this distinctive American work, the question comes to mind whether Gershwin might be considered the "American Chopin."

Garrick Ohlsson is recognized worldwide as possessing both an enormous repertoire and as a leading exponent of Chopin's music. In the program notes describing one of Smetana's Czech Dances, second series

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### Celebration of the Life of Helena Modjeska Held at Arden

By *Betsy Cepielik*



**Helena Modjeska (Modrzejewska) as Ophelia in Shakespeare's Hamlet performed in Austrian Poland 1867**

On April 18 the lovely garden and woods area of the Arden home of Helena Modjeska, the greatest Polish actress of all time, was the setting for the celebration of her life - near the 100th anniversary of her death.



*Agencja artystyczna - Partus*

**Helena Modjeska President Linda Plochocki** personally welcomed the invited guests as they arrived by van to the Arden grounds, situated in Modjeska Canyon (Orange County, California.) Tours of the home were available both before and after the program.

Linda Plochocki welcomed the gathering, prior to a delicious buffet luncheon. The Ave Art Foundation from Warsaw was present to film the event for inclusion in a documentary film. The Orange County Supervisor's office was represented by Mike Johnson, who presented a certificate to the Foundation and thanked them for all of the work they have done on the house and grounds. This was followed by readings by Mrs. Plochocki.

**WELCOME:**

*Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to Arden - The Helena Modjeska House and Gardens. My name is Linda Plochocki, and I am president of the Helena Modjeska Foundation.*

*The reason we are here today, in front of this national treasure and beneath these magnificent oaks, is not for anything we have done, but for what Helena Modjeska*

*Helena Modjeska to page 7*

### Anti-Polish lies in America's textbooks

By: *Robert Strybel*,

Warsaw Correspondent

For as long as anyone can remember, American schoolbooks, serious historical works and popular culture, including the movies, have been full of anti-Polish distortions, omissions and downright lies. Among the reasons was the absence of an independent Poland from the late 18th century until 1918 and again from 1945-1989. At those times, Poles were struggling to survive and, due to censorship, had little or no opportunity to proclaim their nation's historical truths.

One of the milder results of this have been such oft-repeated statement as "I didn't know Copernicus, Chopin, Conrad or Madame Curie were Polish!" More serious distortions have included the contention that Józef Piłsudski, the chief architect of Poland's post-World War I independence, was a "fascist". A major oversight is the absence from American textbooks of Poland's 1920 defeat of the Red Army at the gates of Warsaw, a victory believed to have saved Central Europe from a bloody Soviet-style revolution. There is also the imbalance of overpublicizing the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which took place on 4.5% of Warsaw's area and produced a death toll of 13,000, while ignoring or downplaying the 1944 Warsaw Uprising which engulfed the entire city and claimed over 200,000 lives. Unless, that is, someone claims that a Jewish casualty is somehow more valuable or significant than a Polish one?!

Polish historian Professor Daria Nałęcz is among those who want to set the record straight. She complains that numerous misconceptions are worming their way into American textbooks and twisting young Americans' minds. These include Stalin's lie that the Soviet invasion and annexation of one-half of Poland in 1939 was motivated by Russia's concern about the Ukrainian and Belarussian minorities living there. Currently we hear that it was the dismantling of the Berlin Wall that launched the drive to overthrow the Soviet Empire, as if Poland's peaceful Solidarity revolution did not get things rolling.

Among the scholars taking part in the "Restoration of Forgotten History" project is Professor Nałęcz, rector of Warsaw's Łazarski School of Commerce and Law. The campaign is being spearheaded by Professor Andrzej S. Kamiński of Washington's Georgetown University. "American textbooks are issued in millions of copies and used by all students in the US. I have come to the conclusion that 20 years after the end of the cold war it's high time for the information they contain to be truthful," Kamiński said.

The group has held a series of conferences attended by American authors, publishers and scholars. Their participants have included publishers and historians from Yale, Georgetown and the University of California, among them British (Welsh) Professor Norman Davies, one of the most prolific non-Polish historians dealing with Polish affairs.

"Our meetings are fairly straightforward. We simply sit down and go through the relevant passages of textbooks page by page, pointing out their shortcomings and errors," Kamiński explained. "Corrections have already been introduced into a number of books, and others are being worked on. The program of each meeting also includes an excursion to places of historical interest in such cities as Kraków, Sandomierz or

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