

**Winetcki - Chopin from 1**

(1879) Ohlsson writes, "This brilliant and poetic 'Furiant' is a piano composition worthy to stand with Chopin's polonaises and mazurkas as an example of the nationalist impulse transformed into breathtaking art." According to musicologists Michael Steinberg and Larry Rothe, stylized polonaises existed before Chopin. However, they comment further, " = but to see or hear the word 'polonaise' is to think of Chopin. Here he is most clearly Fryderyk Franciszek rather than Frederic Francois, for his polonaises are works whose impact comes from the addition of national fervor to compositional power and pianistic imagination."

Irish writers and poets in particular have a special knack for explaining the paradoxical connection between the specific and the global. Author Patricia Monaghan in *The Red-Haired Girl* from the Bog quotes poet Patrick Kavanagh, "The parochial poet speaks in the local language to those who know its references – and thereby speaks to all our hearts, for each of us knows our own world in that kind of immediate and specific detail." Music is the universal language. No wonder in the hands of a musical genius like Chopin it can resonate with people throughout the world. Ohlsson explains, "... Chopin really speaks for, as many people have noted, the heart and souls of people everywhere, but especially brilliantly for the repressed hearts and souls of people under foreign occupation, which was exactly what was going on in Poland: a non-elected, illegitimate government..." Chopin created some sixty mazurkas from the wild country dance form originating in the villages of Mazovia. Working from that general form he created his own music, original in both rhythm and harmony. Significantly, Lin chose four Mazurkas from the composer's extensive oeuvre to play at his recital.

Ohlsson astutely grasps the meaning of that elusive Polish word "żal." He relates how, "In a (Chopin) mazurka that has you already feeling an inspired melancholy, he'll absolutely slay you emotionally with just a few notes and then back off." Commenting further he tells us, "'żal' is a mixture of bitterness and rage and melancholy and depression and all those characteristic Slavic qualities of which we find such great doses in his music, probably more than anybody else's. He's a super-Slav." Coming from such an admired and respected authority as Garrick Ohlsson, one wonders how the editorial and production staff of Webster's II New College Dictionary had the audacity (ignorance or cultural bias?) to print the biographical entry for Chopin as "Polish-born French composer!"

Some ten years ago I was present at a reception for Ohlsson following one of his extraordinary recitals. I remember telling him the fact that after years of attending numerous Chopin concerts, "At last, I had heard the truth." He smiled and calmly suggested that I "keep listening." Just as the word "truth" glided into my consciousness during Ohlsson's playing, "beauty" floated into my realization the evening I heard Kevin Kenner, 1990 International Chopin Competition Winner. Recently at the San Francisco debut of the remarkable Rafal Blechacz, the phrase "Chopin in the flower of youth" drifted into my awareness. Tao Lin's decision to render the four Mazurkas immediately evoked Norwid's words regarding our favorite son. Perhaps we may also enhance the universal common good when we choose to devote effort to preserving our Polish culture. □

**Strybel - Anti-Polish lies from 1**

Gdańsk. Our guests are enchanted by our country which they hadn't known before. One of the biggest impressions on Americans is made by the fact that Poland already had a parliamentary system at the turn of the 16th century, nearly 300 years before American declared its independence."

A major reason for the present state of affairs has been the relatively small interest of English-speaking historians in anything east of Germany. Without first checking, many of them probably could not differentiate between Slovenia, Slavonia, Slovinska and Slovakia. It is no wonder then that it was the English-speaking world that coined the term "Lower Slobovia" to mean some God-forsaken hinterland on the peripheries of Europe.

"I do not attribute this to ill-will or sloppy scholarship on the part of American authors," said Professor Nałęcz. "They are simply unable to check every detail and have to rely on the research of others, preferably sources available in English. The works of Polish authors have not been translated into English that much."

The writings of Russian and German scholars get translated into English far more often, and their version of history is often rather skewed as far as Poland is concerned. But Americans often uncritically accept and repeat their theses. The same may be said of American researchers and popular authors with links to the "Holocaust agenda", often known to ride rough-shod over Polish national aspirations, concerns and sensitivities. But, according to Professor Nałęcz, not only Americans but much of the rest of the world – the Chinese, Japanese, Brazilians and others – learn about Poland mainly via American textbooks, translated into subsequent languages.

What, if anything, can be done? Professor Nałęcz advises: "We must read what others are writing and alert authors to errors so that new editions get corrected. They usually do. And we must do what other nations are doing: attend historical congresses and conferences as well as holding our own. Such personal contacts are the best way to convey one's point of view. Unfortunately, we are not all that present at the world's history salons." □

**Justyna Ball from 2**

who tried to remove her from the race. She finished in 3:21 hours, not bad. This year I noticed that half of the runners were women. Maybe because it's hard to qualify for your age, and to get a number you have to do some fundraising. Many nurses and females participate.

In 1975 the wheelchair competition was added.

They start ahead of everybody, and they can go fast! After that Men Elite, Women Elite, First Wave and Second Wave (those without numbers).

Some wear funny, costumes... some run for good causes and have names of their loved ones written on their shirts. Boston's crowd favorite is always the Hoyt team, the 68 year old father who runs while pushing the wheelchair of his 47 years old son who has cerebral palsy.

There are people who traveled from around the globe. I always bring my Polish flag so the Polish marathoners can see it. I was told that it gave them hope, to see it on the 21st mile. At this point many of them are exhausted and need that extra push. At one of the first marathons I attended I met Janusz Majewski. He ran dressed up in Polish colors (hard not to notice!) He stopped by, yelled "Jak sie masz?" and gave me his business card. It said "Janusz Majewski, President of the Polish Marathon club in Chicago."

Janusz has ran in 115 marathons. This time Janusz wasn't running. He saved me a seat at the finish line so we watched the spectacle together... Jacek promised to make it by 5 pm. The weather was going to change after that, and I did not bring my umbrella...

(To be continued next month)

**Music news from 3**

programs again.

Throughout the evening, Susan Svrček successfully coaxed beautifully nuanced and colorful textures from the Colburn Steinway. In addition to her discriminating touch, Ms. Svrček's search for understanding within complex modern works and her desire to permeate her interpretations with personal engagement proved a big bonus for the listener.

These very qualities were once again evident in Ms. Svrček's appearance at the Spring Concert organized by the Polish Music Center at USC on March 28. The program was devoted exclusively to works by Grażyna Bacewicz, in celebration of the centenary of her birth and the fortieth anniversary of her passing. Bacewicz's towering Second Piano Sonata stood at the center of the program that also included her String Quartet no. 4 and Quintet for Winds. The Sonata is a complex and challenging piece with three substantial movements, demanding considerable pianistic prowess from the performer. The work was premiered in 1953 by the composer, who is chiefly remembered these days as a virtuoso violinist and a prolific composer, not as a concert pianist. Susan Svrček's ability to shape the music's narrative thread and bring its rousing content to the audience was much appreciated on both occasions of her recent appearances at Zipper and Newman concert halls alike.

**Winetcki - May from 2**

Chelmoński's (1849-1914) painting entitled *Bocian* ("Storks"). Unlike the two previously mentioned paintings portraying the desire for political freedom, *Bocian* expresses the individual hope and hunger of the soul for personal freedom and dignity. According to Malalai Joy, the youngest elected member of Afghanistan's national parliament, "No nation can donate liberation to another nation. It's the responsibility of our own people to bring values like democracy, human rights, (and) women's rights." Perhaps there truly is a connection between fertile Polish soil and the country's freedom loving inhabitants. King Stanisław II Augustus (Ruled 1764-1795) introduced many political, economic and military reforms in an effort to save the Commonwealth. Poland was going through an economic crisis while its three neighbors, Russia, Prussia and Austria, bided their time, warily watching each other while greedily anticipating the annexation of Polish territory. The Constitution of 3 May, 1791, functioned for only one year. Poland disappeared from the map of Europe for 123 years. But the memory of this initial stage of forming a new society remained. The document itself was hardly revolutionary, but it provided for numerous commissions to carry out tangible reforms. Zamoyski states, "It was a legacy which gave the orphans of the Commonwealth an inalienable right to the esteem of other nations."

Grażyna and I disagree with the either-or observation of a journalist in *What, Where, When Warszawa*, a popular tourist and business publication. He claims, "rather than celebrate their heritage as pioneers of constitutional parliamentarianism in Europe, Poles prefer to enjoy free time in the countryside." We believe this is the most appropriate way to commemorate both Poland's historical contribution to the cause of freedom for all people and our individual freedom. After all, the strength and beauty of freedom like that of flowers depend fundamentally on the soil in which they were germinated. □

**Witold Pilecki from 11**

against the Polish state as a paid resident of an overseas intelligence agency," one accusation reads. "The worst crime committed against the state was that he was acting in the interests of foreign imperialism, to which he has completely sold out through a prolonged period of work as a spy." The implication is clear: Mr Pilecki was providing information on the Soviet-backed regime that was finding its way to MI6.

After his death Mr Pilecki was demonised by the Communists and his heroics re-emerged only after 1989.

His son, Andrzej Pilecki, who was 16 when he learnt that his father had been executed, said: "There'd be no better memorial to my father than for the young to learn of his example. I was at school at the time, it was a terrible shock, but now after 60 years of waiting I am thrilled to see justice."

The new archive releases also reveal touching details. In a smuggled letter dated October 18, 1943, to his ten-year-old daughter he wrote: "I am very happy to hear you are such a devoted housemaid and that you like to take care of the animals and our plants in the garden. I, too, like every kind of bug and beetle as well as the beans and the peas. I like everything that lives. I'm very glad to hear that inside my children there are the same thoughts that I have."

The Chief Rabbi of Poland, Michael Schudrich, said that Mr. Pilecki was "an example of inexplicable goodness at a time of inexplicable evil. There is ever-growing awareness of Poles helping Jews in the Holocaust, and how they paid with their lives, like Pilecki. We must honour these examples and follow them today in the parts of the world where there are horrors again."

The historian Michael R.D. Foot said that the life and death of Mr. Pilecki brought shame on the British and the Allies, who turned a blind eye to Stalin's European ambitions as well as the Holocaust. "The Foreign Office's betrayal of Poland is the darkest chapter in its history, even if that betrayal was a strategic necessity," he said. □

**Investments from 3**

Lastly, reinvestment risk may impact your portfolio. This is the risk that the income stream from a given investment may be reinvested at a lower interest. It is especially evident during periods of falling interest rates, where coupon payments are often reinvested at a lower rate than the original instrument.

**Achieving your Investment Goals**

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