

## Garrick Ohlsson Performs in Celebration of Chopin's Bicentenary

By: *Joanne Winetzki*

On Sunday, January 10, 2010, Garrick Ohlsson popped the proverbial champagne cork to begin celebration of the bicentenary of Chopin's birth. Sponsored by Cal Performances at Zellerbach Hall on the University of California Berkeley campus, Ohlsson's recital epitomized the effervescence and freshness of a newly opened bottle of the bubbly. The audience throughout the 2200 seat capacity auditorium picked up on that palpable energy. None of the usual distractions of chiming electronic devices, loud whispers or crackly candy wrappers were evident as the audience listened intently, captivated by the music and the artist.

"There are incredible depths in Chopin's music beneath its glittering surfaces, yet only the very best pianists can tease out all of the poetry and majesty these works contain. Mr. Ohlsson is among these select few..." explains Matias Tarnopolsky, the Director of Cal Performances. Appropriately during this momentous musical year, Ohlsson is observing the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his triumph as winner of the 1970 Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw. Enormously popular with Polish audiences, he also has established a worldwide reputation as one of the leading interpreters of Fryderyk Chopin's works. In addition, Ohlsson commands an impressive repertoire extending over an astounding range of piano music, including some 80 concertos.

Gala performances often degenerate into a rendition of a composer's "greatest hits," tossed off by the pianist with the nonchalance and weariness of an over the hill lounge performer. What made this performance particularly memorable was the feeling of improvisation and newness Ohlsson brought forth from each work. He moves over the keyboard with the assuredness and finesse of a pianist who has done his homework. Yet he eschews histrionics, playing with the control of a T'ai Chi Ch'uan practitioner, focusing his energy in his fingers and his awareness on the music. Taking time with each note and rendering discerning rubato, the artist appeared to be caught up in a reverie as the music glided from the keyboard into the hearts of listeners.

The program began with an eclectic selection of pieces showcasing the diversity of both composer and pianist. As the woman next to me exclaimed, "I never heard Chopin like this before!" Ohlsson began with the Impromptu No. 2 in F-sharp major, Op. 36, described in the program notes as, "reminiscent of a Nocturne in its placid flow and gentle spirit." Next he played the Ballade No. 3 in A-flat major, Op. 47. Chopin biographer and musicologist, Arthur Hedley, stated that in the Ballades, "Chopin reaches his full stature as the unapproachable genius of the pianoforte."

Another musicologist, Herbert Weinstock, described the following selection, the Fantasy in F minor, Op. 49, as, "the crowning formal achievement of Romantic piano music...Chopin's greatest single composition." Ohlsson rounded out the first half of the program with two Nocturnes, Op. 49, and the Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp minor, Op. 39.

Following the intermission, Ohlsson delighted concert goers with all twenty-four of the Preludes, Op. 28. Franz Liszt expressed his admiration of them stating, "Everything seems fresh, elastic, created at the impulse of the moment, abounding with that freedom of expression which is characteristic of works of genius." On Sunday afternoon the genius of both the composer and the pianist bubbled forth

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## Piast Institute complains about the 2010 Census

### Ethnic groups say 'white' isn't enough on the 2010 census

*Arab Americans, others fear loss of benefits if ancestry not accounted for*

An article by Niraj Warikoo, a Detroit Free Press staff writer writes... As a land of immigrants, the United States is home to people from all corners of the world.

And in the past, it has documented where its people hail from by using the U.S. census, conducted every 10 years as mandated in the Constitution.

But the 2010 census form -- in a departure from 2000 and previous decades -- will not contain a question asking people about their ancestry, prompting concern among metro Detroit's diverse ethnic communities. Many in the sizable Arab-American population in metro Detroit -- who have faced a host of challenges during the past 10 years -- are particularly concerned.

Government officials say they eliminated the ancestry question along with several others because they wanted a shorter form that will make it easier for people to complete.

But ethnic groups are worried that they might lose their fair share of federal and private dollars since institutions often rely on census data to allocate funds.

### Ethnic groups say 'white' isn't enough on the 2010 census

With her light-brown skin and Islamic headscarf, Khadigah Alasry of Dearborn said she doesn't see herself as white.

But the Arab American is officially classified as such by the U.S. government, which says that anyone with roots in the Middle East -- including North Africa -- is white.

"That's just weird to me," said Alasry, 23, born to immigrants from Yemen.

It's also weird for thousands of other Americans who say they don't fit into traditional categories of race in the United States. As the 2010 U.S. census prepares to tabulate millions of Americans, the issue of racial and ethnic identity is being debated as groups push to get their voices heard.

The census is conducted to get accurate population statistics that are used to determine the number of congressional seats and amount of government funding, and to ensure that minorities are not discriminated against.

The concern is acutely felt in metro Detroit, home to the highest concentration of Arab Americans and Chaldeans -- Iraqi Christians -- in the United States, according to 2000 census figures.

Having the ancestry question is important because terms like "white" and "black" are vague and don't offer much detail, said ethnic advocates.

"There is no such thing as white culture," said Thaddeus Radziłowski, president of the Piast Institute, a Polish-American group in Hamtramck that is one of 56 census Information Centers in the United States and the only one in Michigan. Having the ancestry question "provides a better notion of our pluralistic society and who we are," Radziłowski said.

Polish Americans and members of other European groups, such as German Americans -- two of Michigan's most common ethnicities on the 2000 census -- are interested in keeping the ancestry question. But the issue has somewhat faded for them given that they, on average, are more culturally assimilated and not as visible in the post-Sept. 11 world as Arab Americans.

Discrimination and advantages

Since the 2000 census and 9/11, many Arab Americans say they have

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## Winter Wonderland

By: *Adam Kiernik*

My "conservative" friends will be proud to know that Barbara and I attended a dinner with Michael Reagan on November 10, 2009, on the Old Town Square (Jazzownia Liberalna). My "liberal" friends should understand that I did so because the event was sponsored by a Polish-American Economic Foundation (PAFERE) set up by an old political ally and friend from Southern California - Jan Malek.

To both my conservative and liberal friends I say UNITE, because the political establishment made up of Republicans, Democrats, the Press, and many others in power, is really united when it comes to action, basically all acting the same way with different window dressing, which ends up screwing us, the people, at every turn. Look into a true logical conservative (really Libertarian) Ron Paul, and if you insist on a liberal consider someone like Dennis Kucinich. These two individuals are among the very few that have the courage to stand up to the political establishment that has been destroying us for the past several decades.

The above event motivated me to successfully try and renew contact with my old friend Chris Cox, the former Congressman and Chairman of the Security & Exchange Commission (who I ran against in a Republican primary, and then supported, during his first bid for a Congressional seat in what used to be my district). It was so nice to touch base with him again after so many years, and to find that we are basically on the same Libertarian page nowadays. Now that my political commentary has been made for this issue I can bring you up to date on how our life is progressing (degenerating).

On Thursday, November 12, Barbara and I spent a very memorable night at the Sabat Cabaret Theater club (where the last time in Poland we saw a show "Welcome Europe"). I have never been to the Moulin Rouge in Paris but I can't imagine it being much better than this Review Theater. The show we saw this time (Kisses From The World") included the music, dances, costumes, and scenery of many countries, including the U.S. of course (early rock n roll to the dancing of the Rockets at Radio City Music Hall in New York). When it came to Poland they included the songs of our deceased friend Czesław Niemen - "Dream About Warsaw" and "Strange Is This World," to which I raised the table's candle light and swayed it back and forth, with others in the audience following.

After the long fabulous show two of the performers sang many hits with people being invited on stage to dance. Before long Barbara was dancing with the male singer and at one point he puts the microphone in her face to sing and she did, beautifully, getting a nice hand from the crowd. For those that don't know, Barbara is truly a fabulous singer and dancer who did some performing before coming to the U.S. and truly missed her calling. At least she had this opportunity to perform publicly on a great professional stage.

We were about the last people to leave Sabat and then celebrated Barbara's debut performance at the Polyester Club, and then continued celebrating at home until the early morning hours. What a night and what a life!!!

We booked ourselves for a 3<sup>rd</sup> Review on December 16<sup>th</sup> ("Life Is A Stage"), and we spent New Year's Eve there, where they will had an unbelievable Ball complete with a welcome and midnight drink of bubbly, along with a bottle of Pippin-Heidsieck to go with a multi-course dinner, buffet, Review Show, and then a live band, with theater performers singing songs during breaks. It was one of the best New Year's Eve celebrations in the country.

## Poland in Afghanistan till 2013... at least!

A December 4 article in the news.pl website reports... Polish troops will stay in Afghanistan until 2013, says a report on Poland's Afghan strategy prepared by Poland's ministry of defense.

*Dziennik Gazeta Prawna* reports that the document, "Directions of Poland's further engagement in Afghanistan", Polish soldiers will stay in the country for at least four more years.

At the same time sources close to *Dziennik* in the ministry admit that chances are slim for the implementation of many provisions of the strategy as the weakness of the Afghan authorities may make it more difficult to gradually transfer responsibility for the country to local authorities.

The authors of the report also complain about lack of coherent actions of NATO in Afghanistan.

Among the problematic issues mentioned in the report are also increasing costs of the Afghan mission. They will amount to almost 700 million zloty this year and will be twice that amount next year. □

You can check out this fantastic place by going to <http://www.teatr-sabat.pl/> While at it, check out our most frequent hang out (Molly Malone's) at <http://www.mollymalone.pl/> You will need to scroll down to choose the Polish version to see who is playing but you can access the photo gallery to see some good pictures of the pub by clicking on "Gallery" or "Galeria" (depending on which language version you have chosen).

Molly Malone's really rocks, especially when our favorite band "Etholina" (as in Ethylene) plays. Management always saves the best table for us and we consider the place our 2<sup>nd</sup> home. We also hang out at a 2<sup>nd</sup> Irish Pub not far away, which for practical purposes serves as a raunchy Oldies but Goodies club with bands playing every night.

Thanksgiving was absolutely fabulous, which included a dinner with all the works held at our home. We invited a couple that lives directly above us (Stefan and Ela Radzik), another friend from upstairs (Jacek Rożycki), as well as very old friends Slawek and Ewa Kancierski.

Before the turkey, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce, yams, sautéed mushrooms, and other goodies were served we treated our guests to caviar and lox appetizers. To add to the flavor I now specialize in making exotic American drinks and came up with a CD that included recordings of Andy Williams, Pat Boone, Perry Como, Doris Day, and the like. Who ever would have thought back in the communist 60's that everything would one day be available here?

The only thing missing was pumpkin pie, which we could not find at our local stores. Our guests were truly excited to take part in this great American holiday. All arrived at 6:00 PM and most did not stagger out until 1:00 AM. It was also one of the best Thanksgivings Barbara and I ever had. There was something special about being able to celebrate it here, and having the pleasure of introducing others to the holiday.

On Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, we splurged for a big bash at our home in honor of Barbara's Names Day. As mentioned in my previous entry, everyone has a day in the year dedicated to their first name. Nineteen people were at our little apartment but, somehow, we never felt cramped for space. The hall served as our dance floor. Appetizers included Beef Steak Tatar, Jumbo Shrimps, eggs with caviar, herring, specially prepared tuna salad along with Polish vegetable salad,

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