

# Polanki, Inc.

Polish Women's Cultural Club Newsletter

October [Październik] 2015

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## Polanki Meeting October 9

The October general meeting of Polanki, Inc., will be held on Friday, October 9, at 7:30 p.m. in the dining room of Villa St. Francis. Final sign up and instructions for Soup Festival. Member recognition, see p. 3.

**November meeting will be held Friday,  
November 6!**

**SPEAKER: TBA**

**HOSTESSES:**

Kathy Camacho  
Roma Numrych  
Diane Ufnowski  
Laurie Ufnowski  
Adrienne Zuber

## *The President's Pen*

"Celebrate the Culture of Light" is this year's Folk Fair theme. This same theme could be an inspiration for Polanki and its members. Where and how can we show our light? Perhaps we have rays of light that nobody has seen. Let's share our light. Let's try something new that we haven't done before. This will keep our participation in Polanki and Polanki's participation in the community new, creative, alive and enjoyable. Let's enjoy our participation and each other by showing the many rays of our light.

## Current Polish Culture and Me

by Emilia Brahm  
Winner of Clarence and Esther Nowicki Award

Born in 1921, Tymoteusz Karpowicz grew up in a small village outside of Vilnius (then Polish territory, called Wilno) in a Polish farming family. When he was a child, Karpowicz lost his left hand in an accident, rendering him unfit for most farm work. He learned to work even with the handicap, but knew he would have no future as a farmer on his own, so Karpowicz spent long evenings studying and preparing for high school entrance exams. Eventually, he left to high school in Wilno, where he published his first poem, "Mosty" (Bridges), in the Vilnius Pravda, in 1941.

As in every Pole's life, the German invasion of 1939 was an earthquake. It was no different for Karpowicz. Karpowicz eventually joined the resistance, participating in guerilla subversion, like hijacking trucks or weapons from German officers or planting explosives in Nazi offices or homes. Still, he was reticent about his wartime experiences, first by necessity — in post-war Poland, the non-communist resistance army was never recognized. Even in his personal life, Karpowicz rarely talked about the war, only invoking it in a few poems.

After the war, when Poland lost the Vilnius region to the Soviet Russia, Karpowicz moved to Wroclaw. A new Wroclaw was being (re)built under the full sway of the communist regime, and Karpowicz was able to study, read, and become the officially recognized intellectual he had often dreamed of being. He graduated with a Masters in Polish philology and started teaching at the Polish department in his alma mater, the University of Wroclaw, then took up doctoral studies.

After marrying beautiful and talented former student, Maria, Karpowicz moved into a once-opulent house in a neighborhood left intact during the war, with sturdy, two-story pre-war German "villas." Crowded trams traveled between the historic downtown, suburban villa streets, communist apartment blocks (nicknamed "anthills"), and new, glass walled developments.

In 1973 Karpowicz left Poland, never to return for longer than days. He settled in Chicago in the Oak Park neighborhood, after a long and tedious apartment hunt (no landlord would accept him for fear that the 7,000 books he brought would break the floor of his apartment). There he taught Polish letters and Slavic studies, as a professor at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Their life in Chicago was spent mostly at home, with few friends from the huge intellectual Polonia. Their circle became even smaller when Maria was diagnosed with cancer. Karpowicz was dedicated to caring for and healing her in every way he could. Throughout his 34 years in Chicago until Maria's death, Karpowicz never stopped moving around the garden and, of course, never stopped writing, barely losing the pace he maintained as a young man, though he only published one tome (albeit a massive one) 30 years after originally moving to Chicago. In 2005 Karpowicz died suddenly, alone in his house, a year after Maria's passing from a long-drawn, devastating illness.

I first found out about Karpowicz through my mother, who had his wife as a primary school teacher. I began to pour over his poetry — always with the help of a dictionary! — and explore his and his wife's story, which fascinated me on the level of an artistic life, and as people of two cultures, as I always felt growing up.

Karpowicz's story is a fascinating one for anyone who follows Polish poetry—he is the less famous and much more intellectual, avant-garde, and theoretical parallel to Czesław Miłosz, the World War II resistance fighter émigré poet who won international attention as a Nobel laureate, professor at UC Berkeley, and de facto voice of the oppressed behind the iron curtain. Karpowicz never reached those heights of fame, or anything near them, either in Poland or in the U.S. His story is therefore an interesting one for all of us Americans, all of us who have entered a new community and felt misunderstood or unrecognized, and all of us having to create our life path and life's work in the difficult circumstances of everyday life. Karpowicz's story is one of preserving and maintaining a culture that works, that made Karpowicz feel fulfilled and productive—and his life work offered his readers a fulfilling experience in their own daily struggles.

## Coming Events

		Nov. 20-22	Holiday Folk Fair
Oct. 11	Soup Festival, Norway House	Nov. 29	Tree decorating at PCW

Dec. 6            Holiday Bazaar/Brunch, PCW

Dec. 20           Polanki Christmas Party

April 10, '16   Pierogi Dinner, Polish Center

April 24, '16   Awards Tea, Polish Center

10/11 Sharon Ann Rzentkowski

10/14 Grace Janusz

10/21 Joyce Hryniewicki

10/22 Patricia Koronkowski

10/24 Anne Gurnack  
Julia Stark

10/26 Ann Pienkos

## Community Corner

**The Polish Center has a number of events coming up:**

Oct. 16 Polish Beer Tasting, Friday, 7-10 p.m.

Oct. 18 **Chopin Concert**, 2 p.m., featuring Kamil Tokarski, pianist, who grew up in Bydgoszcz, Poland, where he studied piano performance at the Arthur Rubinstein School of Music. He continued his musical education at the Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music in Łódź. Adults: \$12; PHA: \$10.

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**FYI: Polish Rummage Sale at the November Meeting**

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### Torsk Suppers at Norway House:

2015: Nov. 24 and Dec. 12

2016: Jan. 23, Feb. 27, Mar. 19, and Apr. 23

Price: \$13 adults, 4 - 7 p.m.



10/01 Joyce Broderick  
10/05 Rita Michalak  
10/08 Wanda Kosmalski  
10/10 Frances Barwinski

## Membership Recognition '15

### 5 Years

Dorothy Broihier  
Mary Kazmierczak  
Barbara Mueller  
Christine Ostrowski  
Deborah Tyszka

### 10 Years

Wanda Kosmalski  
Katherine Ott  
Karen Pierce

### 15 Years

Judy Chattin  
Jerry Martynski  
Barbara Rutkowski

### 20 Years

Susan Konecny  
Elzbieta Walentynowicz

### 25 Years

Carol Bialek  
Anna Rogalski

### 35 Years

Joyce Banachowski  
Valerie Lukaszewicz  
Susan Mikoś  
Geraldine Reszel  
Shirley Rydell

## 50 Years

Barbara Borowiecki

## Congratulations!

Active member Teresa Jankowski, District Commissioner of the Polish National Alliance fraternal for Wisconsin and Minnesota and Director of the

PAC-WI Division, will be honored by the Polish American Congress at their annual Polish Independence Day/Veterans Day luncheon on Sunday, November 8, at 1 p.m. at the Polish Center. Teresa is also a strong supporter of cooperative efforts in our community and is an active and long-time member of the Polonia Sports Club. She does her fair share and more for Polanki as well.

## More Scandalous Histories of the Chopin Competition

by Wojciech Oleksiak, Culture.pl., 8/24/2015

### 1980—Ivo Pogorelić doesn't make it to the finals



Ivo Pogorelić, Royal Festival Hall, London, 1997, photo: Clive Barda

The anniversary 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the competition was to go down in history as the most controversial of all time. In 1980, it was Ivo Pogorelić, a young Croatian pianist, who became the bone of contention.

Ivo Pogorelić was a notably extravagant competitor. He was the only one not to wear a suit, sporting instead a bouffant shirt and a velvet ribbon instead of a tie. According to The Warsaw Voice, he was arrogant enough to chew gum in public as well as during interviews. The way he interpreted Chopin's music was even more revolutionary. Famous critic Dorota Szwarzman recalls his "demonic way of playing with his 'paws'

twisted like Dracula's claws" but also gives him credit for an "absolutely thrilling interpretation of the **Sonata No. 2 in B flat Minor.**" Ivo Pogorelić's playing was at least as eccentric as his image. Dynamic contrasts pushed to the boundaries, vehement shifting of the tempos and huge exultation combined with hitting the wrong notes too often and occasionally missing important details . . . Sounds like the very definition of controversy, doesn't it?

Even though Pogorelić was met with enormous enthusiasm from the public he didn't make it to the final round. Moreover the traditional dichotomy between audience and critics was enhanced by jury member Martha Argerich, a former winner and absolute star of classical music, who proclaimed Pogorelić a genius and quit the jury in an unprecedented act of protest.

Deafening boos, never-ending jeers and angry stamping of feet left the jury unimpressed and Pogorelić didn't even get the chance to play in the final stage. Eventually, the first prize was given to Dăng Thài Són, who was the antithesis of Pogorelić—a subtle, calm, perfect traditionalist, but in the years to come it was the latter who turned into a pianist of world standing. In this case, his being thrown out of the contest in an atmosphere of a scandal



Martha Argerich, photo: Clive Barda

was the beginning of a distinguished career, with the biggest concert halls, the most prestigious record labels and festivals waiting for him.

Further to this, the Pogorelić controversy never ended. He avoided Poland for over twenty years and suggested that his rejection had a political background. His return to Warsaw after over 25 years was judged rather disappointing but still he remains one of the most memorable contestants in the competition's history.

### 2010—An unexpected winner

The previous competition in 2010 unanimously recognized as the best in its history. There was no single favorite but a tremendously strong leading group comprising Evgeni Bozhanov (Bulgaria), Lukas Geniušas (Russia/Lithuania), Daniil Trifonov (Russia), and Ingolf Wunder (Austria). The final stage was incredible and so evenly matched that the most experienced experts were unable to predict who was closest to being placed first . . . and then the jury announced that the winner of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Fryderyk Chopin competition was Yulianna Avdeeva!



Yulianna Avdeeva receives the 1<sup>st</sup> prize from Wlademar Dąmbrowski and President Bronisław Komorowski, photo: Eugeniusz Helbert, Forum

Hardly anyone had considered Avdeeva as the likely winner. Until the final stage she was more of a candidate for a place somewhere around the podium but her final performance of the **Concert No. 1 in E Minor** was indisputably judged as ‘surprisingly unsuccessful’. All in all the audience was so stunned that no loud protests could be heard. Famous critics whose discussion of the verdict was broadcast live from the competition were infuriated and announced that ‘the jury had just lost every shred of its credibility’. Moreover, 2010's competition was the first one in the era of social media, thus the official profiles of the competition turned red hot with discussions often consisting of less elegant invectives.

Soon it turned out that the jury was using a brand new rating system—instead of choosing the winner in a traditional discussion and using the points as an auxiliary indication, the grand prix was decided by the number of points acquired only. This information made the debate even more elaborate and scientific. ‘Was the mathematical method well designed?’, ‘Why were all the judges forced to use one method irrespective of their preferences?’, ‘Can such a decision be at all taken on a mathematical basis only?’ The conclusion came no sooner than a few years after the verdict with Avdeeva turning into a great ‘Chopinist’ and widely acknowledged new star of classical music.

### 1927-2015

There have been a number of other controversies throughout the years; not awarding the first prize in two consecutive competitions in 1990 and 1995, not admitting the miraculously talented 18-year-old Leonora Armellini into finals in 2010 or Fou Ts'ong (former laureate and experienced jury member), not signing the jury verdict as an act of protest to awarding of the first prize to Stanislav Bunin of the USSR in 1985, and so on.

Meanwhile, the competition has never been more relevant than now because it has launched the careers of many incredible pianists. This is why competition partners are not afraid to offer in advance incredibly



prestigious engagements to the eventual winners. In 2010 the winner was awarded performances with the New York Philharmonic in New York and Warsaw and in 2015 Deutsche Grammophon (the biggest classical music record label) announced that the first-placed pianist would be automatically offered a recording contract. This is hard evidence of the industry's trust in jury's verdicts being right and the competition's immense prestige, and it probably wouldn't be the same without 88 years of passionate debates on Chopin and the way his music should be performed in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

## Global Union Reviewed

by Edith Malson

Polanki was asked to be a sponsor of Global Union by Alverno College. The music festival was held at Humboldt Park on Saturday, September 19, from noon to 6 p.m. The festival featured music from four countries: Africa, Poland, Canada, and Colombia. It was a sunny day and hundreds of people sat on the hill above the band shell. There were tents with vendors selling food and merchandise on the sides of the hill. Polanki's tent had pottery, folk art, books, and wycinanki.



Active members Lynn Adams, Jean Wroblewski, and Edith Malson manned the Sales booth. Ewa Melenchuk helped set up the booth. All three women talked with many people who were glad for our presence at the park and who were totally surprised about the Bolesławiec pottery. Active member Susan Mikoś introduced Karolina Cicha and Bart Palyga.

“One of the pleasures of the event was talking to the people and sharing our Polish heritage. It is always good to reach out to the community. All in all, a lovely event.





*Above photographs were taken by Janina Zurko's husband and Barbara Rutkowski.*

## **Our Deepest Sympathy to**

Active member Camille Shaw and her family. Camille's brother-in-law Noel Biesik passed away very soon after his daughter's wedding.

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