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Program

Chopin, Champagne and Chocolate Reception
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Masters of Ceremony

Bozena Gasior
Vice President & Director
American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay, Inc.

Russell Andrey Skibicki
President
The Kosciuszko Foundation Florida Chapter

Concert

Ms. Margot Zarzycka Whitelaw
Margot & Friends Concert Series
Artistic Director
Performing on 1721 Vincenzo Ruggieri violin

Dr. Agnieszka Zick
Featured Pianist
Performing on Steinway & Sons grand piano

Polish Center of John Paul II, Inc. Auditorium
1521 North Saturn Ave., Clearwater, FL 33755

Your ticket includes $25 for reception and entertainment.
The remaining is a tax-deductible donation
Tickets include 2 glasses of the champagne & assortment of desserts
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The Evening's Repertoire

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Three Mazurkas, Op. 41
Piano Solo
Mazurka in E Minor, Op. 41, No. 1
Mazurka in B Major, Op. 41, No. 2
Mazurka in A-flat Major, Op. 41, No. 3

Wojciech Kilar (1932–2013)

Polonaise
Violin and Piano

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Nocturne in E-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2
Violin and Piano

Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880)

Legenda, Op. 17
Violin and Piano

Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941)

Minuet in G Major, Op. 14, No. 1
Violin and Piano

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Waltz in A-flat Major, Op. 69, No. 1
Piano Solo

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Prelude in D-flat Major, Op. 28, No. 15
"Raindrop"
Piano Solo

Michał Kleofas Ogiński (1765–1833)

Polonaise
Violin and Piano

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Nocturne in C-sharp Minor, Op. posth.
Violin and Piano

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Waltz in C-sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2
Piano Solo

Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880)

Obertas, Op. 19, No. 1
Violin and Piano



In Unity and Harmony
The Officers and Trustees of the

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and
Kosciuszko Foundation Florida Chapter

Dedicate ourselves to our common goal
of preserving and promoting
Polish heritage and culture through education.

By supporting our fundraising efforts, together we can offer scholarship opportunities, support Polish Saturday schools and provide cultural programming in our community.

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Paul Szczepaniak, Anna Wolaniuk, Margot Zarzycka-Whitelaw



Bozena Gasior

Vice President & Director
American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay, Inc.

The **American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay** is a distinguished Polish-American cultural and educational organization dedicated to advancing Polish culture through education. For more than four decades, we have proudly preserved and promoted Polish heritage, traditions, and educational opportunities within our community.

For over a century, **The Kosciuszko Foundation** has fostered strong ties between Poland and the United States, promoting cultural understanding and supporting education through scholarships and international exchange programs.

United by a shared commitment to education and cultural preservation, our organizations have joined forces in this fundraising initiative to expand educational opportunities, support future generations, and ensure that our rich Polish heritage continues to thrive in the Tampa Bay community.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Polish Center of John Paul II for its gracious hospitality and support in making this event possible.



Russell Andrey Skibicki

President
Florida Chapter
The Kosciuszko Foundation

Music has always held a special place in Polish culture. For generations, it has been more than entertainment—it has been a way of preserving identity, expressing emotion, remembering history, and bringing people together.

From the timeless compositions of Chopin, traditional folk melodies and classical masterpieces to the vibrant sounds of contemporary jazz, Poland's musical heritage reflects both a deep respect for tradition and a remarkable ability to evolve.

Please enjoy this enchanting evening.

Polska matka –
serce domu,

cicha siła pośród
burz,

w jej modlitwie,
w jej ramionach

pamięć Polski
trwa wśród nas.

A Polish mother –
heart of home,

a quiet strength through
every storm;

within her prayers,
within her arms

the memory of
Poland carries on.

To od matki
pierwsze słowa,

pierwsze
„kocham", pierwszy śpiew,

polska mowa,
polska wiara,

i polskie tradycje
trwają w nas.

From Mother come
our earliest words,

our first "I love you,"
our first song;

the Polish language,
Polish faith,

and Polish traditions
to carry on.

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A BELOVED MOTHER

Maria Cebula Związek

1899 – 1964

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Our children are our legacy

We want them to be well equipped for the challenges ahead. Cultural education consists of the capacity for reflection. Children and young people in cultural education learn to reflect upon their own culture, culture of others, and culture in general.

Our goal is to assist educational institutions in promoting Polish culture, folklore and customs so that our children will succeed in their own right and that they will continue to promote richness and importance of Polish culture in todays' world.

Scholarships

AIPC supports American students of Polish descent for undergraduate and graduate level studies at colleges and universities with a special consideration given to students from our local community attending Florida universities. Scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis for one academic year with a two year maximum.

Saturday Schools

American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay is a proud supporter of the local Saturday Polish Schools

Polish University Clubs in Florida

Our aim is to connect Polish American students to their heritage by fostering and promoting Polish Culture through Polish Clubs at Florida Universities.

Please support us

The amount of funds available solely depends on your contributions.
www.aipctampabay.org

The American Institute of Polish Culture was founded on February 20, 1982. In 2002, we erected the Kosciuszko Monument in St. Petersburg, FL and twice a year we organize with other local organizations Constitution Day and Independence Day. The organization is registered as a non-profit, non-sectarian, tax-exempt Florida corporation.

the KF FLORIDA CHAPTER

Grants & Scholarships

The Kosciuszko Foundation offers a variety of scholars, grants, and exchange programs to American and Polish individuals such as Tuition Scholarships, Summer Studies Abroad, Exchange Program to Poland and Exchange Program to the US.

Teaching English in Poland

TEIP is a unique program that centers on American volunteers who come to selected summer camps all around Poland to teach English to children and expose them to American culture.

Polish Studies

Over the years, the Kosciuszko Foundation has helped fund Polish Studies at over 20 American Universities, increasing American knowledge about the Polish language, culture, and history. Every year, the KF supports 2-3 teaching fellows from Poland through the KF Exchange to the U.S. program.

Events

We organize various in-person and online events dedicated to promoting Polish culture in the United States.

- Established in 1925.
- The Kosciuszko Foundation awards up to $2 million annually in grants, scholarships, and fellowships.
- Headquartered in New York and Washington DC, The KF has office in Warsaw as well as 11 Chapters throughout the US.

Learn more and become a member



As I am entering my final year of university, I have been so grateful for all of the opportunities that my education has taken me. Through scholarships like AIPC, I was able to focus on gaining experience in my desired field rather than overcoming financial barriers. I feel so grateful that I was able to focus my time on unpaid experiences, allowing me to grow professionally and enter my post-grad life feeling confident for my future.

Thank you! **Barbara Kopec-Jewula**

Thank you again for everything AIPC and the Polish American Engineers of Florida has done for me and for our community.

Warm regards,

Gracjan Stecyniak

I am so grateful to have received a scholarship, thank you for this opportunity and helping me reach my goal of becoming a physician who can one day give back to our community.

Paola Piascik

As I'm continuing my undergraduate in mechanical engineering, I would like to say thank you to American Institute of Polish Culture for the opportunity to utilize funds for paying off college and pursue my career in the field of mechanical engineering. I appreciate my polish heritage and want to help spread the culture and support future Polish-Americans.

Daniel Urban



I truly appreciate the support I received through the scholarship and am grateful for the opportunities it provided during my education. I am currently continuing my studies at the University of Tampa, where I am pursuing my degree in Marketing and preparing for the next steps in my career.

I am very thankful to have been part of the scholarship program and to have received support from the Polish American community. Thank you again for your continued support of students and for all that you do to promote Polish culture and education.

Warm regards, **Izabella Thompkins**



I am currently finishing my undergraduate degree at the University of Florida, studying Biology. I currently work at Moffitt Cancer Center and I have applied and hope to enter into Physician Assistant School this upcoming school year. The scholarships provided by the American Institute of Polish Culture have helped me achieve my goals and stay connected to my Polish heritage. I am very grateful for the contributions of the community and donors and I am excited to give back to my community serving in the medical field.

Garbiela Wisz




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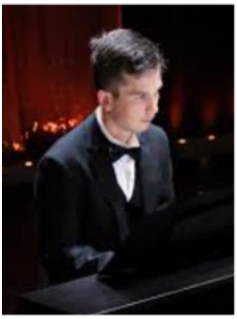
Margot Zarzycka,
Concert Violinist, Sarasota Orchestra

Margot Zarzycka is a highly respected violinist known for her refined tone, technical command, and expressive musicianship. Born in Szczecin, Poland, into a family of classical musicians, she distinguished herself early, earning recognition as a winner and finalist in numerous European violin competitions. She holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in Violin Performance and Education from the Music Academy in Poznań, a Master of the Arts from the Academy of Music in Gdańsk, and a Performance Diploma from Indiana University in Bloomington, where she studied with renowned teachers who shaped her polished artistic style. Her European and American training reflects a strong foundation in both classical tradition and refined performance practice.. A member of the Sarasota Orchestra since 2000, Zarzycka is admired as a soloist for her clarity, precision, and distinctive tone, appearing throughout the United States and Europe in performances noted for their elegance and musical depth. She is also an active chamber musician and the founder and artistic leader of the Margot & Friends concert series, through which she curates thoughtfully designed programs that highlight artistic collaboration. In recognition of her cultural contributions, she was awarded the Ignacy Paderewski Civic Achievement Award for her impact on Polish American musical life. She performs on a 1721 Vincenzo Ruggieri violin.



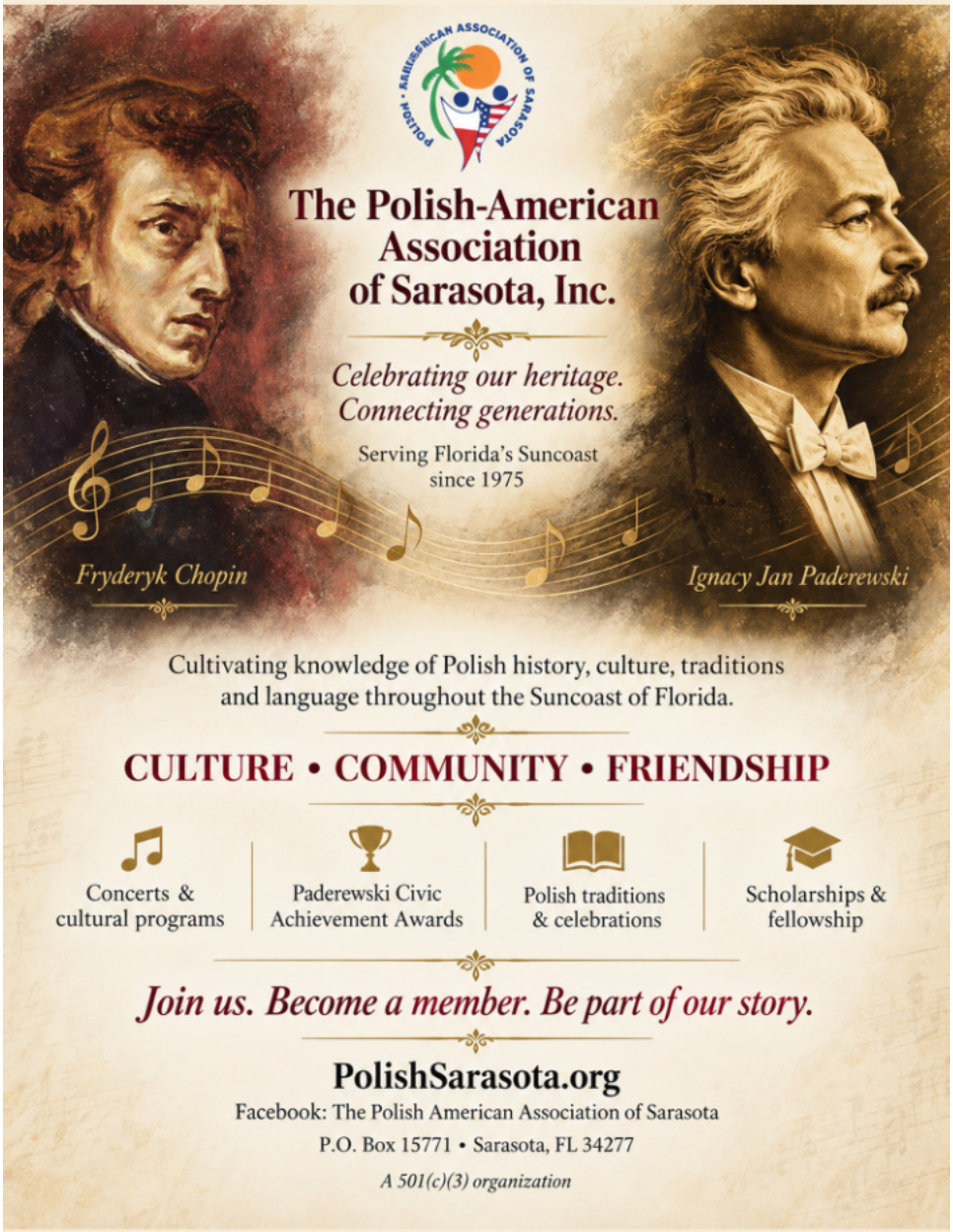
Agnieszka Zick
Piano

Meet Polish-born pianist Agnieszka Zick, hailed a "stellar pianist" by A.R. Thomas, and an established performer and educator. Ms. Zick holds degrees in piano performance, piano pedagogy, and chamber music, and the Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Michigan. Currently Ms. Zick serves as a pianist at the Bayshore Baptist Church and leads a private piano studio in Tampa Bay. She has previously served as a faculty member at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, and the Schoolcraft College Piano Academy in Livonia, Michigan.



Milosz Gasior

is a pianist with autism and a volunteer with the Arts in Medicine Program at Moffitt Cancer Center, where his music supports patients, families, and medical staff through moments of healing and reflection. He also provides comfort with his music at the Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital. Together, initiatives such as these and future educational or medical scholarships reflect the many pathways through which communities can support individuals facing medical challenges. Learn more through his mother's eyes at www.bozenagasior.com.


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Polish Pride in Classical Music

Polish classical music is a source of immense national pride, shaped by composers who have woven Poland's soul into each note. Few nations can boast such a distinct musical lineage - one that fuses folk tradition, historical struggle, and emotional depth.



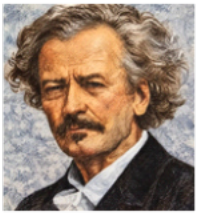
At the forefront is **Frederyk Chopin**, whose music is a cornerstone of Polish identity. His mazurkas and polonaises, rooted in Polish dance, became symbols of national resist resilience. Chopin's ability to craft profound emotion from folk rhythms made him not just a composer, but a custodian of the Polish spirit in exile.



Following Chopin, **Michał Kleofas Ogiński**, carried the torch of Polish pride. His polonaises - particularly "Farewell to the Homeland", became anthems of patriotism during Poland's partitions. Ogiński's music, while elegant, carried the bittersweet longing for a lost homeland - a sentiment Poles pose understood all too well.



Henryk Wieniawski, the virtuoso violinist, added brilliance to this legacy. His compositions, blending dazzling technique with Polish lyricism, brought Polish music to the world's great concert halls. His "Polonaise Brillante" showcased both Polish dance and unparalleled violin artistry.



Ignacy Jan Paderewski, a composer and statesman, was a living symbol of Polish pride. His "Minuet in G" gained a global popularity, but his larger works - like the symphony in B minor, - exuded, national grandeur.

These giants paved the way for later composers like Karol Seymonowski, who drew on the folklore while also pushing the artistic boundaries. Through it all, there is a common thread - a proud celebration of Polish identity. Each composition carries the weight of history, the joy of dance, and distinctly Polish soul.

Credit: Margo Zarzycka margotviolin@yahoo.com

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Facts about Polish Classical Music

National identity shaped the repertoire

During the 19th-century partitions of Poland, composers used music as a cultural language of independence. Polonaises and mazurkas functioned almost like patriotic symbols rather than just dances.

Frédéric Chopin almost never wrote symphonies

Unlike most Romantic composers, Chopin focused primarily on solo piano. His influence comes from refinement, harmony, and expressive rubato rather than orchestral scale.

The mazurka became concert music

A rural folk dance in triple meter was transformed by Chopin into sophisticated art music performed in the world's major concert halls.

Virtuoso violin tradition

Poland produced one of the 19th century's great violin heroes, Henryk Wieniawski. His études and concertos are still technical benchmarks for advanced violinists.

A modern sacred sound revolution

The meditative minimalism of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki unexpectedly became a global bestseller in the 1990s — rare for contemporary classical music.

Polish rhythms are asymmetrical and accented

Dances like the mazurka place accents on the 2nd or 3rd beat — unusual in Western classical tradition and immediately recognizable.

Polish composers balanced folk and modernism

Karol Szymanowski combined mountain folk melodies with impressionist harmony, influencing 20th-century European music.

Classical music originally served the Church and aristocracy

Before public concerts existed, music was written mainly for court ceremonies, religious services, and private salons — the modern concert hall came later in the 18th–19th centuries.

Silence is part of the music

20th-century composers, especially in Eastern Europe, emphasized space and resonance. Polish contemporary works often use long sustained tones and stillness as expressive material rather than constant melody

We Salute YOU!

Many of you or your parents came to America with determination, courage, and a dream of building a better future.

Through sacrifice and hard work, you opened doors to new opportunities, giving yourselves and future generations the freedom to pursue your dreams and define success on your own terms.

Now it is our turn to carry that legacy forward by empowering the next generation of Polish Americans through education.

Let us honor our heritage.
Celebrate our achievements.
Invest in the future.



SKIBICKI FAMILY

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Facts about Poland

One of Europe's oldest nations

The Polish state dates to 966 AD, making it over a thousand years old with an unbroken cultural identity despite partitions and occupations.

Constitution ahead of its time

Poland adopted the Constitution of May 3, 1791, the first modern constitution in Europe and the second in the world after the United States.

Homeland of world-class composers and scientists

Figures such as Frederyk Chopin influenced music. Astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (Mikolaj Kopernik) profoundly influenced science. Copernicus formulated the heliocentric model of the solar system. The chemist and physicist Marie Curie, *née* Maria Skłodowska, is remembered for her discovery of polonium and radium, and her pioneering research on radioactivity. She was the first woman to receive a Nobel Prize and remains the only person ever to have received it twice, in two different scientific fields.

Historic Cities Preserved

Warsaw's Old Town was almost destroyed in World War II and meticulously reconstructed using paintings and records; it is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Remarkable resilience

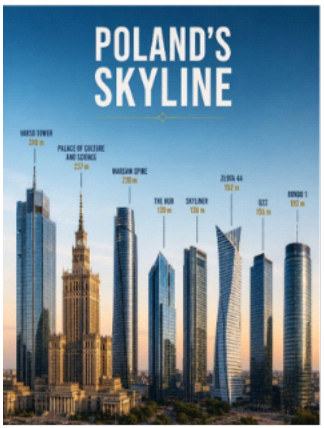
Poland disappeared from the map for 123 years (1795–1918) yet it maintained language, literature, and national traditions without a sovereign state.

Center of European wildlife

The Białowieża Forest contains the last primeval lowland forest in Europe and is home to the European bison, the continent's largest land animal.

Educational tradition

The Jagiellonian University in Kraków, founded in 1364, is one of the oldest universities in the world and educated many influential European scholars.



Strong modern economy

Poland ranks as the 6th largest economy in the European Union and hovers around 21st globally by nominal GDP, with an output surpassing $1.1 trillion

Poland's Skyline

From historic landmarks to modern glass towers, Poland's skyline has transformed dramatically in recent decades. Leading the way is Varso Tower in Warsaw, rising 310 meters above the city and standing as the tallest building in the European Union.



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For 70 years we have been providing assistance to persons of Polish origin who are at risk or in crisis due to poverty, mental or physical illness.

As we celebrate our 70th anniversary, we reflect on the countless moments of hope, progress, and transformation.

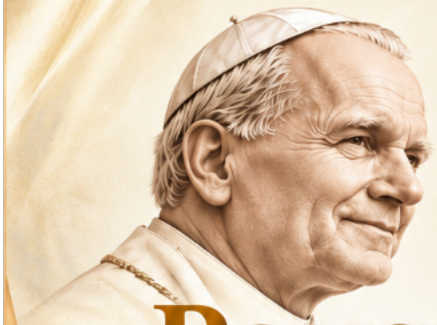
A Legacy of Compassion and Service

The Skibicki family's dedication to Polish Assistance spans generations, beginning with Russell Andrey Skibicki's grandmother, Jadwiga Palade, who became involved in the 1970s. Eva Skibicki followed in the 1990s, and Russell Andrey Skibicki in 2009. Russell, as the current President, carries forward a legacy of compassion, generosity, and commitment to those in need.

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Russell Andrey Skibicki
President

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With Heartfelt Gratitude

The success of this special evening reflects the dedication, generosity, and collaborative spirit of the many individuals who helped bring it to life. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to making this celebration possible. Our heartfelt appreciation goes to our sponsors, donors, performers, volunteers, and all those who generously shared their time, talents, and resources.

- **A special thank-you to Margot, Agnieszka, and Miłosz for being our inspiration and helping bring this vision to life.**
- **The Management Board of the Polish Center of John Paul II** for its exceptional cooperation, generosity, and hospitality, especially Michał Bak, Tomasz Pasek, Andrzej Żmijewski, Barbara Gościk, and Renata Sobański.
- **Hania Hryniewicz and the entire kitchen staff** for their hard work and dedication in assisting with the desserts.
- **The Dessert Crew** for providing the delicious assortment of desserts that added a delightful touch of sweetness to our reception.
- **Ewa Sobolewska** for serving good cheer and keeping spirits high at the bar.
- **The Polish Saturday School in Tarpon Springs**, especially Ewelina Martin and her wonderful team of volunteers, for their enthusiastic participation and invaluable assistance.
- **The Polish Saturday School of Clearwater**, under the direction of Irena Bogusiewicz, for their involvement.
- **The University of Tampa students** for contributing their time and energy to the evening.
- **The leadership of the Kosciuszko Foundation and the American Institute of Polish Culture in Tampa Bay** for embracing this ambitious undertaking, working together, and helping spread the word throughout our community.
- **Aneta Budzinski** for her many years of unwavering support—and for having the distinction of being the very first person to purchase a ticket!

To Our Wonderful Volunteers

No event of this magnitude comes together without the helping hands and generous hearts of dedicated volunteers.Our sincere thanks to Tomek Urban, Grzesiek Kapuscinski, Lidia Wisz, Ela Kukula, Ania Balicka, Renata Derylo, Monika Sierzega, Patryk Gasior, and Gabi Wisz, along with the countless others who stepped forward wherever help was needed. To everyone who proudly wore a **VOLUNTEER** or **HOST** badge, your enthusiasm, kindness, and willingness to help made all the difference.

A Very Special Expression of Appreciation

We extend our deepest gratitude to **Paweł Dembiński, Grzegorz Kapuściński and Halina Bullock**, whose friendship, generosity, and readiness to lend a helping hand over the years have meant so much to our community. Their steadfast support is truly appreciated.

Our Organizing Committee

Special recognition goes to **Bożena Gąsior, Dorota Horocki, Russell Skibicki, and Margot, our Artistic Director**, for their vision, dedication, creativity, and countless hours devoted to bringing this evening together. **A special thank-you to Bożena** for taking the lead on media outreach, spreading the word, and helping generate enthusiasm and awareness throughout our community.

To each and every one of you—thank you.

Your generosity, friendship, and commitment have made this evening more than a celebration. Together, we have honored our Polish heritage, strengthened our community, and supported educational opportunities for future generations.

With sincere appreciation and heartfelt gratitude, thank you for making this special evening possible.



OCTOBER IS POLISH HERITAGE MONTH

LET'S CELEBRATE!