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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Apparently, statistics should not be trusted too much; but how could we not feel satisfied when the statistical data clearly demonstrate that the Polish economy is getting better and better? It is a promising symptom for domestic businessmen as well as for foreign investors. The long-term economic development programme for Poland announced by the Polish deputy prime minister contains elements which may fill entrepreneurs with hope and optimism.

Poles have different opinions on numerous aspects of what we have managed to build in the free Poland since 1989. They do agree, however, that one of the greatest national accomplishments is building of a market economy supported by solid foundations. Due to this our country has great prospects; thanks to it we constantly belong to the group of the best developing states in this region of Europe.

The Polish brand has its renown. It was possible to build it not just thanks to the Polish successes referred to above, but also thanks to the efforts of the Polish diaspora on all continents.

In this magazine we outline the picture of Polish environments scattered all over the big wide world, also in a country so distant from Europe as Argentina.

The success of a country is predominantly created by individuals. Therefore, we attempt to present what is most interesting from the perspective of achievements of Poles operating in business, science, and culture. A considerable part of this issue is devoted to culture. I encourage you to read interviews with persons whose names are symbols of contemporary Polish culture – such as Jerzy Stuhr, Rostaw Szaybo, Włodek Pawlik, and Marcin Wyrostek. The conversation about the world-famous film school in Łódź is very interesting, too.

Contemporary Poland seen from abroad evokes emotions, sometimes controversies. In order to grasp its peculiarity, one needs to look at it through the eyes of Poles. But definitely it is not black and white. I encourage you to become familiar with the entire richness of Polish colours, also thanks to the magazine you are holding in your hands.

I wish you pleasant and interesting reading!

Krzysztof Przybył

*Editor-in-Chief
President of the Foundation for the Polish
Promotion Emblem "Teraz Polska"*

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MAGAZINE
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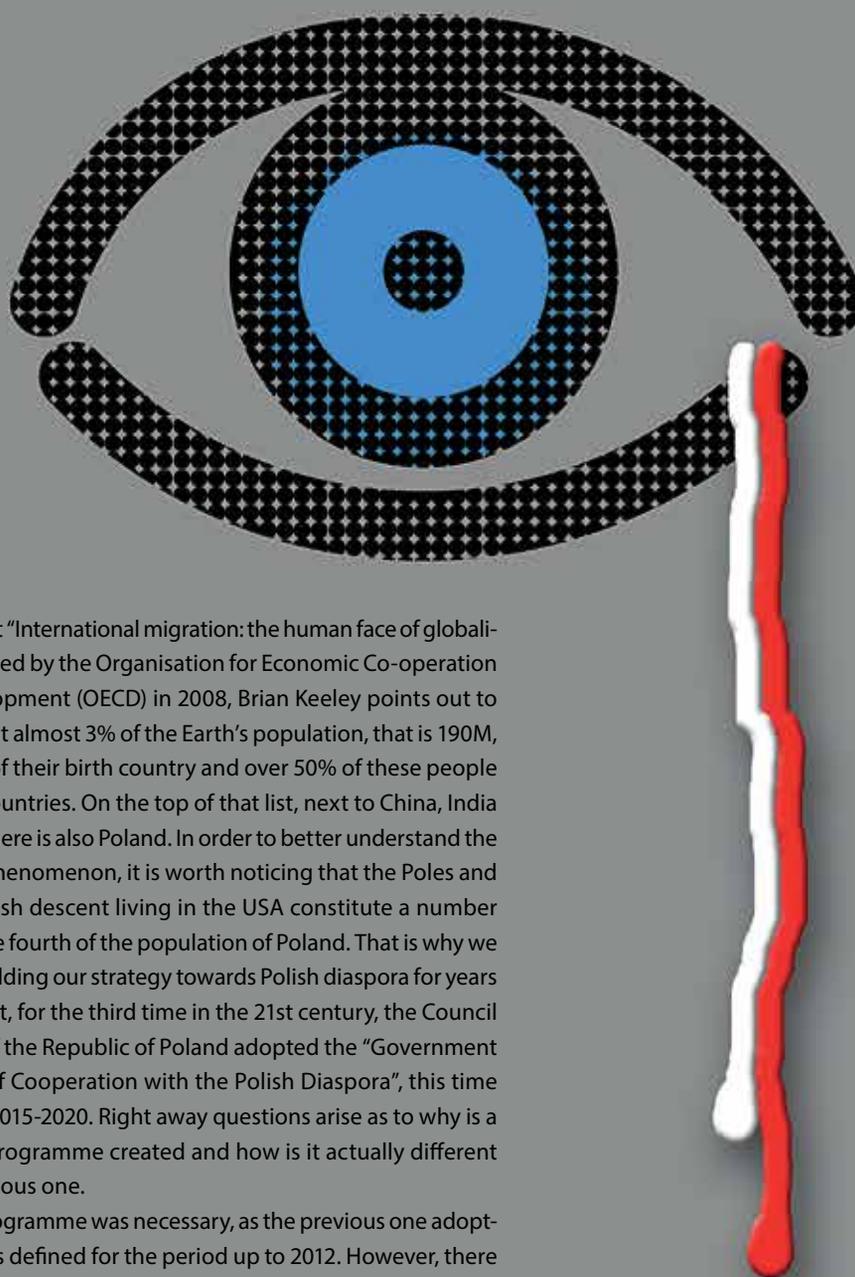
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About programme of **cooperation** with **Poles and** the **Polish diaspora**



In the report "International migration: the human face of globalisation" issued by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2008, Brian Keeley points out to the fact that almost 3% of the Earth's population, that is 190M, lives outside of their birth country and over 50% of these people are from 20 countries. On the top of that list, next to China, India and Mexico, there is also Poland. In order to better understand the scale of this phenomenon, it is worth noticing that the Poles and people of Polish descent living in the USA constitute a number exceeding one fourth of the population of Poland. That is why we have been building our strategy towards Polish diaspora for years now. In August, for the third time in the 21st century, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland adopted the "Government Programme of Cooperation with the Polish Diaspora", this time for the years 2015-2020. Right away questions arise as to why is a subsequent programme created and how is it actually different from the previous one.

The new programme was necessary, as the previous one adopted in 2007 was defined for the period up to 2012. However, there

was also a probably more important reason. After 2004 the situation changed with the accession of Poland to the European Union. On the one hand Polish people, especially the younger generation, started to benefit from one of the four basic freedoms laying at the foundation of the EU – the free movement of people. On the other, the decision of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland [*the Lower house of the Polish parliament*] changed the administrator of the funds allocated by the Polish state to the Polish diaspora policy. Previously it was the Senat of the Republic of Poland [*the Upper house of the Polish parliament*]. From 2012 it is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that coordinates Polish external policy, which covers the issues of the policy towards Polish diaspora.

By the decision of the Sejm, the government obtained an important tool for the purposes of performing this policy.

The new situation needed to be taken into account in the government programme – the document where the authors for the first time attempted to define the circles to which the Polish diaspora policy of the state will be addressed. Previously, this distinction had a more intuitive character. According to the programme currently in force, the target group of this policy includes not only the members of Polish minority, Polish diaspora (after the term was redefined to mean only people born outside of Poland whose ancestors left the country), World War II and post-War decades emigrants but also people migrating after the accession to the EU in 2004, profiting from the European freedom of movement of people. The document also takes into consideration different living conditions in various countries which have a decisive impact on the needs of the Polish diaspora and Polish people living abroad. This led the authors of the programme to divide these circles into 10 so-called geographic and functional groups, which distinguish countries or groups of countries where the approach to the problems of Polish diaspora should be similar. These two factors contributed to a more precise determination of the most important challenges faced by the Polish diaspora policy. Among other, the programme defines the mission of the Polish diaspora abroad. For the first time, the governmental document on the Polish diaspora policy sees the issue of cooperation between the authorities in Poland and Polish diaspora circles.

Polish diaspora and Poles living abroad are expected to help in “creating a reliable image of the country, including protection of its good reputation in the living and working environment as well as in cultivating abroad the national heritage, Polish language and culture”. We are talking about a multitude of 18-20M Poles and peoples

of Polish descent. Help in promoting a proper image of the country from even a small percent of this group is a value hard to assess. Our country wishes to motivate not only the organized Polish diaspora (not many people know that Polish diaspora organizations make up only a few percent of the community) but also the vast majority constituted by those who are not part of such organizations to perform such actions. There are many people of great reputation and strong professional position as well as having knowledge and skills which are helpful for promoting matters related to Poland and to the Polish diaspora communities who are outside such organisations. Up till now this vast group was generally outside of the interests of the government policy related to the Polish diaspora. Among

other important challenges include such issues as legal regulations strengthening the ties with Poland and facilitating settling in the country, development of economic cooperation with the participation of the Polish diaspora and Poles living abroad, diversification of cooperation tools depending on the situation and status of the Polish diaspora living in different countries. Young people should hold a particular place in this broad range of actions directed to Poles living abroad. The document clearly states that our country will make every effort in order to build the closest ties with the younger generation.

Naturally, one cannot write about such strategic document as a government programme without mentioning the most important set goals. I believe they are worth quoting. These are:

- support of teaching Polish, teaching in Polish and about Poland among the Polish diaspora and children of migrating employees;
- preservation and strengthening of Polish identity, ensuring the possibility of participation in the national culture;
- strengthening the position of Polish diaspora circles by raising the efficiency of their actions, improving their activity in the public life in the countries where they live and promoting knowledge about their rights;
- helping Polish people to return to the homeland, creating incentives for people of Polish descent to settle in Poland;
- developing contacts (of youth, science, culture, economy and sport character) and cooperation of self-government with Poland.

In this context the document shows an important declaration that Poland in its policy on Polish diaspora intends to be guided by a principle of partnership with all compatriots living abroad regardless of their nationality status.

190 million people live outside of their birth country. On the top of that list, next to China, India and Mexico, there is also Poland. In order to better understand the scale of this phenomenon, it is worth noticing that the Poles and people of Polish descent living in the USA constitute a number exceeding one fourth of the population of Poland.

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Final of the competition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 'Poland for Everyone' at Zamkowy Square in Warsaw

Below: celebrations of the Freedom Day in Argentina

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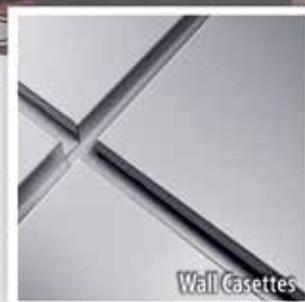
The Polish diaspora policy is a complex challenge as it concerns understood wide range of the state's policy – foreign affairs, matters related to migration, demographic, educational, economic and tourist policies but also international cooperation on the regional and local level as well as protection of Polish cultural heritage and national memorials around the world and cooperation with foreign circles of Polish veterans. This leads the Government Programme of Cooperation with the Polish Diaspora to define a particular place for 10 departments and central institutions such as: the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Sport and Tourism (including the Polish Tourist Organization), the Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites and the Office for War Veterans and Victims of Oppression.

Particular tasks performed by these institutions are enumerated in an annex to the programme which makes it of equal importance with the programme itself. These tasks were defined for two-year cycles. This shall enable corrections of some initiatives so that they best support the implementation of the goals as well as reflect the needs of Polish diaspora environments. This component of social dialogue seems to be an essential task. As a matter of fact, during the works on the government programme it was widely consulted with the society. It was discussed with Poles living abroad, the most important organizations gathering Polish diaspora environments as well as Polish non-governmental organizations cooperating with such circles. The dialogue which was established in this way and influenced the final shape of the document should be continued.

The funds from budgetary reserve are the most important tool supporting the performance of the programme. It is distributed in an open competition for the performance of a public service "Cooperation with the Polish Diaspora". In 2015, Poland allocated ca. PLN 60M (ca. EUR 14M) for projects implemented for the Polish diaspora. As a comparison, Ireland which has about 70-million diaspora (according to the Irish sources, in the USA live over five times more Irishman than in Ireland) and where the Ministry of Diaspora was established in 2015, allocated over EUR 12.5M for the support of their diaspora. This example shows the great importance attached by the Polish state to the issue of cooperation with Polish diaspora circles. The recently adopted government document is another example for this.

Author: Leszek Hensel, ambassador ad personam
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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The Pole – Polish export brand

Promotion of Poland abroad does not only include promotion of Polish products and services. According to unanimous opinions, the greatest potential of our country lies within its citizens. We, the Poles, are the most effective ambassadors of the brand “Poland” inside and outside the country.



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Poles living abroad – formerly cheap labour, masses of people working illegally, settling for low wages and lousy positions. Now they are reliable and diligent employees, often well educated and highly qualified. They are enterprising and successful and they willingly get involved in activities for the local communities. This change of their image was not easy and took many years. Everyone worked on it, both the Poles living in the country and millions of our compatriots living around the world. We are creative, open, ready for change, well educated and have no complexes. Together we are shaping the international image of Poland.

That is why the “Outstanding Pole” Competition is organized each year to honour people who, by their everyday actions, promote Poland around the world. It is a way of showing gratitude to those who significantly contribute to strengthening the image of

Poland by their works, achievements, conduct and behaviour. The competition is a unique opportunity to introduce to Poles living in Poland the profiles of outstanding compatriots who are known and respected on their emigration and often remain anonymous to us.

Foreign editions of the “Outstanding Pole” Competition are a real Hall of Fame. Among winners there are representatives of different fields and generations. On this list we can find, among other people, Artur Ciesielski – an outstanding young chemist participating in international research grants who gains more and more respect among international authorities (winner in the category Young Pole in France, 2015), Witold-K (Wit Leszek Kaczanowski) – recognized in international art as a painter, graphic artist, sculptor and photographer (winner in the category Culture on the West Coast USA, 2015), Father Łucjan Królikowski who saved



The “Outstanding Pole” Competitions has been held since 2010. It is organized by the Foundation of the Polish Promotional Emblem “Poland Now” in cooperation with Polish diplomatic missions and Polish diaspora organizations in the USA (New York, Los Angeles and Chicago), Norway, Great Britain and France. The winners of different foreign regional editions are nominated to the international edition of which the final is held each year during the “Poland Now” Gala. Over 80 people were awarded in five years. Up till now the title of the Outstanding Pole in foreign editions of the Competition was awarded to Prof. Hilary Koprowski, Prof. Maria Siemionow, Prof. Wiesław L. Nowiński, Rafał Olbiński, Janusz Lewandowski and Jan Kulczyk. The winners of the national edition of the Competition are: Wojciech Kilar, Prof. Jacek Jassem, Adam Małysz, Prof. Henryk Skarżyński, Krzysztof Penderecki, Andrzej Wajda, Zygmunt Solorz-Żak and Waldemar Dąbrowski.



Presentation of statuettes to Outstanding Poles in the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in New York, 11 November 2015

150 children during the liquidation of the camps in Tanzania during World War II (awarded with a special prize in New York, 2015).

All winners of the “Outstanding Pole” Competition have in common not only their achievements and successes but also their activity for the Polish diaspora. They are people who actively participate in the life of the Polish diaspora who use their experience and energy for promoting Poles and Poland in their countries of residence. Marian Blicharz, winner of the “Outstanding Pole” Competition in France (in the category Culture, 2015), a musician, composer and conductor has been living abroad since 1957. He devoted fifty eight years of his emigration to promoting Polish music in France by leading a choir, organizing numerous concerts or making albums with Polish folk music at the largest French record labels. Monika Sokół-Rudowska, the winner of Norwegian edition of the Competition

(category Science, 2011) is also actively involved in actions for Poles. She uses the results of her own research on Polish emigration for the purposes of introducing Polish culture and arts to Norwegians.

The winners of foreign editions of the “Outstanding Pole” Competition are active in their local communities. They attempt to integrate the Polish diaspora with the inhabitants of the new homeland. This year, the French Chapter of the Competition awarded Gilles Krowicki for his activities on Polish-French notary cooperation. On the West Coast of the USA Waldemar Priebe received the prize in the category Science for organizing events linking Poland and USA in the fields of culture, science, research and development. “Work on promoting the country is born naturally. I always tried to help others in need. Both people and institutions,

and above all Poland. I believe it is my duty, and I encourage colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic to cooperate" stresses Mr. Priebe. He is president of the Texas Chapter of The Kościuszko Foundation who operates in its New York structures as a member of the board, cooperates with representatives of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington and the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Los Angeles.

For Poles awarded in Poland as well as in the foreign editions, the title of "Outstanding Pole" is an important commendation, showing acknowledgement of their professional achievements. "My lifelong passion became my professional work. I am very happy that I was valued for what is partially my hobby. I always strived to motivate, for instance my students, to follow their passions and try to do what gives them fulfilment. The prize has even more strengthened my belief that this approach is correct" says Tomasz Opański, winner in the category Young Pole on the West Coast of the USA from 2015.

People of Polish descent and Polish citizens permanently residing outside of Poland may participate in the foreign editions of the Competition. The winners of foreign editions are awarded in five categories: Science, Culture, Business, Personality and Young Pole. At present, the Competition takes place in the USA (in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles), Great Britain, France and Norway. The candidates for the main prize include also the winners of the competitions "Pole of the Year" in Belgium and "Pole of the Year" in the Netherlands. In one of the editions, there was also a finalist from Singapore – Prof. Wiesław L. Nowiński. Continuous efforts are undertaken so that the coming editions of the competition are organized in other countries where the Polish diaspora is not only large but also active. We are currently consulting our partners in Canada, Germany, Austria and Spain.

Organization Committees created by local organizations of Polish diaspora are responsible for conducting the Competition in various countries. They publish the Competition, take care of spreading the word among the Poles, accept applications and organize the jury meeting deciding on the selection of winners. From the representatives of local Polish diaspora communities, the committees appoint the members of the Expert Commission (Chapter) which assesses the candidacies submitted to the Competition and selects the winners. People who enjoy respect and authority with extensive experience and knowledge about the activities of our compatriots in a given country are invited to work in the Commission. Complete representation of Polish diaspora circles in the works of this committee guarantees making an honest assessment of the candidacies and the objective selection of winners. The reputation of the Competition and the prestige associated with the prize are strengthened by Polish diplomatic missions that have inestimable knowledge of local communities. Patronage of an Ambassador or a Consul make us certain that everything goes according to the approved rules of the Competition, both at the stage of organization and selection of winners, and that the prize is given to people who

deserve it the most for their achievements and behaviour. This year, the organization of the "Outstanding Pole" Competition is supported by the Consulates of the Republic of Poland in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Edinburgh and by the Embassies of the Republic of Poland in Norway, Great Britain and France.

Over 80 winners were selected during the six previous editions of the "Outstanding Pole" Competition. During the previous years, the competition became a permanent item in the calendar of the Polish diaspora and thus became a factor which even stronger integrates Poles living outside our country.

The "Outstanding Pole" Competition is held both in Poland and abroad. The national edition is carried out directly by the Foundation of the Polish Promotional Emblem (Fundacja Polskiego Godła Promocyjnego) and its organization is connected with the "Poland Now" Competition. The award nominees are recommended by the members of the Chapter and by various social and self-government organizations working on this with the Foundation.

The jury of the "Poland Now" Competition makes the final selection of the winners of the international "Outstanding Pole" Competition amongst the winners of all foreign regional editions and nominees designated by national organizations. Up till now people have been awarded whose activity and achievements are known not only locally but around the world. There is no doubt that amongst remarkable achievements communicated to the entire world we can list developing the polio vaccine or face transplantation operation. Thus, it is not surprising that Prof. Hilary Koprowski (2010) and Prof. Maria Siemionow (2011) were the first winners of the Competition. The following year only confirmed that Polish scientists deserve the highest distinctions. Inventor and visionary, creator of the electronic brain atlas, Prof. Wiesław L. Nowiński, for years living in Singapore, was added to the circle of Outstanding Poles in 2012. The laurels awarded in the subsequent edition are recognition of the genius of human talent. Rafał Olbiński, painter and graphic artist who enjoys great international recognition and whose posters and drawings are published in the papers of "Newsweek", "Time", "Businessweek", "New York Times", "Der Spiegel", and "Stern" and whose paintings are shown in the greatest galleries in the USA, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, and Poland was awarded in 2013.

For many years unjust stereotypes about the Poles were promoted around the world. Today the situation is different as the reasons for emigration, education and language skills of our compatriots have changed. For many Poles leaving the country and living abroad there is no language or educational barrier. Cultural differences are also not an obstacle for them. They fully participate in the social life. They are ambitious, hard-working and effective. They remove the spell cast on the image of the Poles with their achievements and prove wrong the widespread opinions about Polish immigrants. They became the Polish export brand.

Anna Tatarewicz, Michał Lipiński



Adam Ostrowski, pilot of the 317th Fighter Squadron during the World War II

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Keep calm and love Poland!

Łukasz Samek

Poles who live in the British Isles constitute a large and very diversified social group, which over the last decade has been influencing the economy and culture of the country considerably. After May 1st, 2004, when the British job market opened to Poles, it turned out that as new, rightful members of the community we are highly-regarded employees, we assimilate easily, we excellently integrate with the local community, and we share the same values with it. Poles who live in the British Isles learn quickly, get promoted, are ambitious, hard-working, and willing to develop.

Poland has always been regarded as a country with the tradition of emigration. Over the centuries our homeland has been troubled by various problems, which forced its inhabitants to leave.

Curiosity of the world, and willingness to improve material and social conditions – these have been factors making Poles eager to travel all over in search of a friendly place of residence.

At the end of 1939 there were around 3,500 Poles in the United Kingdom. The turmoil of war contributed to the fact that over a period of only several years the number of our compatriots increased fortyfold. Another turning point regarding Polish emigration with the United Kingdom was Poland's accession to the structures of the European Union and the gradual opening of the West European job markets. The right to travel freely in combination with the opportunity to be legally employed, guaranteeing remuneration much higher than in Poland, was responsible for the fact that the United Kingdom became a very attractive destination for Polish emigration.



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Social action #polishblood
Next: Zygmunt Lender, radar operator in the
301st and 304th Bomber Squadrons during
World War II



Today, Poles are the third largest ethnic group in the United Kingdom. The data from the census conducted in 2011 in England and Wales revealed that 579,000 Poles live here. Many sources, however, claim that there are much more of us here, implying that our population reaches nearly 2 million. According to the report published in August 2015 by the Office for National Statistics, 853,000 Polish citizens live in the British Isles, and in terms of numbers they constitute the largest social group residing in the Great Britain, before the Hindu (365,000), the Irish (331,000), and citizens of Romania and Pakistan. The research reports that there are more Polish women than men in the United Kingdom (439,000 and 415,000, respectively). In London itself, there are more than 185,000 Poles, which makes us outnumber the second largest social group, Italians, by nearly 100,000. According to the data provided by ONS, in 2014 over 22,000 children were born in families where the mother was Polish, and nearly 17,000 children in families where the father was Polish. Statistical data on foreigners are imprecise due to the historical complexity of the problem, resulting from the question of citizenship of former British colonies representatives, and an unclear definition of a foreigner as a person born outside the borders of the country or holding a citizenship of another state.

The economic crisis which in 2008 affected the European Union caused a considerable deterioration of the public mood towards emigrants. Widespread suggestions concerning abuse and exploitation of the social welfare system, however, rarely found their reflection in the reality. And the bold facts are that in the period 2004-2008 the work of Poles contributed to strengthening of the United Kingdom's budget with a substantial amount of £1.8 billion. At the very beginnings of the labour-related migration, Poles arriving to Great Britain usually found employment as physical workers. The reason for this was most of all poor knowledge of English. Hence the stereotype of the Polish plumber, which is cultivated in the British society to date.

Nevertheless, 10 years after the opening of the borders, the employment structure of Poles changes radically. More and more often our countrymen who work and live in the United Kingdom occupy managerial positions, are employed in business and administration; IT specialists, programmers, and they are frequently doctoral students at British universities and colleges. Many of us have perfectly integrated with the new country, learned the language and set up businesses, which has had its effect on the way Poles are perceived today. The United Kingdom is not only a place of work and earning money for a better life in Poland; most of all it is a country where we work, reside, rest, and develop in cultural and sports-related terms. It is a place where we live. Thanks to their hard work, resourcefulness and personal culture, Poles belong to the group of immigrants who are the most willingly employed.

The largest cluster of Poles living in the British Isles is, obviously, London. Nevertheless, as the number of Polish immigrants grew, their geographical distribution started to change. Initially the most popular capital city, offering the best employment opportunities, started to become too small to provide space for crowds of immigrants looking for jobs. Being aware of the scale of this phenomenon, to the British government's great joy, Poles started to choose more remote nooks of the British Isles, filling the vacancies that until then nobody had been interested in. This process reduced the previous disproportions in the geographical distribution of Poles between London and other locations in the United Kingdom. The second most popular city among immigrants is Birmingham, although numerous groups of Polish immigrants can be also found in Nottingham, Derby, Liverpool, Leeds, Worcester, Doncaster, Southampton, Portsmouth, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and in many other locations. London, however, still maintains its unquestionable position of a city that attracts immigrants. Once it was quite easy to point to the "Polish" quarters. With the course of time this



© PAMEL FESYK

Prince Jan Żyliński

phenomenon has been gradually blurred, because besides Ealing and Hammersmith, where the old post-war emigration dwells, we will encounter our countrymen in Greenford, Northolt, Southall, Haringey, Finchley, Brent, Hackney, Leyton, Walthamstow, as well as in the south east – in Balham, Tooting, Lewisham, Croydon, and in many other quarters.

Apart from changes of a geographical nature, the structure of the Polish emigration in the British Isles has been experiencing changes concerning the material status and ways of behaviour. Initially, Poles would bring food products with them. Over 10 years after the opening of the borders, old habits have been vanishing, as practically on each corner of a city quarter inhabited by Poles there is a Polish store. What is even more significant and what emphasises the role and importance of Poles in the British society even more is that most large supermarket chains, with Sainsbury's and Morrisons in the lead, have entire departments offering Polish products. It is also worth observing that some culinary tastes in specialties of the Polish cuisine have been taken over by the native British, who indulge themselves in Polish bakery products, cold meats, pierogi, and take a fancy in Polish liquors.

After the last census, the Polish language was dubbed the second most frequently spoken language in England and Wales. It is hard to escape the impression that we can hear our mother tongue at each street corner. The generation of new immigrants is growing, speaking mostly English, but thanks to their parents and Polish schools the ability to speak the language of Mickiewicz and Słowacki is still very popular (also among children born already in the British Isles). Furthermore, many companies see potential customers in Poles, hence specialists who can communicate in Polish are willingly employed. We should also remember quite a large group of mixed marriages, where one partner learns to speak Polish to be able to communicate freely with the spouse's family.

Changes in the structure of the Polish community inhabiting the British Isles that have occurred over recent years have caused the need for diversified initiatives relating to the Polish community. New organisations intended for strengthening the position of the Polish community in the United Kingdom have been springing up like mushrooms. Undoubtedly, a symptom of such processes is the 'Outstanding Pole' Competition, organised by 'Pangea Magazine' and the Polish City Club in cooperation with the 'Teraz Polska' Polish Promotional Emblem Foundation, as well as the fact that Prince Jan Żyliński is running for the position of Mayor of London. Poles are also able to unite around goals which are important for the entire society, to manifest and prepare a national initiative, side by side. An example of such activity is the action of the massive blood donation by Poles in the United Kingdom, coordinated by Jerzy Byczyński from the British Poles Initiative. The #polishblood campaign was organized as a reaction to the strike of Poles, proposed by the 'Polish Express'.

The opening of the European borders enabling to get a job anywhere was a great test for both the immigrants and members of the society to which the foreigners were coming. Poles and the British had to face stereotypes concerning both sides. Many Poles during their job interviews had to explain that there are no polar bears roaming the streets in Poland and that we do have electricity, we had to clarify the geographic location of our country and arguing that we are a large country located in the heart of Europe, and not a town somewhere in the far frosty East. How much time did we need to get accustomed to separate taps with cold and hot water, to the strange sense of humour of the British, and to the left-hand traffic on the British roads.

All this is behind us. Now, we live next to each other, but together. We do not have any complexes, we do not feel inferior, and we do not intend to limit our ambitions. Poles who live in the United Kingdom are not only physical workers, or poor newcomers from a distant country, reaching out for welfare benefits. Poles living in the British Isles are successful. They are well-educated, ambitious, and uncompromising in their pursuits of set goals. This way they create a new, positive image of a Pole in the United Kingdom, so different from the previous one.



Łukasz Samek – Outstanding Pole in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Member of the Round Table and the Arthur Wharton Foundation. Vice-Chairman of Darlington Town Twinning & International Association. Ambassador of the Middlesbrough Futsal Club.



Nina Witoszek

- writer, philosopher, art historian, professor at the University of Oslo, an outstanding intellectual. Winner of the Freedom of Expression Award granted by the Fritt Ord Foundation, she is known as an insightful and controversial commentator in Norwegian media. The winner of the "Outstanding Pole" competition in Norway (2011) in the category of Personality.



Dream about Norway

For years the level of earnings far exceeding the salaries in Poland, a highly developed system of social benefits, the short distance and good connections have been tempting the Poles looking for their place on earth. Norway seems to be a paradise.

However, people who do not know the language and Norwegian culture quickly get disappointed. The country which seems so close turns out to have a very distant culture. There are difficulties in adapting to the new standards and practices, problems with identification and putting down roots.

Anna Tatarewicz talks to **Nina Witoszek** and **Sebastian Garstecki** about how Norway really is and how the Poles live there.

Anna Tatarewicz: Are the Norwegians very different from the Poles?

Sebastian Garstecki: It is important to see, acknowledge and understand the differences between us. These are radically different mentalities. The Poles are more emotional, more extroverted. They display their emotions faster and more clearly. The Norwegians are more toned. Many of them are in a permanent state of "zen". They appreciate the access to nature which is a temple for them. To commune with nature is an inherent part

of being Norwegian. It is more important than the daily pursuit of money, to which the Poles yield to so readily. Moreover, we have a different approach to life and a way of thinking. When a Pole sees a problem, a Norwegian sees a challenge that he or she will face... the next day.

AT: Is it hard for the Poles to put down roots in Norway?

Nina Witoszek: It is almost impossible. Upon arrival, it seemed to me that I found myself among Houyhnhnms – super-rational and



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Sebastian Garstecki - the first Polish-language lawyer in Norway, runs a Polish-Norwegian law firm in Oslo, directed towards Polish citizens working or doing business in Norway. The winner of the "Outstanding Pole" competition in Norway (2011) in the category of Young Pole.

Ceremony of the presentation of statuettes to Outstanding Poles at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Oslo, 2011

super-happy horses from "Gulliver's Travels". If these horses had manners, probably it would be a little easier, but the Norwegians are not known for gallantry. They have an incredibly restrained and prosaic soul which is extremely annoying for the Poles. Only after I learned the language, read through thousands of pages of Norwegian history and slowed down my pent-up frustration, I fell on my knees before the might of the Norwegian talent of cooperation, harmonious settlement of conflicts and fair management of immense wealth being water and kerosene.

AT: In the past, Norway was really crazy about anything which was Polish. How is Polishness and our culture perceived there today?

NW: Once Poland was so fashionable that Dag Solstad, the great Norwegian writer, wrote essays about Gombrowicz, young artists travelled to Warsaw to study with Abakanowicz and the musicians sang songs of Kaczmarek. Now Poland and Poles are mainly associated with men on construction sites. Nevertheless, more and more Norwegians travel to Poland. And when they visit our country they discover that we had a renaissance, and they did not. The elite know Miłosz, Szymborska, Penderecki and Moździerz. Norwegian media keeps track of Polish politics (more thoroughly than the Polish do about Norwegian politics). I still wonder that of all the foreigners who take the trouble to learn the Polish language, the Norwegians are the best – they talk almost without an accent.

AT: How would you describe Norwegian patriotism?

NW: The only real romance that Norwegians have continually and with a passion is their romance with Norway. They are head

over heels in love with their country and believe it to be the best country in the world. Compared with Norwegian patriotism, Polish patriotism is a big book of complaints and grievances.

AT: What is the image of a stereotypical Pole among Norwegians?

SG: Historically, Poles were perceived by the Norwegians as a cheap labour force. Everything changed after 2004, when Poland joined the European Union. Today, they are perceived as being hard-working, but also increasingly demanding.

NW: In recent years, the Poles have advanced in the public awareness of the Norwegians. They are no longer associated with collectors of strawberries, but with craftsmen and professionals in the construction industry who are more capable and more hard-working than the Norwegians.

AT: What is the difference between the Poles, who today travel to Norway, and those who arrived there in the '80s?

NW: Who wanted to go to the "North pole" in the 80s? Intelligentsia from the Solidarity mainly came here. With time they divided into those who have integrated well and stayed, and those who have returned to Poland. Today, thousands of Poles come to Norway. They are not afraid of any work and do not make a fuss. This is what I like.

AT: What is the attitude of Norwegians towards foreigners coming into their country?

NW: In Oslo there is a young cosmopolitanism, openness to strangers, though without particular curiosity or enthusiasm. But, for instance, the residents of Lillesand are more suspicious.

Norway is not one country, but thousands of valleys, fjords, villages and towns – thousands of microcosms.

SG: I have the impression that the Norwegians are very open to foreigners but expect them to strive for assimilation, desire to learn the language, and adapt to the prevailing norms and values. This is a huge challenge for people who choose to live here. The country is very homogeneous, for a long time it was politically, culturally and geographically isolated from the rest of the world. Thus, there is such an emphasis on the issue of integration.

AT: How do young Poles, coming today to Norway, manage this?

SG: If they do not speak Norwegian or at least English, they definitely cannot manage. Not only it is harder for them to find work, but also they are more prone to misunderstandings during formalities. If someone wants to achieve professional success in Norway they must learn the Norwegian language as soon as possible.

AT: How does the job market in Norway look like? Is it open to the Poles?

SG: You have to take into account that competition on the labour market is much greater than it used to be a few years ago. Norwegians value references from other Norwegian companies and more quickly decide to hire a person with experience than the one that is just starting the professional path in Norway. An increasingly important role in the local market is also played by Polish companies. Thanks to hard work and high professional ethics, Polish entrepreneurs are successful here.

AT: Some time ago one could often hear that Poles are treated unfairly in Norway...

SG: We heard about problems of Poles on the Norwegian labour market in 2012, when a Polish nurse was fired for having conversations in Polish during the break. And although the matter of this Pole ended with a settlement, this case started a real avalanche of media reports about gross violations of workers' rights regarding Poles employed in Norway. Much has changed in this scope and is still changing. Primarily, Polish consciousness has improved, along with their knowledge of labour law. I dare to say that those who are deceived today just go along with that. Others who perceive dishonesty are able to loudly oppose it, knowing that the law is on their side.

AT: What are the most common problems faced by the Poles on the Norwegian labour market?

SG: No payment for overtime. This is unfortunately an often recurring subject. The problem is partly due to a misunderstanding. The Poles, making maximum use of their stay in Norway, often work more than the norm. And employers often cannot afford to pay overtime.

AT: What institutions can the Poles rely on the assistance in Norway?

SG: All Norwegian institutions are helpful. However, the problem can be communication. This is a huge challenge for the Poles, as Norwegian officials expect one to speak the Norwegian language.

AT: Will the Poles living in Norway come back to Poland?

NW: I still believe that Poland has enormous potential. If it breaks away from crises, fears and complexes, the majority of Poles living abroad will rather come back.

AT: What is the degree of integration of Poles living in Norway with their new home? Do they engage in activities for the local community?

SG: The migration of Poles to Norway is periodic. Many people come to work only during the summer season. Some operate on a rotating basis, meaning, for example, working six weeks in Norway, then two weeks of rest in Poland. For such people who live in a constant feeling of temporariness, it is difficult to integrate with the local community, to get involved in its life. Poles who have moved with their families assimilate much easier and more frequently. Still, the Polish diaspora is not organized. There is no structure that will represent the interests of Poles in relations with the Norwegian authorities.

AT: Do you feel still Polish or already Norwegian?

SG: Norway is my home, but I still see myself as a Pole. I've lived here since the age of seven. This helps me to get to know this country and learn to live in it.

NW: I am a fairly well-trained intellectual mongrel. I write, think, and teach in English. I carry on polemics in newspapers and chatting with friends in Norwegian. But I always dream in Polish.

Poles are now the largest national minority in Norway. This emigration is relatively young, both in terms of age and the length of stay in the country. Dynamic growth in the number of Poles living in Norway took place after 2004, when Poland joined the European Union. Currently, Norway has a population of about 100 thousand Poles. From year to year they count more and more on the labour market. Initially employed in the construction and assembly services, today they occupy positions in academic and cultural institutions, and are successful in the computer and IT industry. They are also more often starting their own companies. Appreciated for solid and hard work, they decide to stay in Norway permanently. They invest in the education of their children, so that the second generation of Polish emigration gains high positions and achieves success in all areas.



The White Eagle over the Silver River

The Silver River, or the **Rio de la Plata**, flows across the Latin continent, through the territory of the Argentine Republic. The first Poles, former soldiers in the campaigns of Napoleon Bonaparte, appeared here in 1812. In accordance with the old Polish motto "For Our Freedom and Yours", they joined the army of the La Plata province, which at the time was liberating the country from the colonial rule of Spain.

Ignacy Krasicki



Feliks Sobański

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It was at that time that the assumed homeland got to know such Polish commanders of the emerging Argentine army as Emanuel Zatocki (who appears in the local military registers as Zatogni), or Antoni Mierzwa. Over the next decades, when the time was measured by milestones of great independence upheavals, such as the November Uprising, the Springtime of the Peoples, or the January Uprising, subsequent groups of our emigrants were arriving to this South American land, looking for a safe refuge from the suppression of invaders. They were predominantly Polish freedom fighters, who continued their fight for independence in new conditions – by strengthening the democratic achievements of the young Argentine Republic. From amongst former Polish insurgents fighting under the Argentine flag, the soldiers that can take the most credit were the commanders of the Argentine army, generals Teofil Iwanowski and Belina-Skupiewski, and officers: Henryk Spiczynski (called 'Spika' in Argentina), Robert Chodasiewicz, Napoleon Żaba, Czesław Jordan-Wysocki, M. Rymarkiewicz and R. Sudnik. The 20th century brought new troops of Polish soldiers after the World War II, who would emigrate from England and other Western European states to the Latin land, which will be referred to hereinafter.

A very important date in the history of the Polish diaspora in Argentina was the 27th of August, 1897. On that day 14 Polish families (altogether 69 people with children) arrived to the Misiones province, located between Brazil and Paraguay. This date went down in history – it marked the beginnings of settlements of Polish peasants in Argentina. The farmers settled in Apóstoles, occupying plots of land with the surface area from 25 to 100 ha, covered with a tropical primeval forest which had to be cleared. The peasants, who had come mainly from the east of Małopolska, from the areas of Horodenka, Buczacz, or Obertyń, despite the heat they were not used to, they boldly faced the challenge of the local nature. Their hard work brought about good results. The plots that were leased to the farmers on a long-term basis were covered with extremely fertile soil, whose reddish colour was characteristic for the entire Misiones province. The numbers of Polish settlers were constantly growing. As early as in the late 1897, 456 settlers from Galicia, many of whom were Rus, joined the Polish peasants. At the dawn of the 20th century, Apóstoles became the largest Polish diaspora in Argentina. New Polish colonies mushroomed quickly, such as Azara, Corpus Christi, San Jose, Cerro Cora, and others. Initially, the settlers grew predominantly corn, beans, rice, and sugar cane. Later on they switched over to yerba mate, a plant used in the production of the national beverage of Argentina, which is still very popular. Whereas in the 19th century Polish insurgents were highly valued in the Argentine army, the early 20th century saw the leading Polish settlers occupy important positions among farming producers.

Such a leading figure, shrouded in legend, is Jan Szychowski, whose family arrived at Misiones in 1902. The Szychowskis got



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Feliks Sobański with his daughter

to work on the land which was absolutely exotic to them with the typical peasant's stubbornness. They soon also went over to the production of yerba mate. Their company, called Amanda, still operates, excellently managed by Jan's descendants – it is Argentina's second largest farm in terms of production volume.

Jan Szychowski turned out to be not only an excellent farmer and producer of yerba mate, but also a natural born inventor. He and his family equipped their land with advanced irrigation devices and built a water mill. The next technical accomplishments of Jan (or Don Juan, as he was called here) Szychowski were even more impressive. Thanks to his extraordinary ingenuity, this simple Polish peasant, taught merely to read, write and count, constructed Argentina's first multifunctional lathe, using the 'iron wood' growing in Misiones (over three subsequent years he built another one, which was totally made of metal). The residence of the Szychowski family, 'La Cachuera', located 20 km away from Apóstoles, from the very beginning was, and still is, the mainstay of Polishness. If local workers want to get a job here, they have to speak at least basic Polish, which they can learn free of charge in the local Polish House, supported by the Szychowski



family. A great merit credited to 'Don Juan' was the development of a contour map of the 'Polish valley' in 1920, as well as the design and construction of a dam across the Chimray stream, which – retained at the border between the provinces of Misiones and Corrientes – formed an artificial lake. A 700-metre-long canal dug by Szychowski channelled this water towards a turbine generating electricity for the local needs. Jan Szychowski died in 1960. On 26 August 1997, on the 100th anniversary of the celebrations of the arrival of the first Polish settlers to Misiones, the Jan Szychowski Museum was founded in La Cachuera.

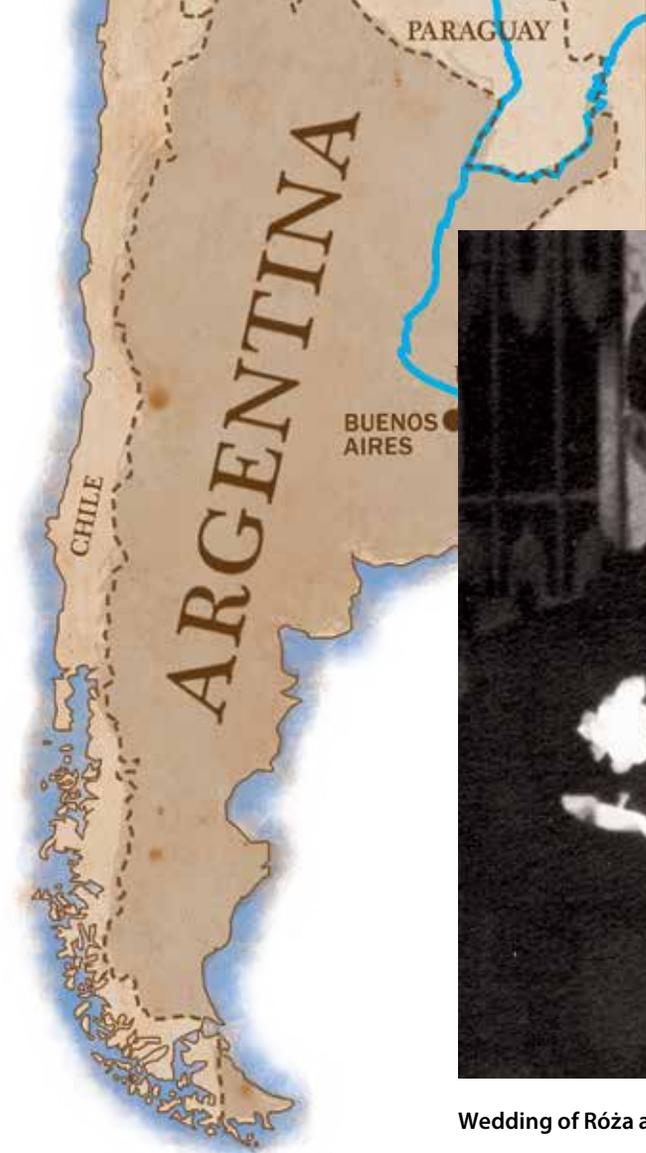
Szychowski was not the only distinguished inventor and excellent farmer. The first generations of Polish settlers became promoters of inventions and technical advancements in Argentina. The first of those people, blacksmiths and cartwrights, already at the end of the 19th century superseded the old heavy Spanish horse-drawn carriages with 2-metre-high wheels and replaced them with *carros polacos*, i.e. 'Polish wagons' – light carts, with low wheels, like the ones used by *Małopolska* villagers.

The Polish emigration in Argentina was growing strong year after year, accompanied by more and more Polish organisations and media. Insurgents from the January Uprising established the first such organisation, namely the Polish Society, back in 1890. In 1905, when the Russian authorities suppressed the protests and strikes in Congress Poland, a large group of Polish workers arrived to Argentina. At the same time, Polish scientists would emigrate to Argentina, for example geologists, who found employment in the Argentine petroleum industry. The next serious emigration wave took place in the interwar period, when ca. 150 thousand Polish citizens settled down in Argentina, with Jews and Ukrainians among them. At that time the Polish-Argentine Chamber of Commerce was established, as well.

World War II also shook this Polish diaspora. Two thousand 'Argentine Poles' volunteered to the Polish Army. Among them was Karol Orłowski Del Carill, whose father, Ksawery, a landowner from Podole, had married Ignatia Del Carill, a lady from a family of the founders and defenders of the democratic Argentine Republic, with great merits for the independence of the country.

Wedding of Róża and Roman Chłapowski





Wedding of Róża and Karol Orłowski

Karol Orłowski played a significant role during the warfare in Europe, where he worked for the Polish intelligence services, organising transport of Home Army couriers from the invaded Poland to England. His father, on the other hand, after the end of World War I, had helped Roman Dmowski when he and a group of other Polish patriots strove for just borders and a strong position of the resurrecting statehood of the 2nd Polish Republic. After the war Ksawery Orłowski was an ambassador in several Latin states and in Spain.

World War II caused another wave of emigration of Poles to Argentina. This time the group of emigrants consisted of tens of thousands of people, predominantly former soldiers of General Anders and General Maczek. There were also representatives of the creative intelligentsia and numerous landowners. The Ignacy Domeyko Polish Library was founded in Buenos Aires (the largest Polish library in South America). It was here, in the capital of the Silver Republic, that Witold Gombrowicz lived and created in the period 1939-1963.

Today, the Polish community in Argentina is believed to consist of 250-450 thousand people. It is very difficult to estimate the exact number, considering the fact that most Argentinians of Polish descent, descendants of the first generations of settlers, do not speak the language of their fathers, grandfathers and great grand-

fathers. Despite this fact, they are still very proud of their Polish origins, which actually ennoble them in the eyes of indigenous people. Here our compatriots can be only proud of their Polish descent, never ashamed. After all, Poland is the only country which can boast an all-Argentina festival (celebrated since 1995), known as the Polish Settler's Day, which falls on 8 June.

The last decades have borne more fruit stemming from the soil of Polish emigration. Young generations of Argentinians living in this period have contributed to the public, social and cultural life of this country with new values. The Orłowski Del Carill family referred to above is a characteristic example here. Karol Orłowski's daughter, Delfina, was the only person from amongst her relatives who married a Pole from the old country, Ignacy Krasicki, and established a family in Warsaw. As an acclaimed artist, author of magnificent tapestries and embroideries, Delfina Krasicka née Orłowska Del Carill became a promoter of the Polish – Argentine cultural exchange. She was a supporter of the Polish arts in Argentina and Argentine arts in Poland. In 1999 in Warsaw she established 'Delfina's Gallery', famous in Poland as well as beyond its borders, which still operates, despite its founder's death in 2012.

Delfina's younger sister, Beatrice Orłowska, married to Eduardo Amadeo, is a social activist, well-known in the region of Rio de



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Róża with her sons

la Plata. Eduardo Amadeo, a former minister in previous governments and a former ambassador of Argentina in the USA, as well as a lobby activist, belongs to a group of proven friends of Poland in his homeland.

There have been, and there still are, many Polish-Argentine families and figures. Let us mention the family of Sobański, so meritorious for Poland. The founder of its Argentine branch was Henryk Sobański from Guzów near Warsaw. This bold soldier of the Home Army, honoured with the Golden Cross of the Virtuti Military Order for his heroic deeds during the Warsaw Uprising, after the war found himself in France, and later on in Argentina. He was a counsellor at the Embassy of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, where the function of the ambassador was held by Karol Radziwiłł (a descendant of a famous aristocratic family, who played an important role in providing support for the poor part of Polish emigrants over the Silver River).

When listing our compatriots who stand out in Argentina thanks to their inspiring patriotic civil attitude, we should not overlook priests. In the late 19th century and in the early 20th century Polish colonies sprang up like mushrooms in Misiones, bearing significant names: Kościuszkowo, Raclawice, Ostrów, Jagiełowo, Wieliczka, Jasna Góra, and Kaźmierzowo. Many of them were founded by Rev. Józef Bayerlein-Mariański. This priest,

a most hardworking man, made a great contribution to the integration of the Polish community in Misiones, which in 1921 had a population of 10 thousand.

Today (for more than 50 years now), a similar role at Rio de la Plata is played by another Catholic priest, Father Ksawery Solecki from the Society of the Divine Word, parson of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Polish Church, where central Polish celebrations are traditionally held. Father Solecki, a great benefactor of the Polish community in Argentina, cooperates with, e.g. the Polish Catholic Mission, founded in 1951 in Martin Coronado (in the suburbs of Buenos Aires). Both Father Solecki himself and the Mission were very close to the metropolitan bishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, the current Pope Francis, who was always interested in the Polish diaspora in Argentina, for which John Paul II was very grateful to him.

To conclude, it is worth quoting an important statement about Poland, Poles and the Polish community in Argentina, uttered by a historic leader of the Argentine nation, the founder of Justicialism, former president of the Argentine Republic, Juan Domingo Perón. These words come from the period when President Perón was in exile in Spain. He had an interview with a Polish journalist then. And this is what he said:

“I have always been attracted to the history of Poland. I have studied it, especially its difficult turns, when the fate of your nation was extremely glum and complicated. For me, the most fascinating was everything that happened to Poles from the loss of their independence at the end of the 18th century to regaining it after the World War I in the 20th century. Despite their over 120-year-long captivity in the period of full bloom of other European states, Poles, who lived in territories annexed by three different countries, did not have their own state, and yet they managed to maintain their national identity, as if their statehood was always there. I have drawn a very important conclusion from your history. It is a question, why Argentinians, who have had their own state for more than 100 years, are still deprived of a mature awareness of being independent, whereas Poles, who did not have their own state for an equally long period of time, maintained the sense of absolute independence, autonomy of spirit and separateness throughout the entire period of their captivity. I have been searching for an answer to this question, as it will deepen and add new important values to the doctrine of Justicialism, which should constitute the foundations of our Argentine state”.

During the same interview, President Perón added, “The fact that so many hundreds of Poles settled in our country and became loyal citizens and patriots of this country, strengthens and enriches it. Bear this in mind, my dear Polish friends! This is what our common Argentine homeland is very grateful for”.

I believe that not only the Polish community from the region of the Rio de la Plata will remember the words of this great Argentinian with gratitude.



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Culture and emigration, or how Poles promote their country

Anna Karahan, Mariusz Soltanifar (Link to Poland)

Emigration and culture are inseparable from the history of Poland – ever since the time of partitions, through the post-war period and the 1980s, Polish artists residing beyond the borders of Poland have left us a great legacy of their artistic work in the field of literature, music, and visual arts, from which we benefit to date. It was them who cherished the national memory and moulded the minds of the generations to come. It was them who did not allow the world to forget about Poland.

Cherishing Polish traditions, culture, and history, caring for the message conveyed

They say good art promotes itself. We know, however, that nowadays we are flooded by immense amounts of information quite impossible to assimilate, and that is why it is sometimes easy to overlook a valuable message. The 'Link to Poland' portal collects in one place information referring to Poles who function and live beyond the Polish borders, and its section 'Culture' is its important element. It is a peculiar international platform which describes in a comprehensive way the initiatives of Poles undertaken all over the world. 'Link to Poland' supports them in media-related terms.

The portal is full of articles presenting outstanding artists and interesting events; the ones who already enjoy great popularity, as well as those which only want to attract their recipients, rarely presented in the media. A great diversity of sounds, approaches, colours, and themes illustrate a broad spectrum of skills and creativity of Poles, who thanks to their talent, work, and commitment promote Poland abroad.

An indispensable component of each cultural event or project is the communication of information. It is essential to evoke the public's interest in the event and to reach those who can support the organisation of their subsequent editions. Therefore, the 'Link to Poland' website contains a calendar of cultural events – starting from private meetings and events, through presentations of movies or shows, to concerts and festivals, attended by thousands of people. Among them are foreigners who enjoy the opportunity to get to know our homeland and what it can offer.

Polish culture goes beyond all geographical frames; it travels across continents, countries, and cities without any limitations, to reach even the smallest villages, just like our countrymen. This article will take a closer look at selected events which over the last two years have been presented in the 'Link to Poland' portal. They illustrate the enormous potential of culture in Poland's promotion abroad.

Polish cinema abroad

Polish cinema and its creators have been known to the world for years – retrospectives of movies by Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Jerzy Kawalerowicz, Tadeusz Konwicki, or Roman Polański always attract large crowds.

Events and festivals which present contemporary Polish productions enjoy equal interest. The New Polish Film Festival - Filmland Polen, comprising Hanover, Hamburg, and Lübeck, LET'CEE Film Festival in Vienna, the Polish Film Festival in America held in Chicago, and the film cycles presented by the Polish Filmmakers in New York have become permanent fixtures in the calendars of local cultural events. Screenings of the latest Polish movies, and opportunities to meet and talk to their creators in person, are an unforgettable experience for Poles as well as for local residents.

The largest mobile festival that promotes contemporary Polish cinema is the Play Poland Film Festival. Its range encompasses not only London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast, Sunderland, Birmingham and Aberfeldy, but also Ottawa, New York, and Oslo. During the nearly 2-month-long festival viewers are given a chance to see the latest full-length and short Polish productions. Play Poland also constitutes a perfect opportunity to meet filmmakers and producers and to take part in workshops, exhibitions, or concerts.

Music – a language beyond borders

Just like film, Polish music also reaches places far beyond the borders of our country. Thanks to its immense diversity, universality, and message it finds its way to every single recipient.

It is impossible to list all Polish artists, musicians, and composers, and to present in just one article their extraordinary talent along with the awards and distinctions won by them. Polish musicians give concerts everywhere, in every nook of the world; they organise workshops and teach foreign students how to play music by Chopin or contemporary Polish artists. They are present in Iraqi Kurdistan as well as at universities and colleges of New York.

An example of an initiative that stands a chance to become a permanent fixture on the world's stages is the Polish Music Days, organised by the Piano Classic Association. Twenty concerts, eight countries, nine artists, and apart from that instrumental workshops and discussion panels – all this is offered within the project's framework. Distinguished Polish artists, with Patrycja Piekutowska, Sławomir Zubrzycki, Anna Miernik, Marian Sobula, Agata Igras-Sawicka, Barbara Borowicz, and Andrzej Pikul, have



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already visited Georgia, Armenia, Turkey, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Israel, and Azerbaijan. The audience had a chance to listen to their renditions of music by, e.g. Chopin, Lutosławski, Paderewski, Szymanowski, Penderecki, Bacewicz, Szałowski, and Lampart. A rich programme of concerts always attracts numerous music lovers, and in doing so it offers an opportunity to show Poland in the best light. This year the artists are going to South America with their concerts and workshops. Ongoing reports of their tour will be on the 'Link to Poland' website.

The traditional music of the Polish countryside, thanks to modern blues or jazz-like arrangements, improvisations with their colours and expression, touches not only Polish hearts, but also attracts foreign audiences. The best example here could be the repertoire of the avant-garde group 'Janusz Prusinowski Trio', which combines folk music with dancing, and the archaic with the modern, as well as concerts of Anna Maria Jopek, who performs on stage with the greatest stars and is an excellent ambassador of Poland in the world. Tours abroad have become a permanent fixture in her artistic calendar. Travelling the world from China,

Japan, South Korea, through Turkey, Holland, Portugal, as far as the United States and Canada, Anna Maria Jopek gives the audience the most beautiful Polish sounds.

The artistic achievements of Poles also comprise competitions in writing, visual arts, and music for children as well as for adults. One of the latest initiatives in this respect is the international Polish song competition 'The Voice of Polonia'. The final of the first edition was held last year in Brussels. The jury, chaired by outstanding musicians, Maria Sadowska and Stanisław Wenglorz, selected the winner, Rafał Motycki, a resident of the United Kingdom. The competition attracted many individualities and vocal talents. Over 70 Poles residing in Belgium, France, Holland, Germany, the United



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Kingdom, and Ukraine took part in it. Among them there were not only young artists, looking for their career paths, but also more experienced ones, for whom life had made it impossible to fulfil their dreams. Thanks to an exceptionally high level of the candidates and the concert tour of the winners in Lille, France (Teatr Salle du Gymnase), Rotterdam, Holland (Teatr Zuidplein), and Solingen, Germany (Cobra Club), the competition was a true show filled with emotions and great music.

As it can be seen, Polish artists who live abroad often combine their force and talents, thanks to which it is easier for them to implement all sorts of artistic projects. Polish Artists in London (PAiL London) operates according to a similar principle. It is an organisation which supports and associates rising artists of Polish descent who operate in the United Kingdom, promoting Polish culture in the British Isles. Last year the association organised a series of events entitled 'Knock Art', combining different fields of culture: theatre, music, visual arts, film, and literature. This project was addressed to audiences with a good command of Polish as well as those who do not understand this language at all. Its goal was to break cultural stereotypes by a strong 'knock out' with art, presented by young London-based artists (especially those of Polish descent), and to encourage participants in the events to contribute to the creation of the Polish culture which is coming

into being here and now. Activities presented during the Knock Art were based on the mutual exchange of experiences, ideas, and inspirations, as well as on networking.

Polish artists and emigrants, when organising different events in a modern and unique way, make sure to also engage local residents in them, and in doing so create an opportunity to get to know each other better. And such was the goal of the interdisciplinary event 'Meet Your Polish Neighbours', organised in the United Kingdom, during which residents of London had a chance to learn about the Polish culture and language (the second language of the United Kingdom).

Numerous initiatives undertaken by Poles abroad take on a regular character and become permanent fixtures in the calendars of local cultural events. It is a very good foundation for building a coherent brand, inseparable from Poland and its culture. The Polish Culture Days, regularly organised in many countries of the world: in Vienna, Udine (Italy), Liverpool, Bremond (Texas), Vilnius and Oslo, as well as festivals, e.g. the Australian PolArt and the Taste of Polonia in Chicago, have already become a tradition. Literary meetings, exhibitions of photographs and fine arts, dance shows, concerts and theatre performances are an inseparable element of these events. Their organisation would be impossible without the commitment of Poles who live in these countries. Numerous foundations and associations support Polish artists. Such activities are held by, e.g. the MMusic foundation from Holland, which organises concerts of Polish musicians, Gram-X Promotions, thanks to which New York's audience has a chance to listen to Polish rock, reggae or hop-hop stars, as well as the Hurricane of Hearts, which year after year invites Polish bands to London alongside the concerts and charity events it organises.

Selected events, initiatives, and projects presented in this article show the enormous potential of Polish artists. They also prove that besides the educational role of culture mentioned above, culture also constitutes an excellent pretext for cooperation of artists representing different fields (music, dance, arts, and theatre) and it provides an opportunity of joint activities of artists residing in Poland and beyond its borders. It is an easy way to engage foreigners in these initiatives, too. Culture connects over borders, over languages – it is impossible to organise one single cultural event without cooperation, compromise, and unity. Moreover, alongside cultural events, Polish companies and entrepreneurs have a perfect occasion to demonstrate their potential and present their current offer, too. Culture builds a good atmosphere, breaks stereotypes, prejudices, and is an excellent tool that promotes Poland abroad. It is worth meeting this challenge and developing a coherent strategy of the promotion of Poland among foreigners by the cultural events referred to above. They are the best carriers of information. Most probably, enchanted with what Poland has to offer, they will enthusiastically share their impressions, inspiring their relatives and friends to get to know our homeland.



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A Perspective on Warsaw and New York

by Daniel M. Gosek

In the (all-too-short) summers following the ends of my second and third years as an undergraduate, I travelled to Warsaw. I made that decision because I was eager to kill two birds with one stone: first, to satisfy every college student's expectation to pursue internship opportunities for the sake of career success; and secondly, to explore my Polish heritage for the first time in seven years.

Warsaw, on account of both trips, proved to be a milestone in my ascent towards adulthood. These summers did not only give me a chance to immerse myself in Poland's capital as an intern abroad; more importantly, they presented my first mature glimpses at the nuances of Polish culture and tradition. From shadowing deputies of the Sejm, to sitting in the Żyleta among the impassioned fanatics of Legia Warszawa, and everything in between—the experiences I've had in Warsaw carry tremendous insight into the soul of Poland and its people.

I've since graduated from Columbia University and began my career within the remarkable urban jungle that surrounds its campus: New York City. It's a bustling scene that I first got to know as a first-year college student. Now, it's the place I call home. And as striking and unique as the city is, I'm certain that I would not fully appreciate the allure and opportunity it offers had I not spent



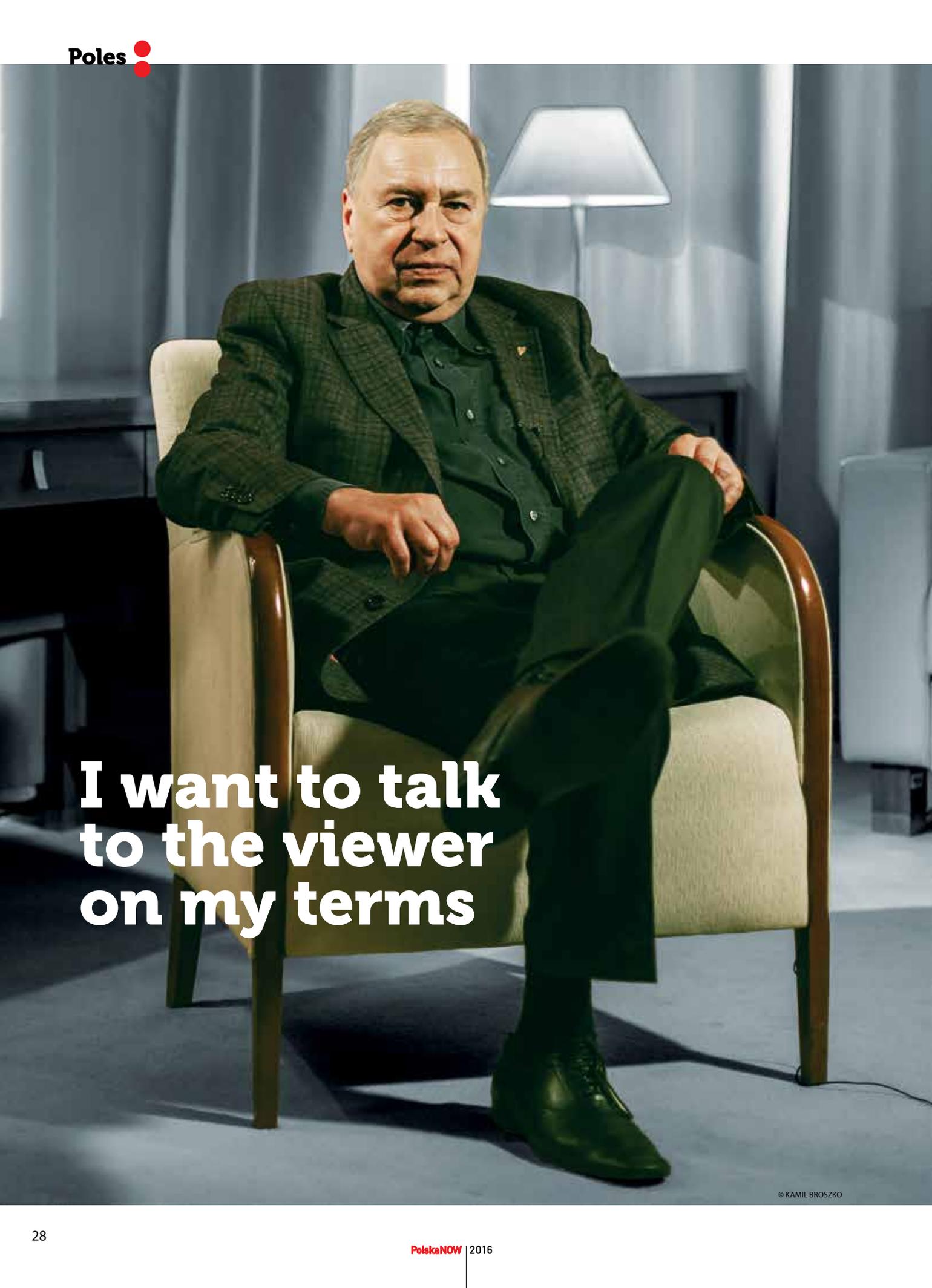
those interim summers exploring Warsaw—the place my parents had once called home.

Getting to know a city that is so significant to my familial background marks one of the most fulfilling and treasured episodes of my life. Why? It's a matter of gaining perspective—both sides of my dual nationalities coming to life. And the elevation needed to access this

eye-opening point of view comes from the opportunity to travel to and experience both New York City and Warsaw as a millennial—that is, today's young adult between the ages of 18 and 34.

In those months I spent in Warsaw doing internships, the Polish workplace wasn't the only thing I was exposed to. I enjoyed delicious food at unique, trendy restaurants. I scratched the surface (and maybe a few cuts deeper) of Warsaw's nightlife and live music scene. I curiously wandered through dozens of compelling historical landmarks, buildings, and exhibits. I've tasted the cultural flavours of the month enjoyed by Warsaw's millennials—and it was distinctly insightful because I had NYC's respective counterparts to draw comparisons from.

I am a New Yorker, a millennial, a recent graduate of Columbia University, living and working in New York, but I'm infatuated with Warsaw, a city that my parents once called home.

A man with short grey hair, wearing a dark green checkered suit jacket over a dark green shirt and dark green trousers, is sitting in a light-colored upholstered chair with a dark wood frame. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a studio setting with a lamp and curtains.

**I want to talk
to the viewer
on my terms**

Jerzy Stuhr, actor and director, talks with Adam Mikołajczyk and Kamil Broszko.

Kamil Broszko: Today an artist must cope with not only artistic obligations, but also the promotional ones. How does the current reality influence the artist's choices? Were the conditions present at the times of the People's Poland more stimulating for the creative process?

Jerzy Stuhr: I became a theatre actor in 1970. Five years later film took interest in me, and twenty years after that, in 1995, I started my work as a film director. Those were completely different times, on the border of two systems of the functioning of art in Poland. I have stayed faithful to the author cinema, which constitutes a manifestation of views and attitudes; very rarely, even as an actor, have I gone beyond this formula to reach for the genre cinema. I am talking about it to stress that both during the times of the Polish People's Republic and today, my only goal was and still is to process my thoughts creatively and to be at one with myself. As an actor, I cannot think opportunistically, how many viewers I will have. Unfortunately, as a creator of author cinema, from the very beginning of the creative process, I have to think about who could finance it. When I started making movies in the mid-1990s, the system of financing cinemas was still the same as under communism. Despite being a debutant, I had no problems in finding the money. Today, I have to go from place to place and collect it. I have to answer numerous questions from investors, even of the type how many viewers will come to see my movie. It is very embarrassing, because an artist should not ask such a question in order to maintain the truth of his message, resulting from a deep need. We start thinking about the audience only when we make a decision concerning the form we want to adopt to communicate our thoughts to be comprehensible for the viewer. I can easily repeat after Andrzej Wajda: I want to talk to the viewer, but on my terms. I cannot wonder what the viewer would like to hear, because it would be disloyal towards myself, the truth, and art.

The greatest skill is to be able to talk about yourself so that the viewer who lives even as far as Argentina could understand what you mean. Polish cinema managed to do this three times. In 'The Decalogue' by Krzysztof Kieślowski, which told a story of people living in a housing estate at Stawki Street in Warsaw in such a way that their problems were understood by viewers all over the world. The second example is 'Wielopole' by Tadeusz Kantor. Even students in Uruguay were able to pronounce this title properly. And recently we had the example of 'Ida' by Paweł Pawlikowski, struggling with our terrible history of Polish-Jewish relations. Also my films, 'Love Stories' and 'Big Animal', were received well abroad, because they were about universal values, concerning every single person.

KB: Was it easier to convince a censor back then or today's investor?

JS: In the period of the Polish People's Republic we paid more attention to political correctness than to official censorship. We were always preoccupied with the question as to what limits could be moved the threshold of honesty of our messages. It was a kind of game with the censor, bargaining about individual scenes. We would always make a couple of extreme shots, knowing right from the start that they would never be in the movie. Thanks to that we had a bargaining card, to protect the scenes we really wanted to save, the loss of which would change the contents of our message. That is what happened many times with the movies by Krzysztof Kieslowski. When I started directing, I noticed I was censoring myself... in economic terms. Instead of a Boeing 767 I would seat my characters in a tram. But when it was important, for instance in 'The Twists of Fate', I was shooting in Majorca and in a Boeing. When I was shooting 'Citizen', the story of which spans 60 years, I knew right away that I was exposing myself to production-related obstacles, because I changed the project from an intimate movie into historical cinema, much more costly.

KB: Is political correctness able to constrain an artist's thoughts?

JS: I have never had such a problem. The honesty of an artist's expression frequently goes beyond the boundaries of political correctness. When I express myself in public as Jerzy Stuhr, I have to consider political correctness, but it is very easy for me to go beyond these boundaries as an actor or a director. Of course, I then expose myself to a dispute, but I have to be ready for that.

KB: What are the tasks of culture as of today? Should it protect certain values, or rather respond to the needs of the market that finances it?

JS: That is a difficult question. I believe that the general condition of culture is jeopardised, so it should protect universal values all the more. These are the values that attract the attention of an ecumenical jury, present nearly at every important festival abroad. Unfortunately, no Polish festivals have such a jury. I myself have received many awards of the ecumenical jury, including the Bresson Award, granted by the Pontifical Council for Culture at the International Film Festival in Venice in 2005. If I intend to make an artistic statement, I always want to send a positive message, and I want the viewer to receive hope. That's how I was brought up and it will not change. I am often accused of didacticism and I have to



watch myself in order not to go beyond the boundary of a message, where didactics begins. I cannot admonish the viewer – this is a role of a teacher. An artist would like the world to be a better place. A teacher will tell you what to do to make the world a better place. This is my dilemma – how to avoid simple explanations and admonitions in a movie.

Adam Mikołajczyk: What does ‘actor’ mean today? Has this term devaluated?

JS: I wouldn’t overestimate the role of an actor in the Polish People’s Republic, although it is a fact that once we had a feeling we were talking about important issues and we wanted to be heard. Even when we were entertaining the audience, the viewer would always look for some deeper overtone in it. He wanted to hear from the stage what he was thinking himself and what he was not allowed to say. Today I often get the impression (especially in the theatre, with live audience) that people come to a show with a thought: entertain me, because I paid you PLN 150! Such an attitude hurts me. Even when I make people laugh, I want to say something important. Unfortunately, the world has changed and the perception is different. Today there is less shame, and shame is a good stimulus to contain yourself. Today there is no shame to not know something, to show yourself undressed or intoxicated. Obviously, such things happened earlier, but they were not exposed to the broad public. The profession of an actor was veiled in mystery, which favoured its mission. Konwicki, Holoubek, and Łapicki would always sit at the same table at ‘Czytelnik’, and yet only few could actually meet them there and rarely was there anybody who had the courage to join them. Now, the audience wants to have every piece of information about an actor. Recently I have been aggressively asked by a young man, ‘Why are you not at Facebook? I have the right to know things about you!’. But I don’t want to be on Facebook! I can talk to my audience, I can comment on even the most difficult topics, like my illness, but I do it on my terms.

Today, you practice the profession of an actor, while once it used to be a mission. Nowadays, young people simply make a living by acting. I have also had a lot of such proposals, but I rejected them because I would get bored with them too soon. And when I am bored, I get worse right away, so all that would be left to me would be distaste. Gustaw Holoubek used to say that an actor is the simplest profession in the world, all he does is walk, talk, and sit, and every-

body could do it. An actor must always know when he is creative and when he is imitative. Usually an actor is a performer, and only sometimes he is an artist – when he manages to stir the viewer’s feelings, to move him or to make him laugh. Sometimes I manage to obtain such a great silence in the auditorium that people seem to freeze, imagining themselves in the situation presented on the stage. When the double bass player, who has accompanied me on stage for 30 years now, utters the words, “I want a woman I will never have”, I hear such a silence in the auditorium. Each of us has such a dream, a longing in front of their eyes which will never come true, although they want it so badly. And them, just for a moment, I am an artist.

You need to remember that respect for the profession of an actor has a specific buoyancy in society. I have been exposed to unpleasantness numerous times. Once I was involved in protecting a music school from liquidation that was once attended by my son. I was delivering a passionate speech in front of another official, and he said coldly, “Mr. Stuhr, this is not ‘Sexmission’”. It taught me not to sail close to the wind, because you can never be sure of your position.

AM: Recently there was a chance to notice some of your strict opinions about the young generation.

JS: I must admit I am a bit self-contradictory in this respect. Recently I made a diploma performance at the Faculty of Dance Theatre in Bytom. The work with wonderful, committed people was a pure pleasure for me. At the same time, however, I hear that a student can text a professor, “Hello, I can come to the exam only to 12:00”. I am scared of such a student. But I don’t blame her. It is a mistake of my generation, which first of all was preoccupied with freedom, and only then with organising the new reality. And children were abandoned educationally.

The young like to have fun, but they can’t differentiate (as Americans do perfectly) between what is art, and what is entertainment. People watch cabaret shows and think they commune with art. “I work hard, I have paid, I have a right to entertainment”. I want to talk with the audience, but the audience just wants me to entertain them.

AM: How to convince the young generation to take part in a dialogue?

JS: We have to educate them and stimulate their ambitions. Film festivals, especially one that are retrospective, play a perfect role



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in this respect in Poland. They have taken over the role of film discussion clubs or culture centres. I can see crowds of young people there, who take part in accelerated education, facing problems depicted in the cinema of moral anxiety. When I observe the young at the review of films by Antonioni, I can see an elite coming into being, and a Poland in which I would like to grow old is being born.

AM: You have talked a lot about hysterical patriotism.

And is there positive patriotism in Poland?

JS: I have always wanted to devote all my creative forces to my country. I have received many proposals to emigrate and I could live abroad comfortably. Today, the young generation demands a good job and appropriate conditions immediately. But such an attitude cannot be considered in the categories of patriotism. If I decide to choose a comfortable life and prosperity over patriotism, I'll leave. One can comfortably organise a person's life abroad, but your children will not speak Polish and are not always willing to visit their homeland. I was one of the first artists during the martial law period who received a passport in 1982 (together with my three colleagues from the 'Stary' Theatre, the 'Mazowsze' ensemble, and Sinfonia Varsovia). I could have comfortable life in the West as I had numerous proposals from all over the world, but not even for a second did I think to use them.

Hysterical patriotism is throwing yourself on bayonets. It is a longing for martyrdom. I am not the one who coined this term. It is described in literature, like, e.g. in the short story 'Moniza Clavier' by Mrozek, where a Polish emigrant shows in Lido his teeth knocked out 'for freedom', or in the movie 'Lotna' by Andrzej Wajda, where the Polish cavalry armed with sabres attacks German tanks. I had also sick with such patriotism, when in 1968 I ran to Collegium Novum to join my protesting friends, although I knew the militia troops were already beating students and organising 'fitness trails'. And then, beaten, doused with water, we were licking our wounds in the 'Pod Jaszczurami' club, and showing our bruises to each other, saying, "Look what those communist pigs have done". But you just have to get well or grow out of it.

KB: What makes a person stay in Poland, although the world calls him?

JS: Once I went with my family to a long, over 2 months' tour around Italy, with the 'Double Bass Player'. It was a beautiful

summer, we were visiting beautiful cities. My last shows were in Sardinia, where we stayed several days more. Sitting in the beach by the sea, suddenly my little daughter started to cry and asked miserably, "Daddy, and where is grass?". She had the most beautiful sea, a sunswept landscape, and my child longed for Polish grass. It was nostalgia. If you were to ask me today what kept me in Poland during martial law, I would tell you: the meadow in front of my house. Once, when I was acting in 'Emigrants' by Mrozek in Argentina, we met a Polish translator coming from Vilnius. I asked him, "Staś, do you miss home?". And he answered, "Jurek, I long for home, I long for the smell of grass near Vilnius, because I know I will never smell it again and I will never go back there".

AM: And what does the magic of your Cracow consist of?

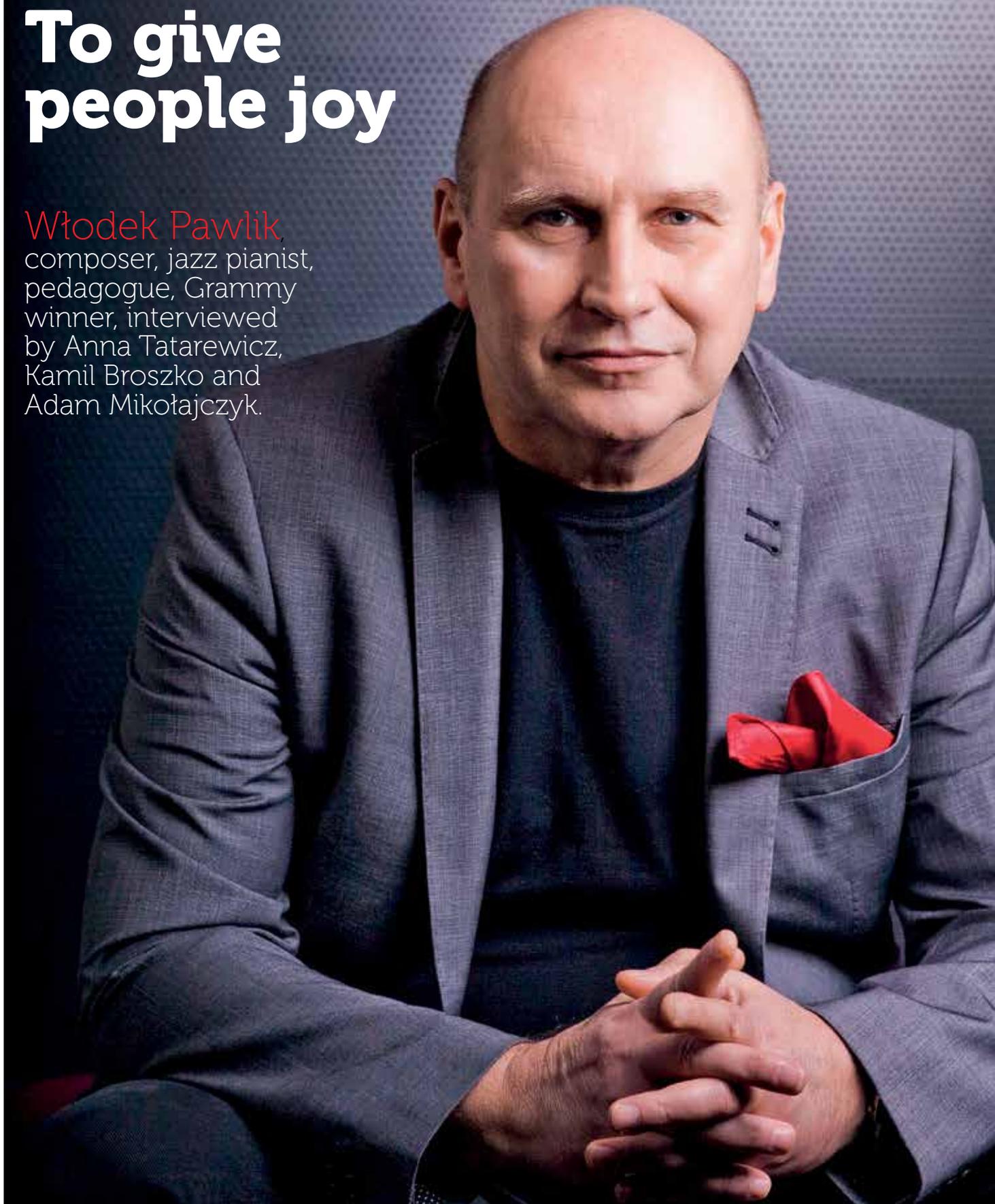
JS: I have worked in many places of the world, from Argentina to Israel. When I was doing something creative, I would also think about how people in Cracow would comment on it. How my work would be assessed by Piotr Skrzynecki, Jerzy Jarocki, Tadeusz Kantor, or Konrad Swinarski. They have always set the artistic level of what I do, they have always been the judges of my achievements. Wherever I go, whatever I do, they are always my guiding light, the determinant of the level I want to reach.

My Cracow stands not just for people, but also walls. All inhabitants of old cities have a similar mindset. Florentines are the same as Cracovians – both are characterised by a slight haughtiness and a dash of contempt for others. Inhabitants of old cities avoid destructive behaviour, because since they were brought up in buildings which bear witness to long centuries of tradition, they will always look for conciliatory solutions. I noticed the greatest differences between Warsaw and Cracow at the time of Solidarity. In Warsaw everybody wanted to demolish everything, and we, in Cracow, were thinking how to defend the good things.

We should be particularly careful with our language; we should be proud of it, because it can describe our feelings in a particularly beautiful way. When you tell somebody "Chodźmy na kawusię" (*How about a small cup of coffee?*), it means that you like this person and want to have coffee with them and not anybody else. The Italians will say "Prendiamo un caffè" – and that's it. There is no emotional colour to it. After all, it was not without a reason that three Noble prizes in the field of literature went to Polish writers.

To give people joy

Włodek Pawlik,
composer, jazz pianist,
pedagogue, Grammy
winner, interviewed
by Anna Tatarewicz,
Kamil Broszko and
Adam Mikołajczyk.



Kamil Broszko: You have achieved international success.

Have you ever thought about leaving Poland and settling in another place?

Włodek Pawlik: I left Poland in 1984 for 10 years. I came back because Poland has changed. Now I live and work here, and I am happy with what we have.

KB: Would you encourage young people living in England or Norway to return to the country?

WP: I cannot be the voice of the younger generation because of my age. Emigration in the 80s was political. Today, people decide about labour-related emigration, so it is very possible that they will return. I know many young people who went to Ireland, England, Spain or the United States, but that does not mean they do not come here. My son lives and works in Germany, and has studied in the United States and in Düsseldorf, but he also performs and records in Poland. Today, people don't buy a one-way ticket. People leave, come back, and often invest in the country. The awareness that we live in a free, democratic country, that we can freely travel around the world, and work where we want helps young people to make such decisions.

KB: And what about the talent drain? Should we allow this to happen?

WP: The situation of thousands of graduates of music universities whose musical career is less spectacular – I am thinking here of the multitude of music teachers or members of stationary symphony orchestras – looks in Poland quite depressing in many ways. The main reason for frustration is the low salaries in comparison with the salaries of musicians in other European countries. That is why it is so difficult to keep many talented and ambitious young musicians in full-time jobs in Poland. From the perspective of my experience as a university lecturer, who for eight years has been working with students at the University of Music in Warsaw, giving classes in improvisation, I can say that many of them decide to leave Poland in search of better earnings. This is sad. Unfortunately, the quite commonly known example of the Warsaw National Philharmonic flutist who moonlights at night as a taxi driver in Warsaw, is a reflection of a difficult situation of the Polish music community.

Adam Mikołajczyk: You teach your students improvisation. How can you teach something that by definition is spontaneous and undefined?

WP: We improvise every day, and especially we, Poles. Improvisation is something that goes beyond the scheme, a phenomenon that deprives us of rational arguments. It is a negation of the idea that life is the sum of rules and behaviours controlled by reason. Often the human mind collides with a combination of uncontrollable events, unable to find any justification for their existence... Music is exactly the same. Improvisation is a skill beyond the

scheme contained, for example in notation, subordinated to rigid, often painfully precise, compositional assumptions. It is intuitive, spontaneous and unique action, whose genesis lies in the emotions of the improvising person. That is why in my class I pass knowledge to students, which allows them to cross borders of performance correctness. I convince them just to open up to a more creative model of making music.

Anna Tatarewicz: How is improvisation born?

WP: Improvisation is born from the need to change or transform what currently exists. I listened to jazz from an early age and grew up in its spirit. Even then I improvised for pleasure, without the need of teachers' guidance. A few colleagues with whom I studied years ago at the Academy of Music in Warsaw went the same way. The absolute majority of them fully entrusted the music education system associated with the process of education developed on the foundation of classical music. I play both Chopin and improvise. I graduated from piano classes with the great pianist Barbara Hesse-Bukowska, and also graduated from the jazz faculty at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg, so I'm proof that the most important thing is to discover in ourselves a need for improvisation. Schools can give some help here, but they are not a decisive condition.

AT: Is improvising a higher degree of initiation?

WP: European music – especially romantic and later – is very precisely written by composers, there is virtually no possibility of even the slightest interference by the performer. This is contrary in the case of other cultures, e.g. in African or Indian music. This music is more open to freedom. Formally it is much easier, often archaic, but, paradoxically, it gives musicians greater room for their own interpretation. There are less written elements (if any), so you just need to have innate musical abilities, such as good memory, and a sense of rhythm. It is best to improvise based on simple melodic, harmonic and rhythmic patterns, because they are easy to remember.

AM: Are there music genres especially suited for improvisation?

WP: Yes, of course. Jazz in this context is a unique phenomenon. It has restored the rank of improvisation. Paradoxically, jazz improvisation is the closest European concept of creating music in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Baroque era, where the dominant role was played by *basso continuo*, which is a line of the bass voice constituting the harmonic foundation of a piece of music, with its specific, harmonic writing, the implementation of which resulted in fairly large freedom of performance. *Basso continuo* in many ways resembles the role played by *walking* in jazz music. Ornamental techniques that were also popular in those days are very similar to the idea of the modern jazz improvisation. The development of European culture with its foundation in Christianity, brought a powerful load of intellect to music. In the Middle Ages

and later, music was taught at the largest European universities – as one of the most important sciences, on the same level as astronomy and mathematics. Jazz is the result of the symbiosis of culture of African slaves who worked on cotton plantations in America, with the musical tradition of the white man, brought to America by European settlers. African ecstatic rhythms and melodies (blues, gospel, spirituals) collided with the whites' world of music. Thanks to the geniuses of such people as George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, those distant musical phenomena assimilated so much that a new genre of music emerged, in other words jazz. Improvisation is the essence of jazz, Dixieland, blues, church gospel singing, soul, swing and rock.

AT: What is the position of Polish jazz in the international arena?

WP: In the 1970s and 1980s Adam Makowicz, Ula Dudziak, Michał Urbaniak, and Zbigniew Seifert were highly recognizable in the USA. Jazz is American music and it is hard for jazz musicians from outside of the cultural background to exist there. But the fact is that many young Polish musicians study at American jazz universities, which automatically increases the likelihood of success in the United States, in other words, anywhere.

KB: What is the place of jazz in Polish culture?

WP: Very prestigious, derived from the activity of the "catacomb" jazz movement of the 50s, inspired by Tyrmand, in which Krzysztof Komeda began his career – an icon of Polish jazz. Since then jazz in Poland is a constant and important phenomenon on the Polish musical map, with thousands of die-hard fans.

KB: Is this prestigious position weakened by the fact that jazz clubs keep disappearing?

WP: The closing of jazz clubs for some time was a quite common phenomenon throughout the world. The habit of listening to live music in clubs is slowly becoming a thing of the past. While on the other hand, large audiences are eager to visit concert halls, which allow experiencing music in luxurious conditions. I remember the times when some fantastic rock and jazz student music clubs operated in Warsaw. I think of Hybrydy, Remont, Stodoła, and Medyk, which main activity was to organize concerts and jam sessions, usually lasting until dawn. These were the times of the hippie movement. Today, I do not understand how Warsaw, a city with such a rich musical tradition, could get rid of virtually all jazz clubs that operated perfectly in the Polish People's Republic. I do not understand the city where I live...

KB: Isn't this situation caused by the absence of jazz in the media?

WP: Jazz was often present in the Polish media still in the 1990s, not to mention its popularity in the 70s and 80s. However, for

some reason, many jazz musicians lost contact with the young generation who are looking for their own idols via the Internet, not necessarily listening to the opinion of the so-called experts and music critics. Different times, different challenges...

AM: I guess this is the nature of jazz, for it was never present in the mainstream media. It was always music closed in clubs or listened from a black, vinyl record.

WP: I don't think so. As I have already mentioned, until recently jazz music was ever-present in the media. Polish jazz encountered a crisis at the end of 90s. Then Radio Jazz closed, independent jazz magazines ceased to exist. Earlier, live coverage of the Warsaw Summer Jazz Days festival could be seen on public television, one could even perform a concert during prime time, as it was in my case. Unfortunately, "top-down" decisions were made and the good times for culture finished. More than just viewer rankings should be taken into account. When I hear about some mission of the Polish media and I observe their programming offer, I have the feeling that we live in the fumes of absurd. However, you have to appreciate many initiatives that neutralize the shift towards commercialism. I think of the activities of TVP Kultura, Polish Radio Programme II and many other interesting, grassroots initiatives.

AM: Maybe jazz musicians cannot find their place in this new environment, because the world of celebrities is not their natural environment?

WP: Some people can find their place, some do not want to. Let's not generalize. Diana Krall is more popular than all Polish celebrities together. Jazz musicians are different from pop musicians in such that the latter have a clear goal: to gain popularity, and making music is secondary to recognition. Jazz musicians usually are very sensitive people, introverts. They feel a mission and it is difficult to demand that they enter a world that is governed by the rules of the media circus. But I really desire and I'll do everything so that the good aura for jazz will be revived in our country not through media tricks, but through the real energy that comes from the spirit of this fantastic music.

AT: The position of jazz in Polish culture is quite specific. On the one hand, this is hermetic, elite music, and on the other hand it became fashionable. Isn't it a paradox?

WP: Jazz will always have its audience, because young people under the rubbish served by commercial media every day, will always be seeking a trait of individuality in the art. People like them will always reach for the genres, which offer a close, intimate meeting with the creator and his/her art. Although we are not suggesting this in any way, another thing is that jazz was as an allegedly impaired child of musical culture, forgetting that there are real people and their achievements in every generalization. So in the case of jazz and other musical phenomena, generalizations are very confusing, because

we lump together very popular artists and those who have a more difficult time, while creating the impression that there is something wrong with all jazz. I can bet that there are a lot more pop musicians suffering and dissatisfied with their situation than jazzmen.

AT: You have been observing your students for eight years. How has their sensitivity changed?

WP: There really is something going on. When I was young contact with culture – art, music, theatre or literature – was naturally complementary to life and an entry ticket to the salons of contemporary intellectual elite. One read Ibsen, Mickiewicz, and Shakespeare. People talked about the “Balladyna” in the avant-garde approach of Hanuszkiewicz. Grotowski and Kantor were popular... Listening to Bach, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Davis, Coltrane or Jimmy Hendrix gave us the feeling of living in a cocoon of important and beautiful issues. And thanks to this awareness we felt elite. Knowledge as well as intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic needs were common for my entire generation – we perceived the world in the same way, we talked about the same subjects. Now, we have other times, the pace of life is so dizzying that it is impossible to keep track of everything that appears on the music market. That’s why I still stick to my first important books, CDs, and fascinations, because they constituted me as a human being. Today, young people are less likely to stop at a particular book, music, painting – they treat them as changing background in the mad rush of everyday life. I feel somewhat sorry for them...

AM: There still remains the question of authorities. Today, young people do not have them, some do not need them, and the rest – cannot find them.

WP: One always has to look for one’s master. I happily share my knowledge with students. I know that for many of them I am an authority. It’s very nice, but also obliging. I will not tell them how to win a Grammy, because I do not know. However, I can teach them the profession and self-confidence, for faith moves mountains. If someone is really looking for a master, he or she will find one.

AT: You don’t know how to obtain a Grammy, but you won it. This award is for us evidence that Poles count in the jazz world. Has it changed something in your life?

WP: Everything. I became a person who has gone beyond Polish, hermetic, and somewhat veteran jazz community. From the time of the Grammy I have played about 200 concerts around the world, won the triple platinum record for “Night in Calisia” and a mass of happy, smiling listeners. Oh yes, music can really give people great joy.



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Efforts and work are finally rewarded

Marcin Wyrostek, accordion virtuoso, lecturer at the Academy of Music in Katowice, winner of the show Poland's Got Talent (Mam talent). Interviewed by: Anna Tatarewicz.

Anna Tatarewicz: Are you fed up with questions about the 'Poland's Got Talent' show?

Marcin Wyrostek: Not at all. 'Poland's Got Talent' had a significant effect on my life, it allowed me to fulfil myself as a musician, to do in my life what I love doing. It was a breakthrough. I do not intend to detach myself from this show and to pretend that I don't owe anything to it.

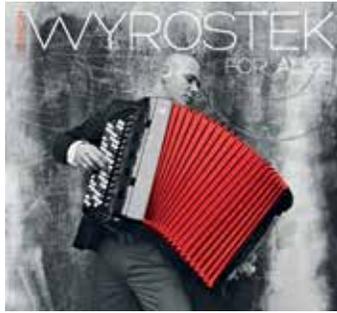
AT: You reached media success quite late, after years of hard work. Have you ever had any periods of doubt?

MW: As a student I played many concerts and performed in theatres. My graduation didn't really change a lot in my life. Besides playing, I sometimes taught at schools.

I lived my life from one competition to another, from one concert to another. Sometimes I slept only two hours a day. It was exhausting for my organism. This lifestyle was bound to end up with a hospital visit, or rather several visits. I lost all hope and good health. It was then that I went to the casting to 'Poland's Got Talent'. Quite by a miracle, because I nearly overslept! I was on the edge. Today I think it pays off to dream and to play *va banque* in your life, never to take shortcuts. Efforts and work finally get rewarded.

AT: Your story is a ready-success recipe – of luck.





MW: All my life I have been faithful to the principle I received from my teacher, Wiktor Oleszkiewicz, that talent is only 10% of your success, and all the rest is hard work. Luck is necessary, too, but you have to look for it, reach out to it.

AT: You enjoy a reputation of a person who has disenchanted the accordion.

MW: The accordion is broadly perceived as a convivial party instrument. It seems to me that when I play Bach or Vivaldi on it, I give it the proper rank, I demonstrate its hidden possibilities to the audience. It is a young instrument, it was created in the 19th century. Only now does it have its renaissance. It started to be appreciated most of all thanks to the tango, which makes use of the possibilities offered by it in a brilliant way. Astor Piazzolla, the composer of the Argentine tango, when he introduced the bandoneon to concert halls, met great dissatisfaction of the audience – it was believed he was profaning the genre. Nevertheless, thanks to him, a concert version of the tango was created, which certainly is more difficult to dance to, but which revealed another face of the accordion. Therefore, we can talk about two faces of this instrument – folk and concert. In my opinion, it is in a transitory period right now. I daresay each instrument must travel a similar path.

AT: Have you ever played at wedding receptions?

MW: Certainly, I played at wedding receptions back as a secondary school student. I gained my musical experience practicing in various places – I performed at school shows for children, I played in music theatres in Chorzów and Gliwice, I played with different pop/folk/jazz bands, I played with string orchestras, and I have also played at wedding receptions. I have never closed myself to any kinds of music. All this, combined with my musical education, has established me as a performer. Today I feel I am a versatile artist. All this hackwork I did in the beginning demanded quick reaction to the expectations of the public, to play music by ear. It is a skill thanks to which in the music school in Jelenia Góra I was able to write down sounds, and write melodic dictations more quickly than my peers. Each stage of my musical path has taught me something different, all of them together have moulded my way of playing and feeling music.

AT: Did your schoolmates laugh at your accordion?

MW: In my childhood I lived in two worlds, as it were. I attended a music school, where it was obvious for everybody that we played different instruments. I had a great accordion teacher, who spent a lot of time with us. I would spend long hours there, also Saturdays and Sundays, winter breaks and summer holidays. We would play a lot of concerts. The general secondary school I attended, on the other hand, was a world of people not connected with music whatsoever. But nobody laughed at me when I came to school with my

instrument. I even performed at school assemblies. My schoolmates actually supported me. When I won some competitions abroad, the school radio station informed about my accomplishments. Everybody knew that I played, that I was seriously involved in it, and that

I was succeeding. I do remember, though, that when my friends and I were preparing for a performance on the market square in Jelenia Góra, I was a bit nervous. I knew the pieces we were to play were not interesting or stirring. And I was right. We did not attract the audience's attention. Nevertheless, I was pleasantly surprised during our performance at the graduation ceremony. My schoolmates gave me a standing ovation. I remember I was extremely proud of myself and had this feeling that people might like what I was doing.

AT: When you were a child, did you play for pleasure, or out of duty?

MW: Definitely for pleasure. Obviously, in the beginning my dad was making sure I was systematic. Each muscle, each tendon learns new movements, so you need to really care for their flexibility. At the music school we were pushed by our teachers. We would often go to concerts and competitions. These trips were exciting, but on the other hand they inspired and mobilised us to work to become better and better, to succeed more and more. For me, however, playing the accordion was most of all great fun. In the evenings, when my parents and sister were asleep, I would slip out to the garage. I would sit down beside the car, I would put sheets of paper, a pencil, a tape recorder on the bonnet, and I would write down a sound after sound from recordings of musicians I admired, and I arranged the pieces played by them so that they could correspond to my skills. I could spend all night this way. In such moments I was able to completely forget about the world around me. There was just music and me.

AT: You are constantly on the run. Do you have to give up anything from time to time?

MW: Today I wish I had more time to spend with my family. I do know, however, that it is not playing but moving from place to place that takes the most time. That's why I have learned to practice on the move. I often write music arrangements while travelling. This allows me to devote all my time home to my family. I learnt how to organize my time in my childhood. Paradoxically, the more duties you have, the more free time you are able to make. I try to use each minute well.

AT: You lecture at the Music Academy in Katowice. Is teaching more interesting than playing?

MW: I prefer playing, of course. But playing teaches me how to teach, and teaching teaches me how to play. Both forms of activity are interrelated. I like sharing my knowledge and experience. I think that after 10 more years on the stage I will have more to share. And then I will devote all my time to teaching. I can see that young people

– just like me at their age – are hungry for knowledge and are willing to acquire it. And that is why teaching them the things I have learned over the years of my work gives me great pleasure. I hope they will use it wisely. When I was young, it was more difficult to get scores of the music by my masters. Today, access to materials is unlimited.

AT: What is the greatest educational challenge for you?

MW: In each generation there are people who are more or less sensitive, and more or less hardworking. The most important task for me as an educator is a meeting with a student who has great talent, great feeling, perfect capacities to play and do it really outstandingly, but does not devote enough attention to music, does not work. Laziness ruins talents. Hard work and diligence should be the most important things for a musician. You can fool your teacher, you can tell him you have practiced more than in the reality, but art is ruthless, you cannot fool art.

AT: Who is an authority for you?

MW: I have always been enchanted by the playing of Richard Galliano, an accordionist. He is a jazz musician, but with classical roots. I have always been inspired by the way he plays, just like I have always been inspired by the brilliant tango arrangements by Astor Piazzolla. Their sound structure and harmony are a true masterpiece! He managed to create a crystalline form of the tango, which refers on the one hand to baroque, and on the other to contemporary music, for example to jazz. I also find my masters among composers of classical music. I adore Johann Sebastian Bach, you could say he is a mathematician of music. I am inspired by Roby Lakatos, a brilliant gypsy violinist, who infatuated me with the sound of his instrument. I also admire Bobby McFerrin and his approach to sound, to chamber music, his way of listening. When we were on the stage together, he was able to respond to what was going on in just a fraction of a second.

AT: Was your performance with Bobby McFerrin during his concert in Zabrze 2010 pure improvisation?

MW: Yes, it was. It was an amazing experience. Bobby has this extraordinary ability to listen and harmonise. We were like one organism on the stage. And the rehearsal lasted perhaps two minutes. We introduced ourselves to each other and Bobby said, 'Let's play something!'. So I played some melody, he sang something, and that was it. We saw each other again on the stage.

AT: Your performance was longer than just two minutes.

MW: Definitely! This spontaneity was phenomenal. I love improvising on stage. Changing musical arrangements during concerts gives me the sense of freshness. The more intimate the concert, the more feeling of freedom I get.

AT: I can't help the feeling that you suffer from a musical ADHD. You play Bach, Vivaldi, Argentine tango, folk...

MW: My bandmates also tell me that. I also play contemporary music. This year I am going to perform at the 'Schaeffer's Era' festival in Warsaw. It is a completely different world of the musical and theatre avant-garde, but I have managed to fit in. I can handle jazz and pop, too. My cooperation with jazzman and composer, Włodek Pawlik, with Kayah, or with Sylwia Grzeszczak, are perfect examples here. I like experimenting. An encounter with a new style is always a challenge I willingly take.

AT: In the way you play one could hear the search for musical inspirations: traces of Gypsy, Jewish, Balkan. Aren't you enchanted by Polish music?

MW: Of course I am! I have transcribed music by Chopin and Moniuszko for the accordion. I have also had a chance to cooperate with Joanna Słowińska, a most wonderful singer from Cracow, with a beautiful, typically Polish voice. Together we worked on a project connected with Polish folk music and forgotten melodies from the Małopolska region. Recently I have been more and more fascinated with Polish folk dances. We will see where this fascination will take me.

AT: You cannot complain about the lack of ideas and work.

MW: I have numerous festival plans. This autumn will bring the second part of the concert tour promoting the album 'For Alice', which I recorded for my wife. I also return to Jelenia Góra – I am to play a large concert there, with a symphonic orchestra, soloists, and dancers. I have ideas for the next four albums, I am thinking about my Ph.D. thesis... Everything I have ever thought of is coming true now. And this is the source of my greatest joy.

AT: What do you feel when you stand on the stage and close your eyes?

MW: Satisfaction that I am at a point of my life where I have always wanted to be, that I'm doing what I love.



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The music my heart dances to

Rostaw Szaybo



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From army camp to the Academy of Fine Arts

I have liked drawing ever since early childhood, which coincided with the time of World War II. My early sketches were mainly caricatures of Hitler. My mother said that I inherited this talent from her, as she had done a lot of drawing during her pregnancy. I spent most of the Nazi occupation with my nose buried in a variety of novels, which somehow helped me survive the War. Although I was well-read, I was not very good at mathematics or physics. My behaviour also left much to be desired. As a result, I failed my final school exams and ended up in the Polish People's Army. After I won a medal for the way I had decorated the garrison lounge, I was transferred to the Officers' Club in Olsztyn, which was housed in a beautiful palace upon the river Łyna. I was immediately promoted to military aristocracy, since I was playing American billiards with the officers and got to decorate the palace interiors for the celebrations of the 1st of May and 22nd of July. I also drew portraits of the commander and members of his family: his daughter, wife, his mother in law. Without informing me first, he sent my works to be included in a nationwide exhibition of amateur artists, where I won first place. Then the major said: "You're an ass, not a soldier, but you may yet become an artist. Try to pass your school exams again and then apply to the Academy of Fine Arts". And so, while on leave, I went to the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts and took the exam, while still wearing my uniform. This also happened to be the first time I drew a female nude. Next, I had to do some free drawing, which was difficult. I knew that only an original idea would save the day.

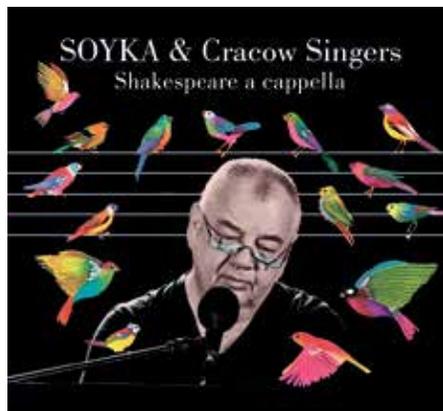
I decided to draw a couple of men fencing (this particular discipline was fashionable at the time) by showing the trail of movement of their swords. My work was very different from the others, and many people approached to congratulate me on the poster drawing. A bald man with glasses and black, demonic eyebrows also came over and said: "Come to my studio after you finish your third year of studies. You'll become a poster designer". I later learned that this was Henryk Tomaszewski. I completed my diploma course in his studio in 1961.

A soldier traipses through woods and forests (from a popular Polish military song)

My mother ran one of the best known millinery shops in Warsaw. One day, a client asked her about a picture she had put up in the shop, which I had drawn. The client praised it, and because she worked in the record company "Polskie Nagrania", she suggested I could design a music album cover for them. As a result, I was

commissioned to draw cover for an album of soldiers' songs titled "Idzie żołnierz borem, lasem" (A soldier traipses through woods and forests). I drew the cover, they liked it and I got another commission – designing covers for the "Polish Jazz" series, which was a real challenge. I loved jazz and, seeing as I was friends with many musicians, I wanted to share their talent with the world. I wanted them to be proud of their music. I prepared a series of eight covers, including one for Komeda's "Astigmatic" record, which was published several times in the same layout. I decided to use the inscription "Polish Jazz" as the main graphic element, a recognizable brand. That's why I used the classic Helvetica font, already well-known in the West. I also wanted to capture the shy smile of Komeda, so I used Krzysztof's profile photo, which I then modified graphically. I added the letters A and B, but there is no deeper philosophy or any message in their orientation. I just wanted them to intrigue and draw attention.

In those days, those with "talent" were hired to design posters, and those "without" had to paint shop signs. Today, anyone can be a graphic designer, all you need is a suitable computer. Back in my days, competition juries included the true gods of poster design: Lenica, Tomaszewski, Świerzy. There was no question of any corrupt judging – only the best could win. Several times, I received awards and prizes for my posters. An interesting example was the poster "20 years of the Polish People's Republic circus", which also won an award in a competition. Well, none of the communist censors noticed the irony in the slogan, and the poster went on to appear on streets across the



whole country. The involuntary joke was caught by Radio Free Europe. It caused such an uproar that overnight soldiers removed the poster and hung a new one: "20 years of the circus arena". It caused my professional status to grow immensely.

Swinging London

It was the year 1966. After winning one of the aforementioned poster competitions, I walked down Nowy Świat Avenue to meet with a friend, an English translator. I happened across a boy and a girl – English tourists, who were searching through their backpacks in some state of distress. I tried to help them, but I did not know any English, so I took them to this translator friend of mine. Then it turned out that the English couple had been robbed and they were totally without any money. Because I still happened to have the money won in the poster competition on me, I lent them a considerable amount of cash and they promised to repay the debt after returning to England. However, it turned out that it

was not so easy to transfer money into a country behind the Iron Curtain, so the couple invited me to fly over and be their guest.

And so, I found myself in London, along with my portfolio. I started as usual, by painting... the walls in the Polish Ognisko Club on Exhibition Road, near Hyde Park. Fortunately, friends then recommended me to the right people and soon enough I was commissioned to design a poster for the Bond film "You Only Live Twice". The producers were delighted, though they didn't actually use it, as it was deemed not commercial enough. Still, they paid handsomely. The same thing happened with the next poster – for the film "Billion Dollar Brain" with Michael Caine. I prepared the posters

A year later, I was interviewed for the job of creative director at Young & Rubicam, one of the top advertising agencies. I presented them with a full portfolio of the work I had produced in Poland. In England back then, people tended to specialise – some drew roses with teardrops, others drew cars, and still others did human figures – so my portfolio looked like a comprehensive presentation of a graphic studio, and not the work of a single person. When asked about the salary I was after, I said "Fifteen" (15 pounds), though because of my heavy accent it came out as "fifty" (50)! I was so stressed, I didn't even realise my mistake, but before I could correct it the management nodded their heads in amazement and without hesitation agreed to pay me this vast sum. And so, my financial problems were over, a particularly pleasing development.

Working in the advertising industry taught me modesty and humility. Despite earning a decent wage, I was frustrated by having to constantly prove that one can of green peas is better than another. I looked with envy at music album covers, which in England had the same meaning and artistic value as posters in Poland, and dreamed of returning to designing covers and posters.

Staś Zagórski

Staś is a good friend from my student days and early Polish successes, which includes my winning a prize in the 1960 national poster competition "1000 years of Poland" and the prize for "Poster of the Year 1961" which I won for the work "Powerful forces allied with them". In 1963, Staś emigrated from Poland. He settled in New York and his career developed wonderfully – he designed many covers for various record companies. When in 1972, during one of the meetings with the director at

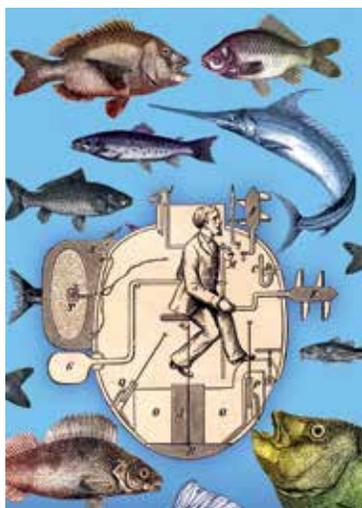
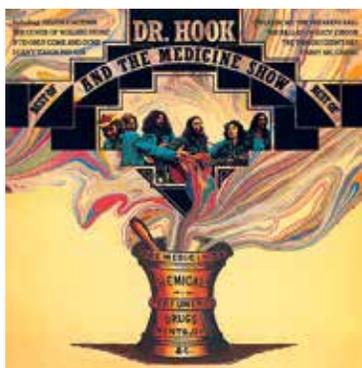
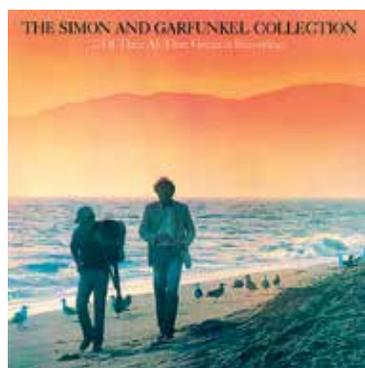
CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System), he learned that the company was looking for an art director for its branch in London, he recommended me for the role. In this way, thanks to Staś, I got a job which allowed me to return to my roots, meet music stars, travel and above all to do what I really loved, which was to design the covers of music albums for years to come (until 1988).

Judas Priest and British Steel

I was commissioned to design an album cover for the heavy metal band Judas Priest. I met with their manager, who gave me the title of the album: "British Steel". I immediately associated the name with English razor blades which I used to buy at the Różycki Market in Warsaw, because the Polish ones immediately rusted, while with



as I would have done back in Poland – creatively and in good taste, but it was not commercial enough for the producers, so the posters were framed and hung on their office walls. Fortunately, they paid me whether the projects were used or not. With the money I thus earned, I could buy myself a taste of the delights offered by what became known as Swinging London. It was a small-big city, constantly "out of it" and constantly having fun. And yet, everywhere felt safe. If you just heard music somewhere when walking down the street, you could buy a bottle of wine at the nearest shop and simply join the party. In this way, you could easily get to know the Beatles, the Stones, The Who, as you could freely approach them, introduce yourself and show your work. There were no paparazzi back then, because there was no media hungry for that crap.



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Rosław Szaybo

Rosław Szaybo was born on 13 August 1933 in Poznań. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, in the poster studio of Prof. Henryk Tomaszewski and the painting studio of Prof. Wojciech Fangor, graduating in 1961. Between the years 1957-1966, he designed jazz and film posters as well as music album covers (the "Polish Jazz" series), while also being involved in illustration and photography. From 1966, he lived and worked in the UK. Between the years 1968-1973, he held the position of artistic director at the advertising agency Young & Rubicam. He designed, among others, the black packaging of John Player Special cigarettes. In the years 1973-1988, he was the creative director of the UK branch of CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System). In 1980, he re-established professional contacts with Poland (designing posters for theatres and the Jazz Jamboree). In the years 1993-2015, he ran a photography studio at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts (multimedia). From 1994-1996, he was artistic director at the Czytelnik Publishing Cooperative. In 2003, he was awarded the title of professor. He has won many Polish and foreign awards for movie, opera and jazz posters, as well as for his music albums covers. His posters, covers and illustrations are shown at exhibitions in Poland and abroad.

the English ones – which had the inscription “British Steel” – you could shave up to five times. Right there, during our meeting at a restaurant, I took a napkin and sketched a hand holding a razor blade in its fingers, with the record title on it. The manager loved the drawing and it was immediately approved. I just needed to actually create the proper artwork. Today, it would take a couple of hours on a computer, but back then I had to hire a locksmith to make a sufficiently large razor blade, tailored to fit a human hand, with the album title engraved on it. Then I had to photograph it properly. CBS Records did not really like the cover, but the musicians from the band came out in its defence, threatening to break their contract if it didn’t appear the way I designed it. Today, this cover has become something of an icon and has earned the status of the best heavy metal album cover of all time.

The music my heart dances to these days

In addition to posters and covers for music albums, which I am still designing, I entertain myself by creating clean, non-commercial graphic art. Once, lying on a beach by the sea, I looked at a rusty, crumpled up can of beer. I picked it up out of the sand for fear that someone may be injured, and since there was no trash bin along the way, I brought it back to my hotel. I looked at it and realized that it was an extremely attractive object – because of the distance it had travelled. Some graphic designer designed it, somebody produced it, someone drank what was in it, and threw away the empty can, which is when time and sea water gave it a new form. I decided to collect and photograph such cans, and in this way restore them back to life. I call this project “Recycling” or “This is not a can of Warhol’s Campbell’s Soup”. I frame the photos and present them at exhibitions.



Positive patriot

I am a declared European, but in England I put a PL sticker on every UK registered car I owned – an Alfa Romeo or Lancia Fulvia Rally. I always had a Polish passport, and defend Poland’s honour when the situation requires it. My father was killed for his homeland in the concentration camp at Mauthausen, wearing an officer’s uniform – this happened in breach of the Geneva Convention, just before the liberation of Poland, so he made the greatest possible sacrifice for his country.

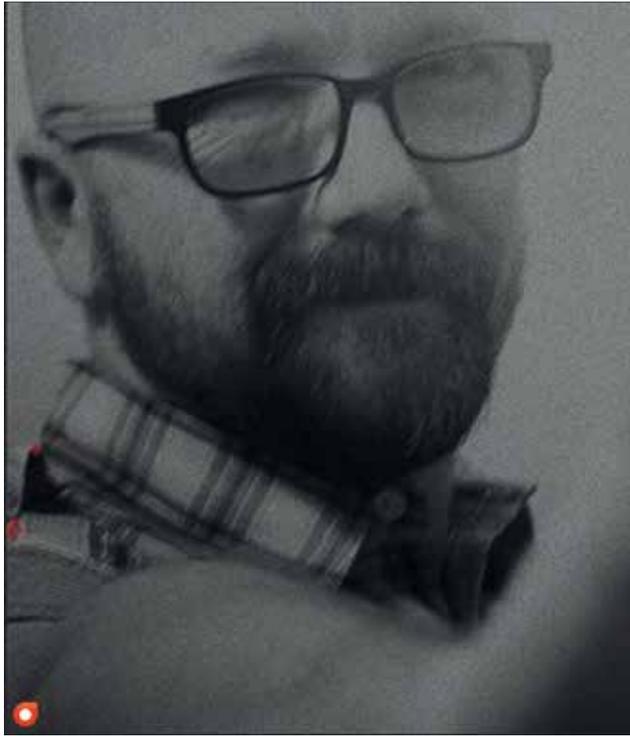
Our country is beautiful, bison roaming ancient woodlands, Mazury is called “the land of a thousand lakes” and the Baltic coastline has hundreds of miles of beautiful sandy beaches. Poland can be a wonderful alternative for any tourist who wants to escape from the crowded beaches of Spain. We need better promotion, each municipality should have postcards designed by the best graphic designers, should have its own coat of arms. The costs would be recouped quickly. By the way, I myself designed

the coat of arms for the municipality of Purda near Olsztyn, where I used to own a house.

We have to take the same care of our country as we do of our homes, arrange it in a comfortable and friendly way. City pavements should be kept clear, unlike Warsaw for example, where parking is a nightmare. And roads to housing estates built by inconsiderate developers should be designed so that we can get to them easily, instead of spending four hours a day in traffic jams. After all, the city exists for its residents, rather than residents being there for the whims of heartless officials. We have to learn how to smile more, how to show one another kindness, because it makes our lives so much easier.

Back to the Academy of Fine Arts

In 1993, I moved back to Poland after I was asked to run the Studio of Creative Photography at the Faculty of Graphics at my alma mater. After a decade of teaching, I was appointed professor. I had wonderful male students and gifted female students. I say “gifted”, because in the old days guys led the way in the field of poster art, while women rarely took up this genre. Today, women present fresher ideas, don’t rely so heavily on digital tools. They appreciate the advantages of communication, they read and they talk more. Men tend to work in advertising (for the money), but rarely go to the trouble of testing and proving their artistic talents.



Tomasz Opasiński, graphic designer, born in Gdynia, currently lives and works in the USA. Creative director and owner of Entertainment Advertising Boutique – ImageMassive. He specializes in computer graphics for publications and advertising. So far he has cooperated with 480 movie campaigns directly for advertising agencies and as an independent consultant. He designs modern collage posters and marketing materials. In 2002 he was granted an award from the Photoshop World Guru Awards. He has been a contestant, finalist, and juror in numerous national and international competitions, such as, e.g. Young Creatives Cannes Lions Contest (Warsaw), the Hollywood Reporter Annual Key Art Awards (Hollywood), and the Golden Trailer Awards (New York, Los Angeles).

Tomasz Opasiński, graphic designer and creative director of Entertainment Advertising Boutique – ImageMassive, a company that creates movie posters for the dream factory.
Interviewed by: Adam Mikołajczyk

I am not thinking about retirement yet

Adam Mikołajczyk: What do you think when you read about yourself that you are the next best known Pole in Hollywood right after Roman Polański; that you have left your imprint on the film industry?

Tomasz Opasiński: I am a rather modest person and I have never tried to compete with anybody about anything. I have always strived to do what I love doing, what has been and still is my passion. It is easier to change your entire life with a clear vision of your future. This is what happened in my life – everything started with one idea; the rest is faith, conviction, persistence, and hard work. It is always a pleasure for me when my work is appreciated. It only confirms my conviction that my plans from years ago were not just a dream. Although the present state sometimes seems to be one... I have participated in the creation of 500 campaigns for Hollywood – for movie theatres, television, festivals and computer games. On average, it is one and a half campaigns per week over the last 14 years.

AM: Why movie posters and not something else?

TO: I was born in Gdynia. Even when I was just a little kid I would always draw, paint or carve something. The period of my primary school was nearly entirely dominated by my 'artistic hemisphere'. My first computer – Commodore 64, and later Amiga 500, transported me to the world of 'non-conventional' drawings – virtual and digital. Pencils, temperas, canvases and panes, on which I used to paint sailing ships, disappeared from my home. After my secondary school I got involved in advertising, particularly in the technical aspect of designing. After several years spent in Warsaw-based advertising agencies I decided to leave, to try something different – to start all over again, as it were. I left for the United States and started working as a graphic designer in a small company consisting of 5 employees. Now, after 14 years, I am the creative director in a company with nearly 200 people aboard. Our clients are the largest movie studios in the United

States. Why did I get involved with posters? Because a perfect poster is an extremely clever thing, it is a puzzle, a metaphor, a rebus, which – if properly arranged – intrigues for years. And this puzzle and the metaphorical sphere of a poster have been intriguing me for years now. Let us imagine a meeting with 40 persons, each of whom has a different vision of what should be on the poster. After such a meeting I come back to my office and I design, and then I send my proposals to all the interested parties. When it turns out that each of these persons sees on the poster something that they have only imagined so far, I feel amazed – like a wizard who has access to human minds.

AM: Is it true that you prepare as many as 10 posters a day? Why so many?

TO: Sometimes 10 posters a day, but usually ca. 5. Let me just add that these are not fully developed and completed works, but simplified, demonstrative versions, in a smaller format, with fewer details, but with an outline of the general vision. During the course of a day we design posters for several different movies or TV series – in the morning for the first movie, in the afternoon for the second, in the evening we start working on the third movie – and often they represent areas which are absolutely separate in terms of themes and genres. On average, for one class A movie we design ca. 800 posters, to complete our work at the end with just one or two versions! Coming up with the poster number 479 requires a great deal of persistence and imagination. You just have to love this profession. Currently, the character of my work has changed, now I usually manage graphic designers and bequeath my experience to the next generation. But I do try to design something from time to time.

AM: Who decides what is there on a poster promoting a movie? What does the creation process look like?

TO: It is a long story, which sometimes lasts even two years. As early as at the stage of the preliminary script, castings and the first sketches, marketing departments try to identify several elements which will make a given campaign stand out among the others. In the United States there are ca. 700 large productions a year, so you really need to rack your brain to be genuine and creative. First are presented preliminary sketches and the so-called previsualizations, which are sessions with models replacing actors. Later on several hundred versions are developed using these photographs, to finally arrange a photo session with the actors who star in the movie. The approval process of the final poster is no mean feat as well – each of the actors or their image managers need to approve every single photograph used in the poster. Then the poster is approved by lawyers and the studio which produces a given movie. And only after all these stages and approvals the poster is forwarded to the phase of the final design and the preparation of versions of the poster in many formats necessary for the distribution. The

finished poster is sent to the studio together with all the elements used in its design. Next all you need to do is wait for the premiere!

AM: As a designer you have access to great Hollywood stars that the world is fascinated with.

TO: From my perspective it looks slightly different. Admittedly, we meet stars, we organise photo sessions with them, we discuss the vision of the campaign with them, and all this takes place in an informal working atmosphere. We simply have a chat sipping coffee, as if we worked with each other for years, without spotlights, flashlights, microphones ...

AM: There used to be times when the so-called Polish school of posters was broadly known. Does anyone in the American movie world still remember such names as Lenica, Tomaszewski, Fangor or Świerzy?

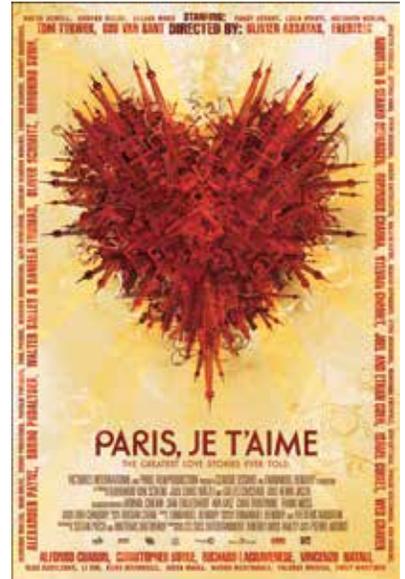
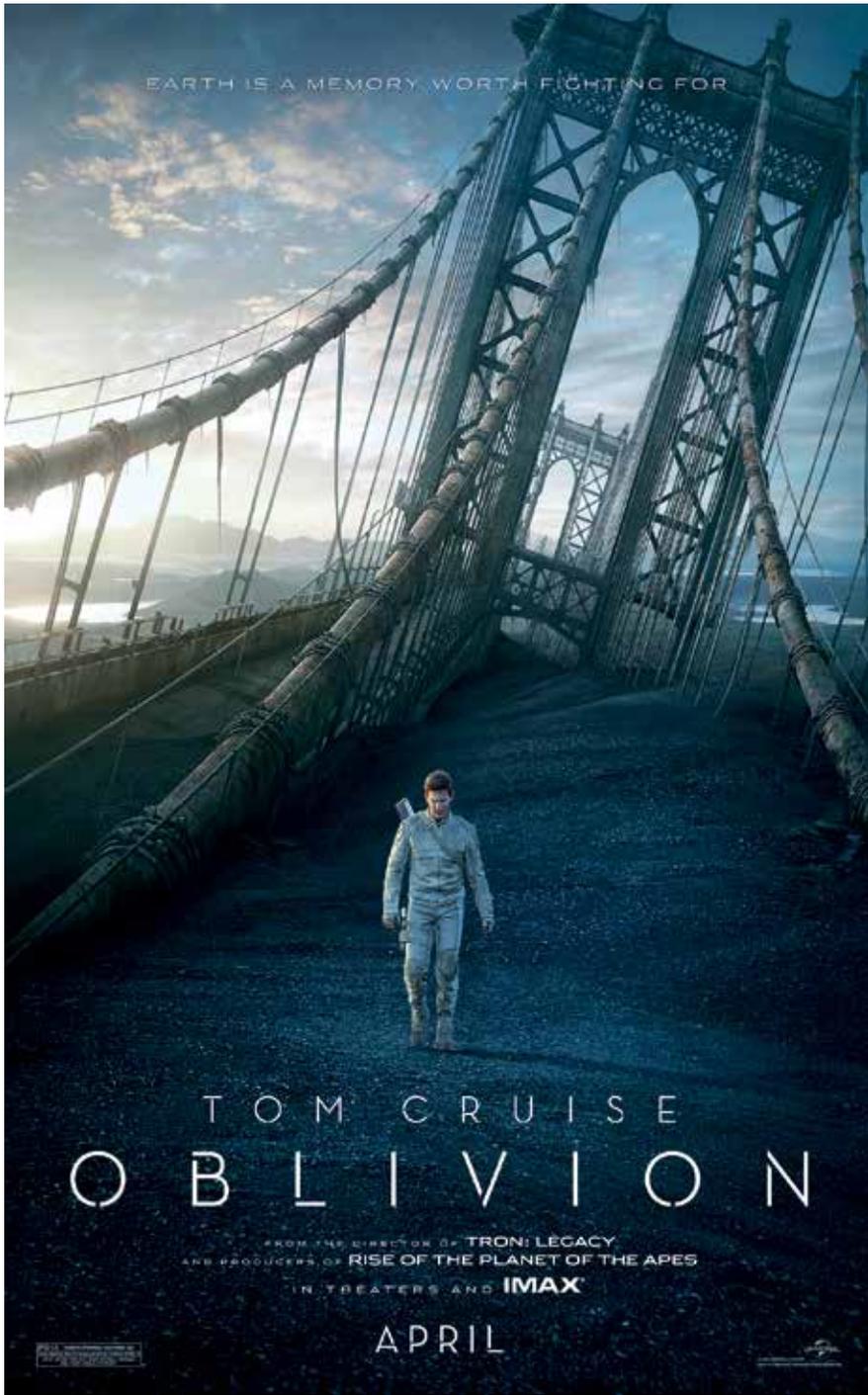
TO: Since that time culture and media around the world have changed drastically, which was followed by a change of the form of advertising and the approach to movie promotion, today regarded as a commodity. America does not fully understand the message of those posters from the Polish school. They are regarded here as a form of art, and not a commercial product. Admittedly, every person I cooperate with in the States has heard about the Polish school of posters and can see something intriguing in them; they would never, however, venture to promote a movie this way. A commercial poster has to be broadly understood by potential viewers. Americans have a great movie industry and its tradition, they know what tools to use to reach their audience. They say that the best song is the one you already know. But what saddens me is the fact that the contemporary Polish poster also follows the direction set by its great creators from the 1960s only to a limited extent. Theatres, operas, and festivals still try to cultivate the artistic vision of a poster, but film and television have chosen another path.

AM: How numerous is the Polish diaspora in Hollywood? Are you consolidated?

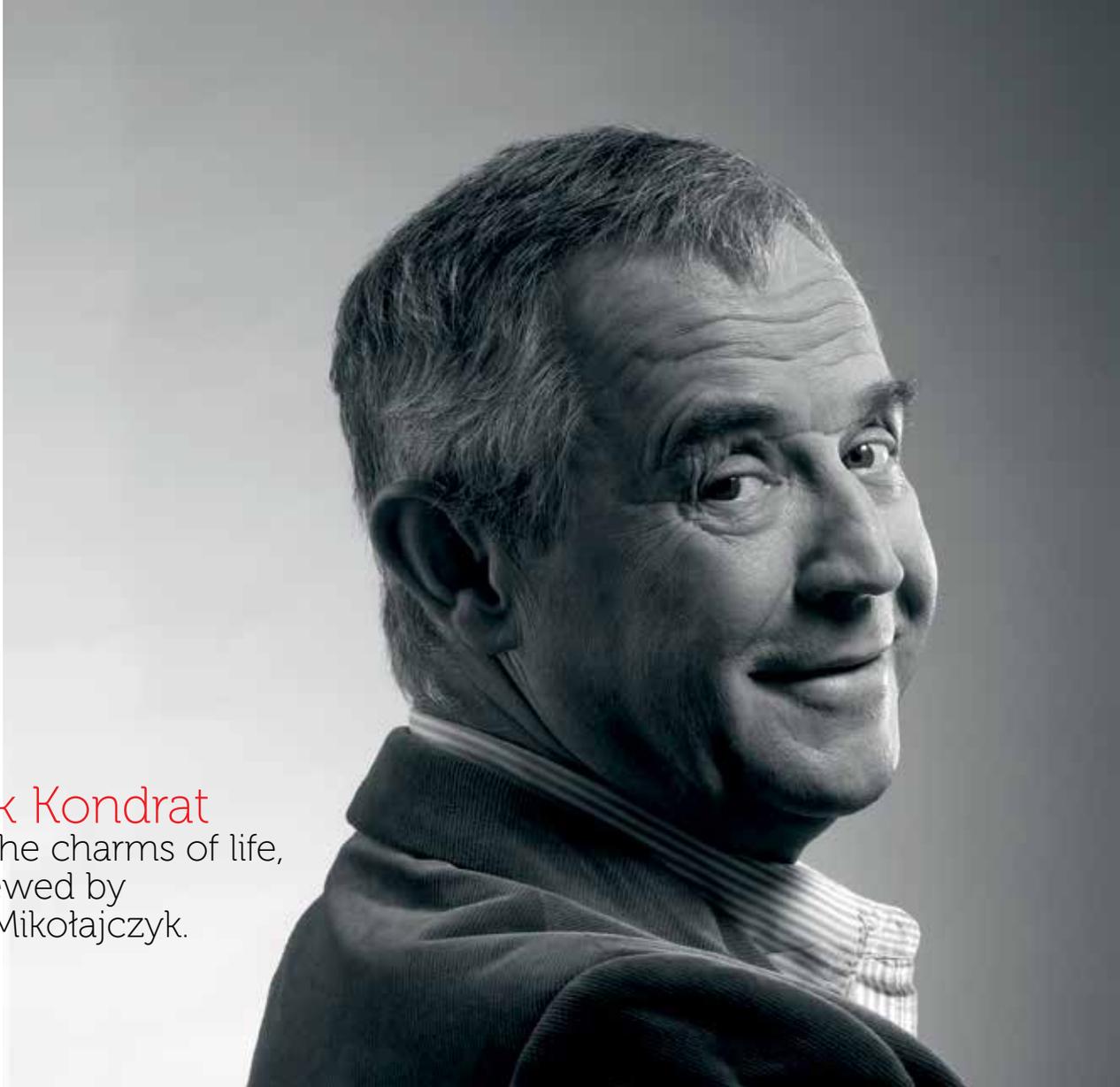
TO: There is quite a bunch of us here, but everybody has their own plans, careers, families, and friends. Nevertheless, we do get together sometimes, especially on holidays or birthdays, and we try to maintain these contacts. Over the years we have created quite a nice well-oiled group.

AM: Do you ever think about going back to Poland?

TO: At this stage my return to Poland would be a completely illogical move. All my investment in coming over to the States, the process of getting used to the work and the first fruit of my efforts would go down the drain. Since I want to keep on working for the movie industry, I can't even move to another city in the States, because only Hollywood (or perhaps New York, too) enables me to work in this niche profession. But I am not thinking about retirement yet.



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Marek Kondrat
about the charms of life,
interviewed by
Adam Mikołajczyk.

The twilight years should be cheerful

Adam Mikołajczyk: In many interviews you present yourself as a sybarite, a person who does not shun the pleasures of life, who just wants to be satisfied. Is it difficult to reach this state in Poland?

Marek Kondrat: I try to avoid making assessments on a national scale. We are a large country, so when we talk about Poles we often refer to our own environment. Sybaritism is a luxury version of satisfaction. Therefore, I am satisfied that today I live in a free, democratic country, which has been developing impressively - especially considering the fact that I still remember the opposite situation. Instead of complaining about deficiencies and faults, I emphasise positive aspects. It is a choice that is consistent with my personality.

AM: In the 'Teraz Polska' Foundation for several years now we have been promoting the concept of modern, positive patriotism, whose one face could be the economic patriotism, that is consciously choosing domestic products and services, appreciation for Polish producers, promotion of cooperation between Polish science and business, etc. Is this model of patriotism something you identify with?

MK: Yes and no. Of course, I am in favour of supporting entrepreneurship in our country, for the best cooperation possible between Polish science and business (I had the honour to be a member of the jury of the 'Stay with Us' award of 'Polityka' weekly, granted to young scientists). However, it is not patriotism but common sense that dictates my decisions when I buy butter or tomatoes.



© MAREK KONDRAT ARCHIVES

I am thrilled to buy fresh fruit or vegetables from a local producer, knowing that they were picked a couple of hours ago, instead of those which travelled in a refrigerator halfway around the world.

AM: As an organisation that promotes Polish businessmen we simply have to ask how your new business project, Kondrat Selected Wines (Kondrat Wina Wybrane), has been developing.

MK: It has been developing well. I have a team of wonderful young people, who together with me and my son Mikołaj, have been creating this company with great commitment for several years now. We operate in several areas, because apart from traditional stationary stores, we have a fully operating online shop as well as wholesale for HoReCa and B2B customers. We organise wine-tasting sessions, trainings and courses devoted to winemaking knowledge, and from the end of July our first shop combined with a bar, BARAWINO, has been operating in Cracow.

AM: Is it possible to buy wines from the Zielona Góra region in your store? Do you believe that Polish wines will

be able to compete on the market, even if only in Central Europe?

MK: We have wines from the West Pomeranian region. For several months now I have had wines from the Turnau Vineyard, one of the largest vineyards in Poland, in my collection. A vineyard is a bit like an English lawn – the first 150 years are the most difficult, and then somehow you get by... The beginnings of the Turnau Vineyard are very promising, and my favourite rosé can easily compete even with French or Spanish wines.

AM: You have done a lot to promote the culture of drinking wine in Poland. Recently this mission has been also supported by discount stores, which offer to Poles wines with much better quality at affordable prices. But will the interest in wine be impeded by the growing popularity of new drinks – the Polish cider or distillates?

MK: The development of the drinking wine culture is connected with tradition, the wealth of the society, and a wise state policy. We do not have the tradition, the wealth has been growing systematically, and the state policy is ailing. Wine in Poland is drunk in large cities, and they stand for less than a half of the population. This fact clearly demonstrates social differences, the financial capacity, and the development of civilisation in many other walks of our life. Therefore, not cider and not distillates, but a wise state policy of eliminating these inequalities will have its effect on whether we are able to enjoy life or not.

AM: Are you able to tell me, basing on your vast travelling experience, what Poland would have to do to make sure that our senior citizens are equally cheerful and full of life like those in other parts of Europe? Is it all about a better climate, more sun, and more money in your wallet?

MK: The twilight years should be cheerful. If they are, we have this feeling that our life has had meaning. Children and grandchildren alone will not replace access to a doctor, to medicines, to the cinema, theatre, your favourite coffee shop, or a trip to some warm and sunny place. Pensioners are a gauge of a country's civilisation. In spite of appearances, Poland as a state is young and working its way up. Setting appropriate principles and their strict implementation – is a condition for wise development. Many politicians are stuck in the era of wars and skirmishes, they wait for a free Poland, whereas it has been free for 25 years now! Sometimes it is easier to fight than to build – may this message accompany our rulers every day.

AM: We ask about acting at the very end, because we know you are not very fond of this topic. What would have to happen for the Polish audience to see you on screen? Wouldn't a screenplay about ambitious winemakers from the Lubuskie Province be tempting enough?

MK: I consider this stage closed. No screenplay can change that.

We are not a polite school

Prof. **Mariusz Grzegorzek**, rector of the Łódź Film School, talks to Adam Mikołajczyk

Adam Mikołajczyk: Why is the Łódź Film School such a phenomenon?

Mariusz Grzegorzek: The reasons are complex. First of all - tradition. The school was founded after the war and from the beginning the names of exceptional graduates were associated with it: Polański, Wajda, Skolimowski and Kieślowski. They are extremely important creators for Polish cinematography. Some, like Roman Polański, feel strongly connected to the school, others, such as Andrzej Wajda, sometime shows distance to the school on Targowa Street. However, the Łódź Film School is internationally recognized as a place that for decades has been generating interesting artists, often with outstanding records. Our achievements also speak for our uniqueness. We teach people how to make movies, but we do not focus only on teaching the techniques. For us, intellectual ferment, gaining experience and clashing views are very important. We gather in Łódź personalities that can shine with a real pedagogical brilliance.

We are a state school, but we are not a polite school. Art should break conventions, so an art school is a specific phenomenon, not fit at all for university patterns. Therefore, at our school, a master and student relationship, which in a sense is the basis of teaching methods, is multidimensional and unpredictable. A student does not blindly follow a professor, but keeps discussing and arguing, which in turn allows them to learn from each other. I know it sounds corny, but now hardly anyone wants to argue constructively. In this process we produce our movies that consistently, with many successes (more than 200 awards per year), are presented at numerous festivals, from Cannes to Sundance. The most important success of the school is that people from all over the world come to us after seeing our films, from Israel, the Czech Republic or Korea, and they want to study in Łódź. Film is such an art, which is based on techniques, so we honestly teach how to write a screenplay, shoot a film, how to promote it. But what sets us apart is the emphasis on the spiritual development of students. In our opinion, a movie belongs to high art, and although the prose of life is that most filmmakers shoot series, advertisements and other commercial forms, they should know who they are and for what purpose they would like to use the language of film art.

AM: Technological progress has undoubtedly a great influence on the development of film art. Does it also influence the teaching method at the Łódź Film School?

MG: Certainly the development of technology has a profound impact on our thinking about the school. Among us are traditionalists, but also those seeking new means of expression. One thing is certain - and this is just as fascinating as frightening - that cinema is really changing. I remember the wonderful '80s, when I was a student and I received a clear signpost that there is a close shot, American shot, general shot, which shots can be mounted together, how to stage a film scene and so on. At present, this knowledge is only a base, a starting point. Ease of access to video recording made film a much more artistic and personal form of expression, which was once the author's unique expression. Now we have to deal with such different conventions, that it is difficult to give an authoritative verdict of what is correct and what is not. In my classes, as in my own work, I try to touch new areas, to launch various, often contradictory, means of expression. The task of a teacher is to show a student many options, but in the end it is the student who decides. It should be respected, even if it seems to us wrong. A discussion itself is not enough; you need to allow young filmmakers to jump into the deep end - to make mistakes. Artistic defeat is something indispensable for creative development.

Today's mental and emotional energy is followed by a change of form, technology and perception of moving images. Cinematography has polarized on two completely opposite poles. On the one hand there is this legendary mobile phone, with which you can capture an image in a totally spontaneous way. In some cases, it can become a work of art. On the other hand, a kind of visual-formal refinement is booming, we have great opportunities, computers, processors, graphic software. Once a movie was created almost entirely during the shooting period, the rest was just good old mounting and adding sound. Now, post-production is the most important. Here you can redraw, colour and improve everything. Here I am not thinking only about science fiction, but also realistic films, where interference, seemingly completely invisible, has a huge impact on the shape of a film. Each method has its good and bad sides. The idea is to try and find your way. This is of course very

difficult and expensive, because it is related to the technological facilities. The new projectors and cameras that we spend enormous amount of money on today will be obsolete in a year.

AM: Recently, Tadeusz Konwicki died, the last member of the unwritten, famous discussion trio: Holoubek, Łapicki and Konwicki. With their passing away, the cinema of thinking and reflection is gone, the one which is not afraid of silence, pauses and the stoppage of time. Instead, shallow series lie in wait for us, and the actor's profession constantly devalues.

MG: This is a more complicated matter. One cannot get offended at reality; we must be able to accept it, for otherwise we will become hostages of our own intellectual impotence. I have a friend who watches sophisticated movies, reads sophisticated books, listens to sophisticated music, but when he became the head of the programme committee which is deciding, for example, on the financing of film projects, a short circuit appeared in his head and he suddenly began to pay attention only to the commercial values of a project. We live in a kind of intellectual and spiritual slavery, although we don't actually know whom we serve. The cancer of commercialism overcomes us all, and it is very sad. Meanwhile, I try to fight for the right to personal expression, the right to ensure that the film will be high art. Art has always been something special, almost sacred. And now we have reached the moment when artists are treated as screw-ups who have chosen the wrong path. We failed to save respect for art, maybe because reality is predatory, and people feel lost and cut off from the merits.

AM: Actors used to fulfil socially important roles. Currently, we mainly expect from them entertainment...

MG: Because we are so tired and tormented, we have such a reduced sense of security that the need to reset and the





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need for most primitive entertainment prevail. It is both frightening and fascinating. We focus on such atavistic matters such as superficial eroticism, food and the simplest, hedonistic pleasures. I follow with enthusiasm online gossip portals with sweet names as Pudelek or Plotek, where 90 percent of information is based on reporting about which woman's breasts are sticking out of her dress, which man is in a homosexual relationship, who has dressed in an embarrassing way, etc. This demonstrates the unbelievable flattened reception of the world. It is sad, but true. It does not make sense to offend, because it only drains energy. The only thing left is to learn to live with it in a certain balance.

AM: Does not it seem to you that recently in Łódź there is less of such films? Does not the city use the fact of having the famous Film School?

MG: When I became the rector, it struck me that people expected the school to welcome and accept everyone with a "rolling out of the red carpet". It was nice to be so appreciated, but this function paralyzed our main activity, which is the teaching process. We constantly had delegations from other countries and offices, which paid us courtesy visits. Meanwhile, we had our problems and normal life, so we had to limit this aspect of our existence. We do not isolate ourselves, we work with the city, state and the world, but our main energy is directed to the harmonious management of school and the teaching process.

AM: How do you assess the condition of Polish cinema? This year we have received a few Oscar nominations, so I think it is good...

MG: I would be very careful with that assessment. "Ida" is a remarkable film and it's wonderful that it has achieved such success, but it is a success of ranking, which ignites the imagination of the masses. There were plenty of hopeless films that received Oscars, and even more amazing movies that did not receive one. Well, it is good the Oscars are awarded, but they are very far away from

us. Again, we attach importance to what is abroad, rather than focus on ourselves.

The condition of Polish cinema leaves a lot to be desired because it is very secure. We still live in such a strange situation. On the one hand we have a kind of fear, a disgust for experiments, something that is bold, therefore courageous films are rare. On the other hand, we are longing for the Western, purebred cinema genre – so there are attempts to catch up with Hollywood, which ends in failure 90% of the time and unpleasantly exposes our incompetence. Consequently, we do not have the extremes - very good commercial films or artistic, intriguing, poignant films that would present our original statement and a chance to appear at the festivals. Thus, Polish cinema is constantly in the middle, which is safe, but boring. I miss searching cinematography, which speaks its own voice, directed to a narrower audience, which may give the character of Polish film making. At the moment, our cinema is not recognizable - we have successful individual films, but lack a common artistic formation.

AM: What is the reason for this state: the lack of artists' courage or the intellectual laziness of the viewers?

MG: There are many reasons, also the ones you mentioned. People do not care about the problems of filmmakers when they have their own (and rightly so). Getting into this profession is very difficult, it is associated with many existential and production issues. Ambitious youth do not withstand the pressure and give up too quickly. All the more that decision makers will comment on their efforts that they are not so commercial and made using state funds ...

AM: Why can we make a good movie about war, martyrdom and sacrifice, and we are not able to make a good comedy or adventure film?

MG: I think we are not predisposed. It's some curse! How long will "Cruise" (*Rejs*) by Piwowski or movies by Bareja be the only notable comedies? I think we are just too sad and incapable of self-irony (as opposed to the Czechs) and too "heavy". And although I am sorry to say this, I think as a nation we have average creativity. The point is not that we are all average, but that there are not enough outstanding individuals, striving to be independent and to set the tone. Maybe we have burned out in a patriotic trance, during the many years of communism and the struggle for freedom. Our films of martyrdom were only significant for us Poles; few of them broke into the consciousness of a foreign viewer. Even appreciation for the movie "Man of Marble" (*Człowiek z marmuru*) by Wajda was a type of support for the struggling nation. You can't compare this film with other movies by Wajda, like "Ashes and Diamonds" (*Popiół i diament*) and "The Promised Land" (*Ziemia obiecana*), which are works of a truly universal nature. When the fashion for Eastern Europe is over, we do not have anything extraordinary to offer to the world. Unfortunately.



Tumski Bridge in Wrocław.
One of the spaces
of the 'Bridges' ECC project,
June 2015.

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Microcosmos of Europe

Wrocław - the European Capital of Culture 2016

In 2016 Wrocław boasts of the prestigious title of the European Capital of Culture. Hundreds of artistic and entertainment projects will be held in the city. The concept of the European Capital of Culture, implemented since 1985, has also a social, infrastructural, and identity-related dimension. Thanks to this Wrocław as a representative of Polish culture and a city with unique history is given a one-off opportunity to mark its presence in Europe.

The European Capital of Culture (ECC) is the most prestigious initiative of the European Union in the field of culture. The concept of the project is to bring Europeans closer together, help them to get to know each other and conduct intercultural dialogue. Cities that are an ECC have a chance to focus the attention of the entire Europe on them for a period of one year. The title is granted each year to two cities – from the so-called old and new Union. Decisions are made by a selection panel consisting of experts appointed by EU institutions and the government of the country which is to receive the title. In Poland the competition for the title of the European capital

of Culture 2016 was attended by as many as 11 cities, and in Spain – 14 (the winner was the Basque city of San Sebastian).

Many of the 50 previous ECCs thanks to the project obtained some measurable benefits of a tourist, marketing, or economic nature. For example, the events held in Marseilles (2013) were attended by 11 million people, with 511 thousand in the opening ceremony itself. In Pécs, Hungary, (2010) the tourist traffic increased by 27%. Lille (2004) boasted of 17 thousand volunteers and ambassadors of the ECC project, and Liverpool (2008) – 130 million pounds of additional profits were generated for the city thanks to ECC by the participants (a total of 9.7 million visits).



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The range of potential activities connected with the ECC project is very broad and largely depends on the character of each city. On the basis of EU reports and other documents analysing the operation of the project one could, however, discern certain tendencies and recommendations from Brussels and the experts. Definitely, the European Capital of Culture should not be merely a year-long theatre, museum or literary festival, as this initiative is of an inclusive nature, whereas the term ‘culture’ included in the name goes way beyond the notion of high culture. The ECC celebrations should be by no means regarded as a year-long tourist event, but a long-term process influencing different aspects of life in the city. All this should take place with active contribution from the interested entities – public and private institutions, but most of all the city inhabitants and non-governmental organisations; what is important, not only those which operate in the city itself. In the macro scale, this title can be regarded in much broader terms than just another occasion to promote a specific city.

Frequently countries use the ECC as a cultural symbol of the entire country and support the project not only financially, but also in terms of its organisation and contents. In the case of Poland, the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław can be an opportunity to raise interest in Poland after the period of our presidency in the EU in 2011, or the UEFA Euro 2012 championship. In 2015 the Polish government declared financial support in the amount of PLN 119 million, which is estimated to constitute over one third of the total budget of the project.

In the context of the ECC, Wrocław sets for itself two main objectives: doubling the participation of city inhabitants in culture, and doubling the number of tourists visiting the city. Within the scheme of implementing the latter, since 2014 the city has undertaken actions aimed at raising the interest of the international audience in the ECC 2016 project. Ones that are worth mentioning



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here are participation in tourist fairs (e.g. ITB Berlin and the Culture Lounge zone), promotional campaigns during Expo 2015 in Milan, and a strong cultural presence at the book fair in Paris (Salon du Livre) and at the Biennale in Venice. Natural partners in the activities connected with the promotion of Wrocław abroad are Polish diplomatic posts, including Polish institutes, as well as centres of the Polish Tourist Organisation abroad. The latter has dubbed the ECC in Wrocław as one of the promotional anchors of Poland in its marketing strategy for the years 2015-2016.

In the context of the local increase of participation in culture, Wrocław has been undertaking such activities as the ‘School in the City’ (students have classes in, e.g. institutions of culture), ‘Wrocław – Entrance from the Backyard’ (artistic interventions in the urban space), or providing admittance to all municipal museums free of charge (always, with the exception of temporary special exhibitions).

Opposite page, below: the event 'A Drowning Man Catches a Book' within the scheme of the 'Bridges' ECC project, June 2015.

ECC also includes artistic activities in the public space, organised for several years before 2016.

In the photo: performance of the Puppet Clinic Theatre within the scheme of the 'Via Cultura' project, May 2012.



© MARCIN JASINSKI

It is largely due to the social character of the project, presented in 2011 in the competition application developed by the team of Prof. Adam Chmielewski, that Wrocław was granted the title of the European Capital of Culture. The diagnose of the local cultural life contained in the document is, however, pessimistic – only slightly more than 10% of the city inhabitants regularly participate in any cultural activity, and groups that are particularly excluded are young people, senior citizens, the disabled, multi-children families, national and ethnic minorities. The ECC is to change it.

The ECC programme in Wrocław is being developed by a special group of people – curators responsible for individual fields of art: Zbigniew Maćków (architecture), Roman Gutek (film), Irek Grin (literature), Agnieszka Franków-Żelazny (music), Ewa Michnik (opera), Michał Bieniek (visual arts), Jarosław Fret (theatre), and Chris Baldwin, the only foreigner in this group, responsible for performance, and to be more specific, four large projects executed in the space of Wrocław.

The first of them, 'Bridges', already took place in June 2015, during the first stage of the Wrocław programme. The project represents an identity- and history-related course of thinking about the ECC and it inscribes in the unique history, which Wrocław would like to tell Europe – the history of a place created by different nations and religions, as well as the only city of this size where there was a complete replacement of the population after World War II. Chris Baldwin invited inhabitants of Wrocław and Lower Silesia to create artistic projects on bridges of Wrocław, which would take into account the historical context of the structure (e.g. who designed and built it). There are over 200 bridges and footbridges in the capital of Lower Silesia, and many of them are connected with quite interesting stories. Finally, on one day, on 20 June, several hundred young amateur artists presented their projects on

26 bridges. The idea proved to be a success and the city has already announced its continuation.

What is worth seeing in Wrocław within the scheme of the ECC? Several hundred projects and events have been planned. Many of them are special editions of already existing festivals, such as Jazz on the Oder, the Festival of Actor's Songs, or Wratislavia Cantans. A true musical hit will be the concert of David Gilmour accompanied by Leszek Możdżer, to be held in June. The artists will perform in front of the National Forum of Music – a monumental cultural investment, implemented with the ECC in mind. Also in June a performance entitled 'Flow' will be held – a show addressed to over 100 thousand viewers, presenting the history of Wrocław on the Oder River, as well as the 'Spanish Night with Carmen – Zarzuela Show', which is a great opera production in the Wrocław Stadium. The city is also preparing itself for the reception of the title UNESCO World Book Capital (in the years 2016-2017) and will implement a number of literary projects, including the next edition of the European Literature Night, during which well-known celebrities read books never published in Poland in unique places. In April Wrocław will be visited by Jo Nesbø, a world famous author of detective novels, and in August there will be the Polish science-fiction convention Polcon organised here. Theatre fans will be interested in the Theatre Olympics to be held in October, and cinema fans – in the special edition of the New Horizons Festival and the European Film Awards ceremony held in December. Exhibitions devoted to architecture will be also organised, e.g. 'Made in Europe', presenting laureates of the Mies van der Rohe Award, and the most important projects of European architecture over recent years. The city and the invited architects also work on the creation of a housing estate 'New Żerniki', referring to the historical exhibition 'WuWa', organised in the 1920s.

A detailed programme of the events is available on the website Wroclaw2016.pl.



Krzysztof Przybył interviews **Jakub Opara**, President of PL.2012+, operator of PGE Narodowy stadium in Warsaw.

PGE Narodowy

- sport, business,

Krzysztof Przybył: PGE Narodowy was the apple of Poland's eye long before Euro 2012. There were worries as to whether the construction will be completed on time. Once the championships were over, some had doubts when it came to the stadium's ability to make ends meet. What is PGE Narodowy's situation today, four years after it opened its gates for the first time?

Jakub Opara: First and foremost I would like to emphasise that for me, managing this national arena, is a great challenge and commitment. I am aware of the responsibility resting on my shoulders. All those interested in the fate of PGE Narodowy can rest assured that the task entrusted to me by the Minister of Sports will be performed.

KP: Does the stadium break even?

JO: Let me be clear about this - there are very few stadiums



culture and entertainment

around the world able to generate a profit, particularly after just a few years on the market. We have to bear in mind that the “stadium” business in Poland is relatively new. This did not change the fact that the outlook for Warsaw’s arena is optimistic. Without doubt, “all stadium” events are key. Of course including matches of our national football team, for whom, without exaggerating, PGE Narodowy has become its home ground, a place where our team feels most at home. But when I talk about the stadium’s outlook, I am thinking about its activities throughout the year. For example, let’s look at premises that are available for lease for start-ups. We are talking about 5 thousand sq. m., where approximately one thousand people can put their minds to work and create fantastic things. Many people and companies are moving their operations to our building, as this place opens up new possibilities, opens the door to a new business sphere. PGE Narodowy draws creative



Match Poland – Scotland, 5 March 2014.



Audience of the climate summit, 2013.



Science Picnic, 9 May 2015.



Wind and Water Fair, 4 April 2014.



Preparations to a match of the Polish national football team, 11 October 2014.

© WWW.PGENARODOWY.PL (6)

people, who sense that here they will be able to realise their potentials to a greater extent than thus far. An office located at al. Księża Jana Poniatowskiego 1 is also enormously prestigious. And we are nothing but happy with such a turn of events.

KP: You have been at the helm of PL.2012+, PGE Narodowy's operator for a month. What is your vision on how the stadium should function?

JO: PGE Narodowy should be a universal venue, where sports, entertainment and cultural events are held, but also one where office space, conference halls, VIP boxes and restaurants are available. It has to be an organism breathing using its many lungs, which I will repeat as my mantra. A dozen or so all stadium events per annum and use of approx. 95 per cent of its office space should put us in the black. It's worth remembering that 2016 is the first year of the PGE sponsorship contract, which will provides us with an additional and significant boost for our budget. The stadium still has vast untapped potential. In the first place I am thinking about large scale events as well as office space rental. We will strive to make use of it the best we can.

KP: So, in your opinion, is PGE Narodowy a good place for business?

JO: I certainly believe that this is a good place for doing business. Due to its prestige the stadium may be used as a venue for business meetings. We have state of the art office space as well as places where elegant business dinners can be hosted.

KP: The prize which PL.2012+ was awarded in last year's "Poland Now" contest stands testament to the fact that PGE Narodowy is an excellent venue to host large events as well as business meetings. What is your opinion?

JO: For us, the ability to use the "Poland Now" Emblem is a great distinction, which confirms the quality of our services. This prestigious prize makes us even more credible.

KP: Is there any way for PGE Narodowy to become a recognisable and prestigious brand outside of Poland?

JO: London's Wembley Stadium was constructed nearly 100 years ago and thus has had somewhat more time than us build its prestige and image. This does not mean that we will not strive for Narodowy to become a global brand. The large events organised here, with July's NATO summit at the forefront will aid this cause. Here, I would also be inclined to mention national football team matches and Rihanna's concert which is an element of her grand European tournée, which means that a large number of foreign guests will come.

KP: Will the NATO Summit make it difficult to conduct business at Narodowy?

JO: First and foremost I would like to emphasise that for us hosting the NATO Summit is a great honour, but also a responsibility. It will certainly entail some difficulties in terms of conducting business. The stadium will be taken out of its normal use for a few weeks or so. This entails a vast logistical operation. We lease 12 thousand sq. m. of office space, which means that we will have to move tenants to different locations or pay compensation. On the other hand, this is a once in a lifetime promotional opportunity. There will be more than 3 thousand accredited journalists from more than 100 countries. Images of PGE Narodowy and its surroundings will appear across all of the most important information services around the world - from CNN, FOX, through the BBC and even Al-Jazeera or the Chinese CCTV. Initially, it is impossible to express these benefits in financial terms, but they will eventually generate money. I personally consider the NATO Summit to be extremely prestigious and an immense opportunity. An opportunity which - I am sure - we will make full use of.

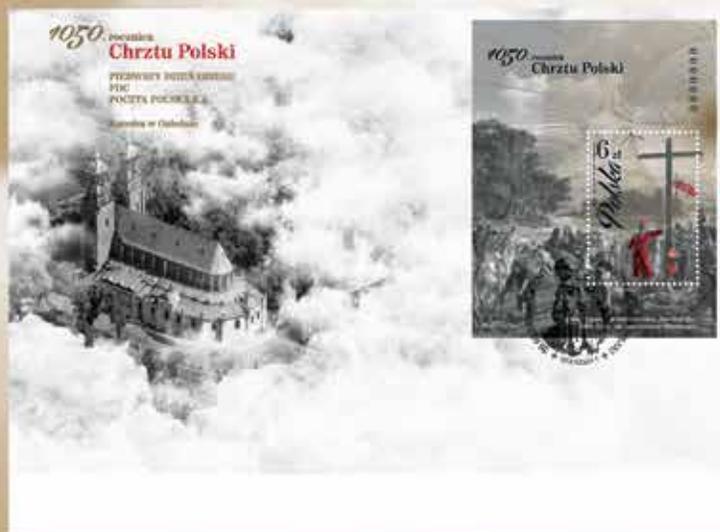
KP: What else is in store this year for PGE Narodowy?

JO: Until the end of February, as part of Winter Narodowy, we have two ice skating rinks, a curling sheet, a Tyrolean traverse and a great ice show will be held on 27 February. We have a permanent Lego exhibition, with attractions such as an 11 meter long Air Force One, built over 60 days by a group of enthusiasts from Gdańsk, and a 3D oceanarium. In May we will host the Polish Football Cup final, Speedway Grand Prix and a Poland vs. the rest of the world speedway heats. Rihanna's concert which I already mentioned will take place on the 5th of August, and in the autumn two matches by Poland's national football team, as part of the World Cup qualifiers. This year, we also want to organise a KSW gala, a tannins tournament, and quarter mile drag racing at the stadium's common. As you can see, there are a lot of things in the pipeline.

KP: And what about events for which PGE Narodowy is a direct partner?

JO: There are a lot of those, and there will be even more. For example, we are the co-hosts of a charity boxing gala - I world encourage you not to miss it. We are also looking to provide services for active people, who like sports, like roller-bladers or long-boarders. A sports equipment rental facility will be available at PGE Narodowy shortly. You will be able to practice with professional trainers - free of charge. However, we are not solely focusing on sports. In August we will invite graffiti artists. A Green Zone, or an area to relax in, will start operating in the spring. We will be a partner to those events also through the PGE contract, our naming rights sponsor. This year we will be well on our way with rebranding, so that everyone knows that PGE Narodowy is our stadium. And we cannot forget that this is the only stadium in the world with its own theatre. And as such we invite you to come and visit the XL Theatre and take part in other events.

The 1050th Anniversary of the Baptism of Poland



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