



# POLISH EMBASSY NEWSLETTER 1/2011



CANBERRA, MAY 2011

## FROM THE AMBASSADOR



We have also included information about the visit to Australia of Poland’s leading expert on European affairs Mr Paweł Świeboda, the Australian celebration of the beatification of Pope John Paul II and last but not least the premiere showing of Peter Weir’s “The Way Back” in Canberra. You can also read about interesting books and pay a virtual visit to one of the most beautiful Polish towns – Zamość. And last but not least there is some news for you from our Consulate General in Sydney.

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the very first issue of our bi-monthly newsletter, which will contain news about activities of the Embassy and the Consulate General in Sydney and information related to Poland and the Polish-Australian relationship.

In this issue we have highlighted the inaugural Australian International Chopin Piano Competition, which was initiated and supported by the Embassy, as well as Poland’s National Day celebration.

You are welcome to visit our websites ([www.canberra.polemb.net](http://www.canberra.polemb.net), [www.sydney.polemb.net](http://www.sydney.polemb.net)) and to share with us your comments and remarks.

With kind regards,

*Andrzej Jaroszyński*

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## THE AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL CHOPIN PIANO COMPETITION CANBERRA 2-8 MAY 2011



21-year-old Peter de Jager of Melbourne took out the first prize at the inaugural Chopin Piano Competition, which was organized by the ANU School of Music and initiated and supported by the Embassy. Oliver She of Brisbane won the second prize and the Polish pianist Gracjan Szymczak was third and received his prize, sponsored by the Embassy, from H.E. Mr Andrzej Jaroszyński. Polish-Australian Konrad Olszewski (Melbourne) advanced to the semifinal. Several special prizes were

sponsored by the Polish Community Council in Australia and the Polish Community in the ACT which initiated and established the Friends of the Australian International Chopin Piano Competition under the honorary patronage of the Ambassador. The Embassy was instrumental in supporting the Friends and securing the artistic patronage of Vladimir Ashkenazy – Sydney Symphony Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor – for the Competition. The Competition is a biannual event and the next edition will be organized at the centenary of Canberra 2013. It is the first Australian piano contest dedicated to the composer. The contest is a concrete and permanent outcome of the 2010 Chopin Year celebrations in Australia. It was preceded on 1 May by a recital of one of the most famous Polish pianists Mr Janusz Olejniczak.



Gracjan Szymczak, Karolina Nadolska, Konrad Olszewski



H.E. Ambassador Andrzej Jaroszyński, Peter de Jager



Karolina Nadolska



Wanda Horkey, Jolanta Gallagher



H.E. Ambassador Andrzej Jaroszyński, Jury Member Charles Bodman Rae

*The final stage of the Competition was attended by approx. 700 Canberrans and livestreamed in Internet (<http://anuchopin11.webcastingsolutions.com.au/links.htm>).*

## POLAND'S NATIONAL DAY

The celebration of Poland's National Day in Canberra was combined with the opening of the Australian International Chopin Piano Competition. The commemoration of the 220th anniversary of the adoption of the 3 May Constitution was held on 2 May in the prestigious venue of the ANU School of Music.

### *The Artistic Director about the Competition:*

*As the artistic director of the competition I would like to thank the Polish community in Australia warmly for their great support in the running of the competition. His Excellency the Ambassador, the liaison director of the competition Dr Jolanta Gallagher, the president of the Friends Wanda Horky and all the other friends and volunteers, have made this exciting event possible.*

Approximately 200 people attended the ceremony, including members of the Australian Parliament, representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and several representatives of the diplomatic corps. After the official part with the national anthems of Poland and Australia and a short speech by the Ambassador, the piano competition was opened by the Head of ANU School of Music Professor Adrian Walter, Artistic Director of the Competition Mr Arnan Wiesel and the President of the Jury Professor Larry Sitsky.

### *The President of the Friends of the Competition Mrs Wanda Horky:*

*Chopin's originality, uniqueness and popularity all over the world place him among the world's most prominent musicians.*

On the occasion of Poland's National Day, the Embassy contributed an advertising feature to the "Canberra Times" which was published on 2 May. The special feature included items on the Constitution of 3 May 1791 (the second written Bill of Rights in the world) and the Chopin Competition.

[Read feature](#)



Mrs Anne Plunkett - Chief of Protocol (DFAT),  
Ambassador Andrzej Jaroszyński,  
Deputy Head of Mission Witold Krzesiński

### *The Ambassador about the Competition:*

*I am convinced that the first Competition will be a great success, and I wish that it expands further to become one of the leading music contests in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.*



Janusz Olejniczak,  
Jolanta Gallagher,  
Senator Gary Humphries

## RECENT EVENTS

### The Ambassador's visit to Melbourne, 4-5 May 2011

#### Opening of the first Polish Honorary Consulate General in Australia



The Ambassador led the ceremony of the upgrading the Polish Consulate in Melbourne to the level of the Consulate General with the nomination of Mr George John Łuk-Kozika as the Honorary Consul General in Melbourne with jurisdiction throughout Victoria. In his speech the Ambassador underlined that the appointment of the Polish Honorary Consul General in Melbourne reflects the growing

importance of Victoria for the relationship between Poland and Australia, and recognizes the contribution of Mr Łuk-Kozika as Honorary Consul since 1995 to its vibrant development. The ceremony in the prestigious "Australian Club" was attended by representatives of the Victorian Government and Opposition, Polish Consul General Mr Daniel Gromann and the President of the Polish Community Council of Victoria Mr Krzysztof Łańcucki.

#### The Ambassador's lecture at the AIIA

On 5 May 2011 the Ambassador held a lecture "Poland Today: Challenges and Opportunities" at the Victorian branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. He presented the priorities of the Polish foreign policy and upcoming Polish presidency in the European Union, and spoke about the most important challenges for Poland and EU and Poland's role in developing good relations between EU and Australia. The next lecture by the Ambassador at the AIIA will be held on 30 May in Sydney.

#### Henryk's Shining Island, 14 May 2011

"Before I die, I would like to know what music is" once said Henryk Górecki, the most original contemporary Polish composer. No one knows whether Górecki discovered the truth he had been searching for. We know, however, that we are blessed by his music that enchants and delights".

With these words Ambassador Andrzej Jaroszyński introduced the audience to a concert commemorating Górecki, who died on 12 November 2010. The concert was organized as a part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Canberra International Music Festival. It took place on Saturday, 14 May 2011 at St. Christopher's Cathedral, attracting nearly one thousand people.

In the 2010 Festival a premiere of the string orchestra version of Henryk Górecki's "Songs are sung" was performed. This year three other pieces by Górecki were played: "O Domina Nostra Op.55" (Australian premiere), "Totus Tuus", and "Goodnight". The concert also included the premiere of a work by an Australian composer, Peter Sculthorpe.

After Górecki's death, Sculthorpe decided to write a tribute to the Polish composer. He met him for the

first time when both were guests at the Vale of Glamorgan Festival of Music. Sculthorpe reported their interchanges in a television program: "Every day Henryk would say: 'After bad there is worse'. *And I'd say:* 'Oh, come on, Henryk. After bad there's better' and finally Górecki would say: 'It's all right for you coming from that big white shining island, Australia'". In his composition, Sculthorpe attempts to bring his friend to that Shining Island. Sculthorpe therefore called his work "The Shining Island" and this name was also given to the concert.



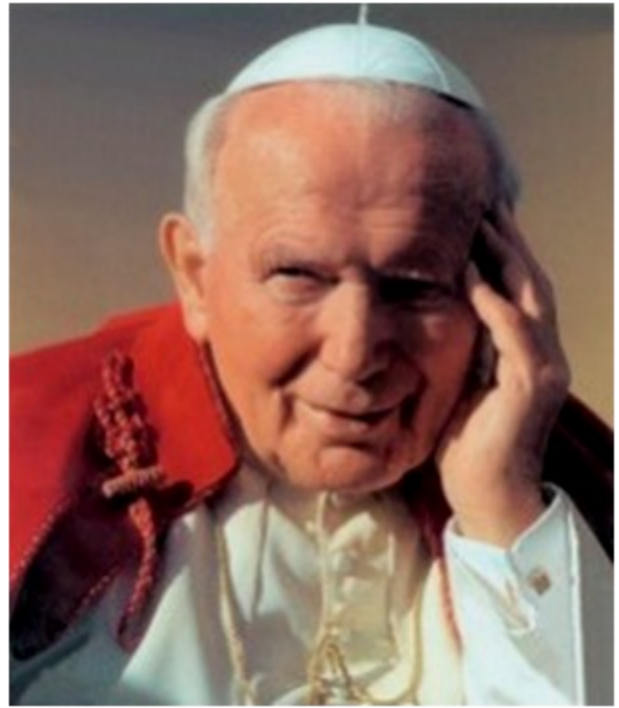
Read more:

<http://www.cimf.org.au/default.asp?id=254>

<http://www.canberra.polemb.net/files/documents/Press/CT07.05.11.PDF>

## **Pope John Paul II Beatification Celebrations in Australia**

The Ambassador took part in the Reception for the Beatification of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, on 1 May 2011 in Adelaide. It was organized by The Hon Mike Rann, Premier of South Australia. In his speech the Premier emphasised that Pope John Paul II was “a great and generous soul”, “a man of courage, and a man of conviction”. “He was the Pope who, together with his friend, the electrician and union leader Lech Walesa, stared down Communism in Poland and lit the torch of freedom behind the Iron Curtain. He was a Pope who could build bridges, as well as tear down walls”, Premier Mike Rann said ([Read his speech](#)). In the Pope John Paul II Polish Catholic Centre in Canberra His Grace Archbishop Mark Coleridge celebrated the Holy Mass, which gathered 200 members of the Polish Community. Abp. Coleridge, who knew the Pope from his time



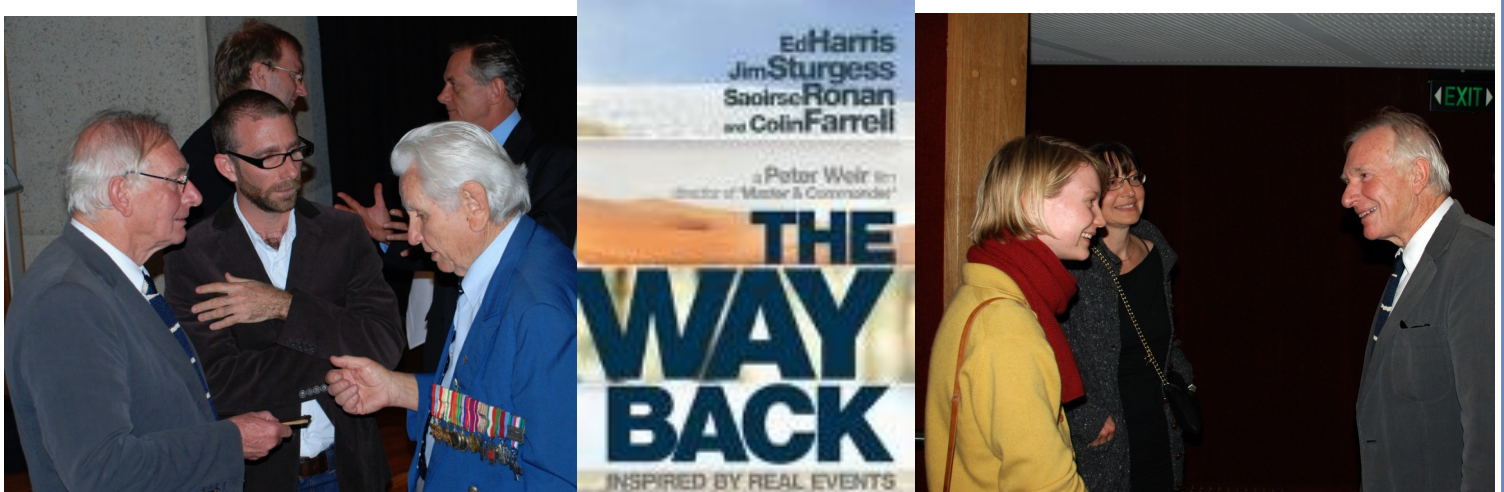
at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, called him one of the most important spiritual leaders in the history of mankind. The beatification was also celebrated in other major Australian cities (*see “News and Information from the Polish Consulate General in Sydney” p.11*).



### **Visit to Australia of Paweł Świeboda, President of demosEuropa**

From 8 to 19 April 2011 the President of the Centre for European Strategy, demosEuropa, Paweł Świeboda, visited Australia at the invitation of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). From 13 to 14 April Paweł Świeboda visited Canberra, where he held several discussions with representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia. On 13 April Paweł Świeboda was received by Paul Grigson, Deputy Secretary of DFAT. They entered into high level discussions with officials from the Europe Division and the South – East Asia Division. The Embassy was represented by the Charge d'Affaires, Witold Krzesiński.

[Read more about visit](#)



## PETER WEIR IN CANBERRA

A special premiere of "The Way Back", organized by the Embassy, was held on 23 February 2011 in the National Gallery of Australia. A short gala event complemented the premiere which was attended by about 260 viewers.

After the premiere, Mr Weir took part in a discussion with the audience, led by Simon Weaving, director of the International Film Festival in Canberra. Responses were also made by the the French explorer Cyril Delafosse Guiramand who traveled the entire route described by Sławomir Rawicz in his book "The Long Walk". At the conclusion of the premiere, Mr Weir made a short emotional speech in which he expressed his gratitude, respect and admiration for Poland and the Polish people.



*Above:*

*Left: Peter Weir, Cyril Delafosse Guiramand, Franciszek Kustra*

*Right: Mia Wasikowska, Marzena Wasikowska, Peter Weir*

*Bottom:*

*Peter Weir and Embassy staff*

### From the Q&A session in Canberra

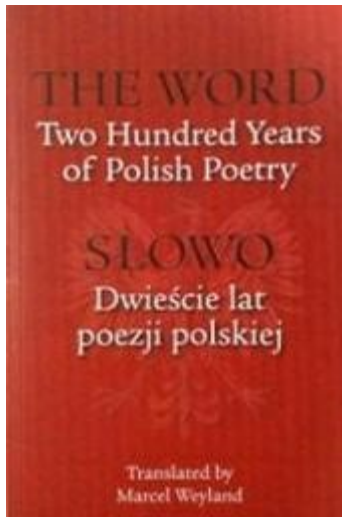
#### **Audience:**

You said the film was inspired by the book by Sławomir Rawicz, but he didn't actually undergo the journey himself, so did you get inspiration for the book from talking to other survivors?

#### **P. Weir:**

The question to the underlying inspiration relates to a book called "The Long Walk" by Sławomir Rawicz, the man who was in the gulag. He was an officer of the Polish army...and he always claimed he was on the walk.... The documents that turned up recently showed that he'd been released in the amnesty in 1942, so we presume he was not on the walk. But there's a certain syndrome. Anne Applebaum...the famous historian and authority on the gulags...was our advisor and she said, there is a strange phenomenon amongst survivors of the gulags, that a number of people would claim the same story...So either Slav heard the story from someone else or at some point he came to believe it himself, because he did walk a great distance after the amnesty. But as far as I was concerned, I wasn't making history, this is rather symbolic. I did need to know the walk happened and I was satisfied by speaking to the sons of the intelligence officer and the interpreter who dealt with these Poles at the end of the war (one in New Zealand and one in London), and they both talked of their fathers who remembered those men. And people walked, a lot of people walked great distances in that period. So that was enough for me.

## BOOKS OF INTEREST



**Marcel Weyland**, born in Poland, based in Sydney, in 2010 has published a bilingual anthology of the Polish poetry “**The Word: Two Hundred Years of Polish Poetry**” – addressed to both Polish and English readers. It contains short works by well-known poets as well as iconic poems. Divided

thematically, the poems present a very personal kind of an anthology. The anthology as a unique collection is still provoking comments. One of them is an article entitled “From the Eternal tree” by Adam Rustowski, published in “Quadrant”, March 2011:

”Almost ten long years have passed since Marcel Weyland published what must have appeared at the time as his magnum opus – the English translation of Adam Mickiewicz’s “Pan Tadeusz”. It was a major triumph of dedication, hard work, patience and poetic inspiration. The silence that followed was, however, a very productive period. It came to fruition with the publication last year of an even more ambitious translation project: “The Word”.

Weyland does not offer any conventionally chronological, pedestrian history of Polish poetry. What he proposes is a rather personal, occasionally idiosyncratic, selection of poems and poets who for various reasons attracted his attention in his meanderings through the rather complicated cultural and political history of Poland.

Few people would even contemplate the incredibly difficult and onerous task of anthologising two hundred years of poetic endeavour, particularly in a country with such a rich and vibrant literary tradition as Poland. Polish literature was almost unknown to the rest of the continent, and the wider world, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when French, English (including American, of course), German and Mediterranean literatures dominated Europe.

A task such as this translation becomes even more daunting when it entails a perilous journey that is not only historical in nature, but also linguistic and cultural – with a scarcity of useful navigation tools to provide a proper orientation in the vastness of available poetic material, as well as the cultural subtleties and obscure complications of historical contexts.

Marcel Weyland seems to have embarked on a mission – and a noble one at that (...).”

To read the whole article click [here](#)

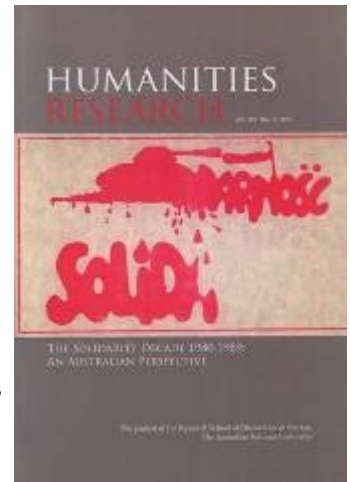
To read more about M.Weyland click [here](#)

**Stefan Markowski  
Jan Pakulski**

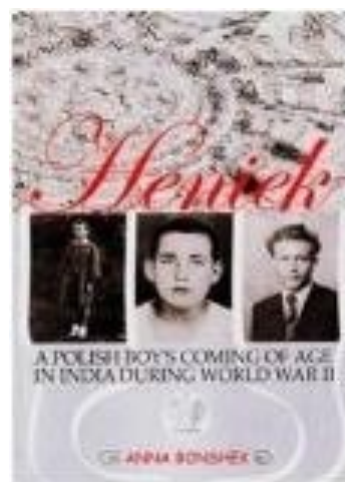
**The Solidarity  
Decade 1980-1989:**

**An Australian  
Perspective**

Canberra, ANU E Press,  
2010



A collection of essays by Polish and Australian authors. Part 1 contains personal reflections and luminiscences illustrating the Australian perspective on the Solidarity Decade. Part 2 is a collection of academic contributions covering the key aspects of this era. The majority of the presentations come from the symposium hosted by the Polish Embassy at the National Europe Centre at the Australian National University in July 2009.



**Anna Bonshek**

**Heniek. A Polish  
boy's coming of age  
in India during  
World War II**

Canberra, PranaWorld  
Publishing, 2011

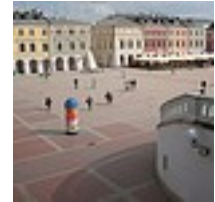
A biography of Henry Bonshek (Henryk Bączek) born in 1928 who was deported to a Soviet penal camp, escaped through Uzbekistan to Rajasthan, India and finally settled down in Australia. His story is told by his daughter Anna Bonshek. She currently lives and works in the arts & news media in Australia.

## Off the beaten track – Zamość



Zamość, named “Renaissance pearl” and “Padua of the North”, is one of the best preserved Renaissance towns in Europe. It was founded in 16<sup>th</sup> century by Jan Zamoyski - one of the most powerful magnates of Poland’s Golden Age. It was built by Bernardo Morando, a native of Padua, according to an Italian concept of the ideal town. The

Main Market Square together with the preserved remains of the old Zamość Fortress constitute a unique urban complex inscribed on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List. The Square is surrounded by arcaded houses, but its landmark is a magnificent town hall with fan stairs which are often used to stage performances and concerts.



To learn more about Zamość visit:

<http://www.zamosc.pl/zamosc.php?get=page,,629>

[http://en.poland.gov.pl/Zamosc\\_8383.html](http://en.poland.gov.pl/Zamosc_8383.html)

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/564>

## Upcoming events:

**51st Krakow Film Festival**  
**23-29.05.2011**



51st KRAKOW FILM FESTIVAL

Krakow Film Festival is one of the oldest film events dedicated to documentary, animated and short fiction films in Europe. During 7 festival days viewers have an opportunity to watch about 250 films from Poland and abroad. Every year Krakow Film Festival hosts about 500 Polish and international guests.

[http://www.kff.com.pl/en/festival/about\\_festival](http://www.kff.com.pl/en/festival/about_festival)

**Polish Film Festival Gdynia**  
**6-11.06.2011**



Festiwal  
Polskich Filmów  
Fabularnych  
Polish Film Festival  
Gdynia

The 36<sup>th</sup> Polish Film Festival in Gdynia takes place 6-11 June 2011. The most important film festival in Poland is a great opportunity to summarize, present and assess the yearly output of Polish cinema. This year 9 films will be shown in the main category - Panorama of Polish Cinema.

<http://www.fpff.pl/en/>

<http://www.fpff.pl/en/festival/>

## For more Embassy news + information:

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2600 ACT  
[www.canberra.polemb.net](http://www.canberra.polemb.net)

FEEDBACK + COMMENTS  
We welcome them!  
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Tygodnik Polski





## Polish Community in Australia

According to the last census, carried out by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2006, over 160 000 Australians have Polish ancestry. At the time of the census, there were over 52 000 Australian citizens and residents who had been born in Poland and over 53 000 declared they spoke Polish at home.

The main waves of Polish migration to Australia took place in the years 1947-54, when Australia accepted Polish veterans and displaced persons after World War II (over 50 000 people) and 1980-91, when immigrants with ties with Solidarity arrived (over



Polish Christmas Festival at Darling Harbour in Sydney, December 2010 (Photo: Tom Koprowski)



Monument to Sir Paul Strzelecki in Jindabyne

25 000 people). The most recent arrivals are mainly students and professionals who, after spending some time in Australia, have chosen to make it their home.

The Polish community in Australia is well-organised. There are numerous organizations, clubs, Polish Houses, community schools teaching Polish language and culture, veterans' associations, seniors' clubs, folkloric song and dance ensembles, theatre groups, aged care services, residential care facilities and so on. Major festivals are organised regularly in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide and the Polish community takes an active part in the rich life of today's multicultural Australia.

Polish language radio broadcasts are featured regularly on SBS Radio and on various community radio stations in all of the major Australian cities. There are also Polish language magazines and websites and a strong Polish presence in the religious communities, especially the Catholic one. The Polish Community Council of Australia is an umbrella organization which gathers together the majority of the Polish-Australian organisations. The 60<sup>th</sup> Congress of Delegates will take place in Canberra in June 2011.



Pol-Art Festival, Adelaide, 2009/2010

Over the years Polish immigrants have made a significant contribution to the development of Australia. Some of the well-known contemporary Australians of Polish origin are: the late sociologist Professor Jerzy Zubrzycki, Michal Klim (the Olympic swimming champion), Dr Sev Ozdowski (former Human Rights Commissioner and Disability Discrimination Commissioner), Dr Ziggy Switkowski (former Chairman of Australian Nuclear Science and

Technology, and currently Chancellor of RMIT University), Dr Karl Kruszelnicki (scientist, author and TV commentator), the actresses Gosia Dobrowolska and Magda Szubanski, composer Cezary Skubiszewski, film producer and director Yoram Gross and so on. The list is long and it is difficult to even choose a few names for fear of failing to mention other people with equal merits. We will introduce some of these people in the following issues of this newsletter.

*Polish presence in Australia according to the 2006 Census*

	VIC	NSW	QLD	SA	WA	ACT	TAS	NT	Total
Polish ancestry	52 105	46 629	21 685	18 032	17 585	3 837	3 193	736	163 802
Poland-born	18 070	15 225	5 068	6 240	5 728	1 083	739	100	52 253
Polish language used at home	17 785	15 496	4 997	6 917	6 098	1 176	820	101	53 390

## Recent Events

### Chopin concerts at the Consulate

Two events celebrating the music of the great Polish composer Frederic Chopin took place at the Consulate in recent weeks. *Chopin: A Longing Heart*, a musical exploration interspersed with letters describing a Polish émigré's life, was presented on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March. The event, organised in cooperation with the Polish Art and Craft Society in Canberra, brought together a number of distinguished artists, such as Krzysztof Malek (a young Polish pianist living in Sydney), Teresa Rayner (a Polish singer from Canberra) and James Scott (a Canberra-based Australian actor)



Krzysztof Malek playing Chopin  
(Photo: Tom Koprowski)



The French salon in the Polish Consulate  
(Photo: Tom Koprowski)

The audience enjoyed Chopin's piano masterpieces and songs and heard excerpts from his letters, describing his despair, his relationship with George Sand and his experiences in Paris and Scotland – all in a French salon complete with gossiping ladies!

On 1<sup>st</sup> April Gregory Kinda, another young Polish-Australian pianist based in Sydney, gave a piano recital which included, in the first part, several of Frederic Chopin's iconic pieces and Franz Liszt's Sonata in B Minor after the interval.

### Commemoration of the Smolensk presidential plane crash

On 10<sup>th</sup> April, the first anniversary of the tragic plane crash near Smolensk in which President Lech Kaczynski and 95 other people lost their lives, a ceremony at the Polish Centre in Marayong commemorated the tragedy. An obelisk with a commemorative plaque was unveiled and a solemn Holy Mass was celebrated in the Polish War Memorial Chapel. It was followed by a cultural program with songs and poems dedicated to the victims of the plane crash, as well as to the more than 22 000 Polish officers, civil servants and other people executed by the Soviets in 1940.

Many representatives of Poland's highest authorities as well as military, civilian and social leaders perished in the April 2010 plane crash together with President Kaczynski and his wife Maria. Among the victims were also some historic figures, such as Ryszard Kaczorowski, the last President of the London-based Polish government in exile, and Anna Walentynowicz, one of the legends of the 1980 Solidarity movement.



### Polish presence at John Paul II Beatification celebrations in Sydney



On 1<sup>st</sup> May Catholics from across the community participated in a wide range of celebrations, prayers and other activities organized at St. Mary's Cathedral on the joyous occasion of the Beatification of Pope John Paul II. The Polish-Australian community had a strong presence, its numerous members coming to celebrate their beloved Pope John The Great's transition to sainthood. Several Polish priests concelebrated the Holy Mass alongside His Grace Cardinal George Pell. The Polish Consul General and leaders of Polish community organizations were



among the official guests. Polish boy scouts and girl guides as well as members of folkloric song and dance ensembles enlivened the ceremony with their colourful and at the same time dignified presence.



*All photographs on this page: Tom Koprowski*

### Celebration of the Polish National Day in Sydney

On 3<sup>rd</sup> May the official National Day reception took place at the Consulate. The occasion (Constitution Day) commemorates Poland's Constitution of 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1791, Europe's first and the world's second modern codified national constitution.

Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian AM, Chairperson of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW, conveyed a message from the Premier of NSW, the Honourable Barry O'Farrell, congratulating the Polish community. He emphasized that Poles have integrated into every area of human endeavour in Australia



Toasts to the Queen of Australia and the President of Poland: Consul General Daniel Gromann (left) and Stepan Kerkyasharian AM, representing the Premier of NSW

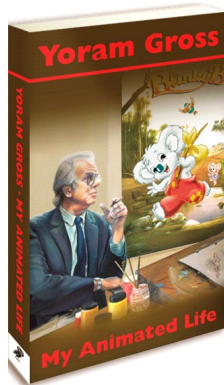


Some of the Heads of Consular Missions present at the event

and he paid tribute to the many Poles who have made their mark in this country, from the explorer Paul Strzelecki who named Mount Kosciuszko to many others who have made a great contribution to public life as artists, writers and athletes and who continue to make a great contribution to their new homeland.

At the well-attended ceremony Gold Crosses of Merit (high Polish civil state awards) were presented to two members of the Sydney Polish community, in recognition of their distinguished service to society.

### Launch of the English edition of Yoram Gross's autobiography



On 14<sup>th</sup> April at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School there was an official launch of Yoram Gross's autobiography *My Animated Life*. The book was presented by CEO Sandra Levy and launched by the Honourable Jim Spigelman, Chief Justice of New South Wales (who himself was born in Poland). The book tells the extraordinary life story of Australia's animation pioneer and creator of the classics *Blinky Bill* and *Dot and the Kangaroo*.

Yoram Gross, born in Poland in 1926, as a young Jewish boy had to hide during the Nazi occupation of Poland. *My Animated Life* is a story of survival and of adventures that make the reader marvel at the future artist's mischievous



The Hon. J. Spigelman  
(Photo: T. Koprowski)



and triumphant spirit, which enabled him to outwit the forces ranged against him before going on to delight generations of children with his films. Gross's memoir spans three continents: Poland during World War II, his award-winning film-making career in Israel and Australia where he became an iconic filmmaker.

Today Yoram Gross maintains strong links with his native Cracow and the rich cultural life of that beautiful city. On the left: Yoram Gross with his wife Sandra and son Guy  
(Photo: Andrzej Siedlecki)