



POLISH EMBASSY NEWSLETTER 4/2012



CANBERRA, December 2012

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the fourth and last issue of our newsletter for 2012. It includes the usual mix of reports on recent activities of the Embassy and the Polish Consulate General in Sydney and major events organised by the Polish community in Australia such as the Polish Festival at Melbourne’s Federation Square and Puma Media Polish Film Festival. We will lead you again off the beaten track, this time to Kashubia, which, according to an old legend, is the last part of the world created by God.

In 2012 Australia and Poland celebrated the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations. The year brought some important political developments in the bilateral relationship. First of all, the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Julia Gillard, announced a \$500,000 Government donation to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation Perpetual Fund in order to support the preservation of the world’s most important Holocaust memorial site. Leading Australian politicians visited Poland: in November the President of the Senate, Senator the Hon John Hogg with a delegation of the Parliament and twice, in March and in November, the Chairman of the House of Representatives Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Michael Danby. Senior official talks were held in Warsaw between the ministries of foreign affairs. And last, but not least, the negotiations of a Work and Holiday Program have been initiated. Cultural exchange and cooperation was developed by members of the Polish -Australian community during large-scale open air festivals in Kosciuszko National Park, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and the first Polish Film Festival in

Australia. I am convinced that the vigour and quality of our cooperation will be maintained, notwithstanding Australia’s recent focus on the Asia-Pacific region and Poland’s deepening engagement in the European Union.

We wish you a blessed Christmas, hoping that it will be a restful, reflective time and a time of renewal for you and that it heralds a happy and successful 2013. We are deeply appreciative of your friendship and support throughout the year and we look forward to enjoying your cooperation and interest in the future.

With kind regards,

Andrzej Jaroszyński
Ambassador



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POLAND'S ASSISTANCE FOR A REMOTE AREA OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Between 8th and 9th December the economic counsellor of the Embassy Marek Kijewski visited the highland region of Papua New Guinea. Mr Kijewski was shown the construction of the elementary school in the remote Kuare village built with the Small Grant Fund assistance of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The program supports the areas dependent on small-scale assistance to meet the needs of local communities. The current project in Kuare was supervised by the Polish priest Bogdan Skupień with enormous collaboration and assistance from the local people. Before the two class rooms (for 5-8 grades) were opened, children from Kuare had to travel on foot 8km to the nearest elementary school (at least 2 hour walk one way). The ceremony of national flag rising of Poland and Papua New Guinea was followed by speeches given by local officials, village leaders, priests and our representative. Mr Kijewski was deeply touched by tremendous hospitality of the highlanders and their true gratitude.



POLAND'S INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION IN CANBERRA



[Kresy Siberia Virtual Museum, Mr Kustra's testimony](#)



On 9 November Independence Day was celebrated by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland together with the Australian branch of the Foundation Kresy-Siberia. The event consisted of the presentation of Orders of Merit, and commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the exodus of exiled Poles from the USSR to the Middle East and Africa during WWII.

The Ambassador presented a Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland to Professor Anna Wierzbicka-Besemeres for her contribution to the development of Polish-Australian scientific cooperation. Former Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, The Hon John Aquilina received the Officers' Cross of the Order of Merit for supporting the Polish community in Australia and initiating cultural and political cooperation with Poland.

In the second part of the celebration, organised by the Kresy-Siberia Foundation Sydney, there was an address by the Foundation's founder and chairman Stefan Wiśniowski, the screening of the documentary "A Forgotten Odyssey" about the exodus of Poles from the Soviet Union to Persia, Palestine and Egypt, and a personal story from an eyewitness, 88-year-old Canberra resident Henryk Kustra. In conclusion, on behalf of the Republic of Poland, the Ambassador thanked representatives of the nations which helped during the wartime exodus of Poles, and on their behalf the British High Commissioner His Excellency Paul Madden responded. Present were the Ambassadors of those countries, such as Iran, Iraq, Israel, Egypt and Pakistan, as well as the Ambassadors of Germany and Russia. Some 170 guests attended the Independence Day celebration, including the Deputy President of the Australian Senate Senator Stephen Parry, Senator Gary Humphries, representatives of federal departments and the cultural elite, media and the Polish community.

On 10 November the daily newspaper "The Canberra Times" published an extensive interview with Henryk Kustra with regard to the celebration.

A Forgotten Odyssey

Documentary filmmaker Jagna Wright explores the aftermath of the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Friendship Treaty by focusing on the stories of survivors of the forced annexation of eastern Poland. During this time, whole communities were being deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan to slave in Soviet labor camps. Two years later, after many of the inmates had died due to disease, malnourishment, or deplorable working conditions, the Nazis attacked their Soviet allies. Since the Soviets had entered into the anti-Nazi Alliance, the survivors of those camps were granted amnesty, and many would make the arduous journey to fight in the Polish Army to the south. Later, after fighting alongside Allied forces in the European South-East, the army would be evacuated through Iran so that they could face off against the Nazis in Africa and Italy. After the Nazis were defeated, the 110,000 citizens and soldiers who played such a crucial role in the war became refugees who could no longer return to their homes - which were now in the hands of Soviet Communists.

Jason Buchanan, Rovi

<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/410573/A-Forgotten-Odyssey/overview>

AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION VISIT TO POLAND

A delegation of the Australian Parliament, led by the President of the Senate the Hon John Hogg, visited Poland on 10 – 15 November 2012 at the invitation of the Marshal of the Polish Senate, Mr Bogdan Borusewicz.

The program of the visit to Warsaw included meetings with Mr Borusewicz, Deputy Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak, Environment Minister Marcin Korolec, senior officials of both chambers of the Polish Parliament and members of the Polish-Australian Parliamentary Group. Mr Borusewicz presented Senator Hogg with a Medal of Gratitude in recognition of his support for the Solidarity movement in the 1980s.



In Cracow, Senator Hogg opened an exhibition “Polish Siberians in Australia”. The exhibition documented the fate of Poles deported to Siberia following the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939 who subsequently managed to migrate to Western Australia in 1950. Members of the delegation laid wreaths on Australian graves at the Commonwealth War Graves Rakowicki Cemetery and at the former Nazi German concentration camps Auschwitz and Birkenau. Senator Hogg was accompanied by Mr Alby Schultz MP, Senator David Bushby, Mr Michael Danby MP, Ms Sharon Grierson MP and The Hon John Murphy MP.

13/11/2012

Warsaw: Senator, the Hon John Hogg (ALP, Qld), President of the Senate of the Federal Government, was awarded a Medal of Gratitude from the European Solidarity Centre (Europejskie Centrum Solidarnosci) Senator Hogg was nominated for the award by HE Andrzej Jaroszynski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Canberra, in recognition of the great support that he gave, as a union worker in the 1980's and 1990's, to Poland's Solidarnosc Union, especially during the years of martial law. Moreover, Mr Hogg was active not only as a unionist but as a concerned individual who helped support Solidarnosc through such actions as the Australia-wide 'Help Poland Live' campaign, as well as in fund-raising activities conducted by the Catholic Church. In his impassioned speech on the occasion Senator Hogg emphasized the solidarity that was felt then by Australian unionists for their Polish counterparts, in particular for their desire for free and independent unions, and for freedom of conscience and religion in Poland.

AIPA Newsletter November 2012

VISIT OF THE AMBASSADOR TO MELBOURNE AND THE OPENING OF THE POLISH FESTIVAL

On 17 November the Ambassador took part in the opening of the 8th Polish Festival at Federation Square in Melbourne. It was conducted by Krzysztof Łańcucki, President of the Federation of Polish Community Council of Victoria. Speeches by representatives of the city of Melbourne, the state government and the opposition were followed by the Ambassador's speech which emphasized the importance of Polish culture in maintaining the identity of the Polish community in Australia and its contribution to the policy of multiculturalism.

Organized by the Federation of Polish Community Council of Victoria and involving more than 400 people representing various Polish-Australian community organizations and businesses, the festival is the largest such event in Australia. This year, in addition to support from municipalities, state governments, and the Polish



Consulate General in Sydney, Qatar Airways provided the main sponsorship. Qatar Airways has commenced flights from Melbourne to Warsaw. The Festival showcased a dozen Polish folk groups, and - for the first time - a group of Lithuanian dancers called “Gintaras Melbourne”. There were dozens of stalls, art products, souvenirs, publications and Polish cuisine.

After the official ceremony, in the presence of the invited guests and the organizing committee of the Festival and the Honorary Consul General of Poland Dr George Luk-Kozika, the Ambassador presented the following awards:

- Knight's Cross of Polonia Restituta to Adam Drahan and Marian Pawlik,
- Gold Cross of Merit to Joanna and Jerzy Merwart Wojtkowski,
- Silver Cross of Merit to Teresa Kaminska and Sylwia Greda-Bogusz.

POLISH FILM FESTIVAL

Ted Matkowski, Director of the inaugural Australian Polish Film Festival.

We asked Ted why no one had previously organised a Polish film festival in Australia. Taking into consideration his experience, would he organise the festival on an annual basis or was it just a one-off experiment?

Ted: Why had no one organised a festival before? I had often asked myself this question over the past 20 years, especially as the Australian film industry has a close connection with the Polish film-making industry.

The Australian Film School was established by Polish Professor Jerzy Teplitz. Many famous Australian film-makers and actors have a Polish background, including Magda Szubanski, Mia Wasikowska, Cezary Skubiszewski, Gosia Dobrowolska, Jerzy Domaradzki, Sophia Turkiewicz, Yoram Gross and Viva Bianca Skubiszewski, just to name a few.

I can't give any clear reasons why no one before me had organised a Polish Film Festival. I always wanted to bring Australian and Polish film-makers closer together and tried to promote Polish films to Australian audiences. For the past 15 years I have shown the latest Polish films here in Australia without having them packaged into a festival. In addition our Golden Kangaroo prize is presented every year to the best Polish film, film director or actor. Part of the prize for the winner of the Golden Kangaroo is an invitation to Australia to meet not only audiences, but also to mix with Australian film-makers and actors.

After so many years, the hosting of a festival in major Australian cities was a natural progression. From the beginning I was aware that for a Polish Film Festival to be successful it has to target not only the mainstream Australian audiences but also the Polish community in Australia.

The biggest supporters of the inaugural festival were the Polish Film Institute in Warsaw, Documentary and Feature Film Production Company (WFDiF) in Warsaw and the Polish Embassy in Canberra.

During the festival I was continuously asked whether it would become an annual event. Considering all the favourable responses and requests for more, the short answer is 'yes'. The Australian and Polish film-making industries wanted it, the audiences wanted it



and film critics judged it more than favourably. "The Age" at the time even ranked one of our films in its top 10 best films showing in Australia.

To my great delight, our 24 films - three of which had their world premiere here - attracted luminaries from the Australian film industry such as Peter Weir, Yoram Gross and Rod Freedman. For our special guests, Krzysztof Zanussi, Jerzy Stuhr, Paweł Pluciński and Agnieszka Lebib, the festival was the opportunity to meet their Australian film-making counterparts, which may result in closer creative co-operation in the near future.

For us as organisers, the festival proved to be a big learning curve. From a logistics point of view it was a challenge to have it in three major cities almost simultaneously, and raises the questions: should the festival be in only one city such as Melbourne, should we continue as we did this year in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney or should it include Perth and Adelaide as well? At this stage it is too early to answer these questions definitively but by early next year, we will announce our decision about next year's Polish Film Festival.



For more information please visit the festival website:
www.polishfilmfestival.net

OTHER EVENTS

Professor Krzysztof Zanussi's public lectures in Canberra

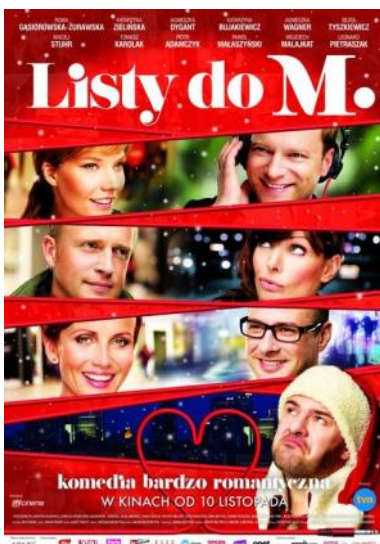


Professor Krzysztof Zanussi, a leading Polish and European film director, visited Canberra in October 2012 at the invitation of the Embassy and the Australian Institute of Polish Affairs. At the Australian National University Centre for European Studies he gave a lecture "Does Europe Still Have a Future?" which brought together some 60 representatives of academia, diplomatic circles and the Polish community. Professor Zanussi described Europe as the cradle of contemporary civilization which is still exerting a significant global influence. He recognized Europe's Judeo-Christian tradition as the primary factor in its success. Professor Zanussi stressed that Europe and the entire West need a new

driving force for future development, since the initial goals of democracy, prosperity and security had already been achieved. In his opinion a spiritual development could be such a force. The speech was well received and provoked a lively discussion.

On the following day, at the Embassy, Professor Zanussi delivered a lecture about Poland in today's Europe. He gave a positive assessment of changes that have occurred in Poland since the fall of communism in 1989. 120 representatives of the Polish community in Canberra attended the lecture.

Krzysztof Zanussi was a special guest of the Polish Film Festival, organized by Tadeusz Matkowski and his company Puma Media and supported by the Embassy (see more on page 5).



The Embassy film series „Under Polish Eyes” Screening of the film „Letters to St. Nicholas”/”Listy do M.”

On 12 December the Embassy held a screening of the Polish film „Letters to St. Nicholas”, directed by Slovenian filmmaker Mitja Okorn. This was the fourth screening in our series „Under Polish Eyes” which aims at presenting recent achievements of Polish cinema to the Australian public. „Letters to St. Nicholas” is a romantic comedy set in Warsaw on Christmas Eve. Since its

release in November 2011 the film has been very successful both at the box office and with critics. Duncan Kenworthy, producer of such hits as "Notting Hill" and "Love Actually", said the movie was fantastic and gave him a sudden craving for Christmas. Our guests apparently shared his opinion, enjoying the film with its charming “white Christmas” atmosphere.

The Ambassador's lecture at the Rotary Club

On 29 November the Ambassador was a guest speaker at the Rotary Club of Canberra Burley Griffin, delivering a speech „Poland, Europe, Australia”. He was introduced by Mr Aleksander Gancarz, International Director of the Club.

The Rotary Club of Krakow Wawel is a sister institution of the Canberra Club.

A Polish order for ArtSound journalist



On 16 November, at the Embassy, ArtSound Radio journalist Jim Mooney was presented with a Polish order for his contribution to the promotion of Polish culture in Canberra. Ambassador Andrzej Jaroszyński gave the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit to Mr Mooney during a ceremony attended by 50 guests including members of his family, friends

and ArtSound board representatives. Jim Mooney and the local community radio have been actively promoting the Chopin Year 2010 celebrations, the Australian International Chopin Piano Competition and many other cultural events initiated and organised by the Embassy and the Polish community in Canberra.

Christmas concerts at the Embassy

On 1-2 December music entrepreneur Carl Rafferty organised Christmas concerts at the Embassy. The program's highlight was Henryk Wienawski's

virtuosic Polonaise, performed by outstanding young violinist Alison Laurens. The event attracted 220 music lovers from Canberra.

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS IN POLAND

Christmas is the most festive holiday in the Polish tradition. Many customs, ceremonies and beliefs centre on Christmas Eve, a special day for Polish homes. An important element contributing to its dignified atmosphere is the display of Christmas decorations, notably a beautifully adorned Christmas tree, which is decorated on the very day of Christmas Eve by all the family members. The first Christmas trees appeared in Poland in the 19th century, mainly in cities. Gradually the custom gained popularity all across Poland. Before that, Polish houses used to be decorated with green branches of fir, spruce or pine. Another element of the traditional Christmas decorations was sheaves of wheat and rye, hay and straw. The custom has survived in the form of a small handful of hay put under the tablecloth. In some houses this is accompanied today by a fish scale or bone put into a wallet - to ensure affluence in the coming year. An extra set of plates and cutlery is laid on the table for an unexpected guest and as a reminder of those who have passed away. Traditionally, Christmas Eve dinner begins when the first star has appeared in the sky. First, there is a prayer. Then the family wish one another all the best for the New Year and, as a sign of reconciliation, love, friendship and peace, share *opłatek* - Christmas wafers that symbolize holy bread. The dinner consists only of meatless dishes. Traditionally, there should be twelve courses - reflecting

the number of months in the year or, according to a different tradition, Christ's apostles. You at least have to taste everything. Typical dishes include *barszcz* - beetroot soup with mushrooms, or *uszka* (dumplings stuffed with mushrooms), mushroom soup, a cabbage dish, sweet dumplings with poppy seeds, pastries, cakes, fruit, nuts, sweets and a compote drink made from dried fruits. The main treat, though, is fish. A traditional Christmas delicacy is carp or pike in grey sauce with vegetables, almonds, raisins and spices. One of the oldest Christmas Eve dishes is *kutia*, which is made of poppy seeds and boiled wheat with honey. After dinner, Christmas carols are sung and gifts are collected from under the Christmas tree. Many families end the day by going together to church to attend the Midnight Mass known as *Pasterka* (the Shepherds' Mass). Unlike Christmas Eve, which is usually celebrated with immediate family members only, on Christmas Day cousins and other relatives gather to celebrate at the same table. From Christmas to Epiphany dressed-up carollers go from door to door, sing carols, wish a happy New Year to the house residents and often act one or more short scenes. For this they receive small gifts. The tradition of caroling is very old in Poland. The carollers' disguises usually represent a goat, a bull called *uroń*, a mare, a horse, a cock and a stork as well as a devil and death. They carry a Star of Bethlehem with them.



UPCOMING EVENT



PolArt is one of the largest Polish cultural festivals held outside Poland.

PolArt festivals have been celebrating Polish culture in Australia for over 35 years. Organised every three years, the festival takes place in capital cities around Australia, drawing crowds of up to 100,000. Perth will host the PolArt festival for the very first time in 2012.

PolArt in Perth will showcase the best Polish folkloric dance, theatre, music, fine arts, film and literature, inspired by more than a thousand years of Polish heritage. Over 800 performers and artists from across Australia and New Zealand are expected to take part in this Polish cultural feast, held from 28 December 2012 to 5 January 2013.

PolArt 2012 Perth FREE Events

Festival Opening

5:45PM Friday 28 December – outside the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, James Street Amphitheatre

Official opening ceremony of the festival with welcome to its 500+ participants from across Australia. Will showcase dance and a short theatre performance, and a Polish film.

Polart Festyn (Family Carnival)

10:00AM-4:00PM Sunday 30 December – Perth Cultural Centre (in Perth city centre, between the State Library of WA and Western Australian Museum). A family fun day including Polish children's games, folkloric dance lessons, a kid's craft corner, Polish food and craft stalls, as well as theatre and dance performances by children's groups Promyk, Junior Kukułeczka, Lajkonik and Scena 98.



Literature

Polish Women's Poetry Afternoon with Anna Habryn. 2:30PM Saturday 29th December (TBC) – Hackett Hall, WA Museum

Meet the Authors. 2:30PM Wednesday 2 January – Hackett Hall, WA Museum. A talk with Ms Barbara Meder (Babcia w Afryce), Ms Magdalena Wołłejko and Ms Ela Chylewska.

Marcel Weyland. 10:30AM Saturday 5 January – Hackett Hall, WA Museum. Marcel will talk about the history of Polish poetry and present his newest book, *What I Read to the Dead*, poetry of Wladyslaw Szlengel.

Visual Arts Exhibition

9:30AM – 5:00PM From 29 December to 11 January (closed on 1 January) – Hackett Hall, WA Museum. Showcasing the work of 11 Polish artists and photographers from Western Australia and interstate.

Polish Stars under the Southern Cross Exhibition

10.00-4.00PM From 29 December to 5 January – Perth Town Hall. Come and read about Poland's history and the impact of Polish people on Australia.

Christmas Carols Concert and Polish Mass

2:00PM Sunday 30 December 2012 – St Mary's Cathedral. Celebrate Christmas with a concert of professional and amateur musicians, playing a selection of well know Polish Christmas carols and some classical pieces.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK - KASHUBIA (KASZUBY)



A nice legend: When Mighty God had already made the whole world, he sat on his throne, called all the angels and said: "Look angels at my work how marvelous everything is!" The angels looked around over the whole world and started clapping. "How wonderful everything is!", they said. But one angel was sad. "Why are you sad my lovely little angel?" asked him God. "Look at this poor Kashubian land God, please! They have nothing. You forgot about them." It was true. But the angel would start to plead God. "God, maybe there is something left in your sack?" "You are right! I must have a look!" And after a little while he added: "I've got something left!" Then he gave them whatever was left in his sack. This is why Kashubia has a little bit of everything: hills, clean air, sunny beaches, quiet lakes, crystal clear rivers, flowery meadows, shady forests, outstanding nature historic sites and even a little desert.

<http://www.chain.to/?m3=23749>

Despite its beauty and proximity to Poland's northern metropolis, Gdańsk, the Kashubia region is a „hidden gem”, as yet undiscovered by mass foreign tourism. It lies on the part of the Baltic coast to the northwest of Gdańsk and in a picturesque district called „Kashubian Switzerland” with hundreds of lakes, vast forests, undulating hills, colourful fields and scenic villages. To the south it borders the second largest forested area in Poland, the Tuchola Forest, which was designated by UNESCO as a World Biosphere Reserve. Due to its varied landscape the region is sometimes called „the world in a pill” (see also text in a box on this page). The scarcely populated region has been inhabited for centuries by the Kashubians, an ancient ethnic group of Slavonic Balts who speak their own language which is distinctly different from Polish. In the last census of 2011, about 230.000 citizens of Poland declared themselves to be also of „Kashubian ethnicity”. They have their own TV and radio programmes, create websites in their language and have even developed a specific keyboard. As well as the language, the Kashubians have retained much of their folk art, including music and dance, embroidery, pottery, glass painting and sculpture. A typical Kashubian house was a wooden hut covered with thatch or cane. Many have been preserved and can be visited in open-air museums in Wdzydze Kiszewskie and Szymbark (where tourists can also view a house that stands upside-down and a 37 metre wooden board which is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's longest). The unofficial capital of Kashubian Switzerland is the town of Kartuzy where you can visit the Kashubian Museum. A major attraction is the cross-shaped Lake Wdzydze, pointing to the four corners of the globe. A challenge for kayakers is the Radunia River route which crosses a dozen lakes and totals 44 km in length.

For all tourists we recommend such attractions as:

Malbork Castle - the mightiest of the Teutonic Knights' fortresses.

Stone circles in Odry near Czersk (“The Polish Stonehenge”) - 12 stone circles and 600 burial mounds, probably remnants of a Goths cemetery from the 1st century.

Steam Locomotive Museum (Parowozownia) at Kościerzyna – an open air railway museum which displays a huge collection of steam locomotives.

National Anthem Museum in Będmin – birth place of Józef Wybicki, creator of Poland's national anthem, the only museum of its kind in the world.

Kashubia, „the last part of the world created by God” is still to be discovered by his children....

[Read more about Szymbark.](#)



For more Embassy news + information:

EMBASSY OF POLAND
7 Turrana Street
2600 ACT
www.canberra.polemb.net
[TWITTER:@PLinAustralia](https://twitter.com/PLinAustralia)

FEEDBACK + COMMENTS
Witold Krzesiński
newsletter editor
Witold.Krzesinski@msz.gov.pl

PHOTOS IN THIS ISSUE:
European Solidarity Centre, Marek Kijewski,
Tom Koprowski, Ted Matkowski
Krzysztof Wende
www.Na-Kaszuby.pl



POLISH CHRISTMAS PICNIC AT DARLING HARBOUR

On 2nd December the Polish community in Sydney celebrated their annual Christmas Picnic in Tumbalong Park at Darling Harbour. The event, held under the auspices of the Polish Consul General in Sydney, took place for the eighth time. The festival was a colourful and dynamic celebration of Polish culture and traditions. It attracted impressive crowds who enjoyed the day in a joyful and festive ambience.

The participants could sample traditional Polish cuisine at stalls selling pierogi (Polish dumplings), kielbasa (sausage), placki



All photos on this page: Tom Koprowski

(potato pancakes) and cakes. Polish jewellery and traditional handcrafted goods were also available for purchase. The offer of the local Polish tourist agents and Saturday schools was directed at those who were interested in getting to know Poland personally or learning the Polish language in Sydney.

The festival showcased a kaleidoscope of folkloric dancing which explored various regions of Poland. It was also enriched with the sound of contemporary songs and classical music. All four Polish folk and dance ensembles active in Sydney: Kujawy, Lajkonik, Podhale and Syrenka performed on the stage, as well as a number of other artists, including Alex Agaciak, Oliva Kierdal, Cabaret

Vis-a-Vis, L'Estro Armonico and Magiakons Band. Some local celebrities: Sammy and Bella Jakubiak, winners of My Kitchen Rules 2011, TV star and journalist Magdalena Roze and actress Gosia Dobrowolska shared their experiences with the public.

Polish Christmas Picnic, the largest and the most prestigious cultural event organised by the Polish community in Sydney, enjoyed the presence of Mr Kevin Conolly, MP, representing the Premier of NSW, the Hon. Barry O'Farrell, Mr John Robertson MP, Leader of the Opposition and Mr Leszek Wikarjusz, Vice-president of the Polish Community Council of Australia, among other official guests.



The festival was opened by Consul General Daniel Gromann.

ADRIA NOSTALGIA

A nostalgic return to the Polish music of the 1930s was made possible once again by Adria Nostalgia, an amazing group founded and directed by Adam Wasiel. Their second concert, entitled *A Touch of Luck in Love*, drew a full hall of listeners at Sydney Conservatorium of Music on 1st December. The lost world of tangos, foxtrots and waltzes bloomed once again during Adria Nostalgia's riveting



On the left: Adam Wasiel; above: Adria Nostalgia with Maya Kedziora centre stage

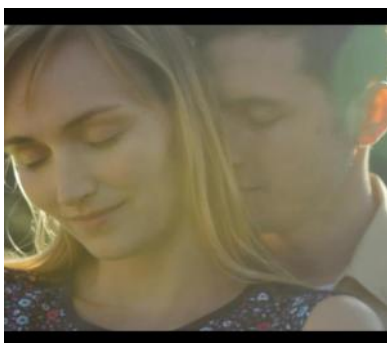


performance with twenty elegant Polish pre-war songs performed with passion in the enchanting spirit of their time.

Adria Nostalgia's debut took place at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in June 2012 with a programme called *This Is Our Last Sunday*. The ensemble has been founded by Adam Wasiel, who is the conductor, first violin and artistic director of the group as well as male vocalist. Maya Kedziora is the soprano of the ensemble, while the ten-piece orchestra provides beautiful instrumental background.

Adria Nostalgia are now preparing a new programme which will be premiered next year. In the meantime one can enjoy glimpses of their musical artistry on the orchestra's Youtube channel at www.youtube.com/adrianostalgia.

HARD LAND OF WONDER



Agnieszka Switala, a graduate of The University of New South Wales College of Fine Arts (COFA), won the Best Video or Short Movie Award for her *Hard Land of Wonder* at this year's COFA Annual Screening. The film was chosen from among 7 hours of short movies and videos. The award was presented by renowned film director Ben Briand. *Hard Land of Wonder* takes the viewers to Soviet-occupied Poland, where it tells the story of two sisters confronted with the cruelty of World War II.

This breathtaking, remarkable movie, based on a true story, reflects on love and family bonds being put to test and on fateful moments of decision which influence the whole life. The movie combines narration in English with dialogues in Polish. The filming was done on locations both in Poland and Australia.

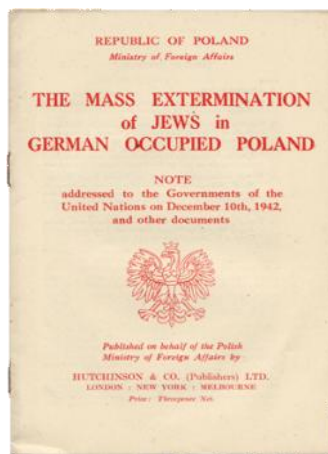
More information on the work of the young artist is available on her website at www.agaswitala.com.



Agnieszka Switala
(Photo: Tom Koprowski)

THE COMMEMORATION OF JAN KARSKI

A commemoration of Jan Karski, the emissary of the Polish Government who in 1942 alerted the Allies of the mass extermination of the Jewish population carried out by Nazi Germany in the Polish territories under her occupation, was organized by the Consulate General of Poland and the Australian Institute of Polish Affairs (AIPA) at the end of November. The solemn occasion was attended by over 130 guests, including official representative of the Polish and Jewish communal organizations, numerous members of both communities and members of the Consular Corps.



Polish Note to the United Nations Governments

The programme of the evening included the screening of several short films about Jan Karski as well as a presentation by dr John Besemeres from ANU Centre for European Studies. Dr Besemeres taught politics at Monash University in the 1960s, was head of Polish and later Slavonic Studies at Macquarie University in the 1980s, spent 5 years working as a translator in Belgrade and Warsaw in the 1960s and 1970s and worked over 30 years in several Australian government portfolios, including PM&C, Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and Foreign Affairs and Trade.

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Jan Karski was a messenger. During the Second World War, he risked his life infiltrating the Warsaw Ghetto and crossing occupied Europe to carry news of the Holocaust to the free world; news of such suffering and atrocity that many refused to believe it.

Bill Clinton

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Check out a new project: *Karski & The Lords of Humanity*, a feature-length partially animated documentary, which tells the story of the heroic messenger: www.jankarski.com.



Jan Karski, acting on the orders of the Polish Government in exile, based in London, infiltrated the Warsaw Ghetto as well as a German transit camp at Izbica from which Jews were being sent to the Belżec death camp. He reached London in 1942 with hundreds of documents on microfilm. As a result of his testimony, on 10th December 1942 the Polish Government in exile directed a Note to the UN Governments, which described in detail what later came to be known as the Holocaust or the Shoah – the genocide of the Jewish population of Poland and other European countries carried out by Nazi Germany.

In 1943 Jan Karski met with the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and later with the American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, pleading with both leaders to apply effective measures to stop the Nazi crimes. He also met with numerous other public figures on both sides of the Atlantic, denouncing the Holocaust. Unfortunately, his testimony was generally received with disbelief.



Consul General Daniel Gromann with a photo of Jan Karski in the background (Photo: Tom Koprowski)