

## NEWS POLONIA

September / October 2009



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 About PAC

**The Club exists and functions only through your membership!**  
 If you have not done so already, please pay club dues for 2009 as soon as possible.

**Who's Who in PAC 2009:**

<b>PRESIDENT</b> president@polamrtp.com	<b>Ryszard Kotek</b>
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<b>POLISH FESTIVAL CHAIR</b>	<b>Sandra Stuckey</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL CHAIR</b>	<b>Mark Fountain</b>
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<b>Polish American Club PO Box 20363, Raleigh, NC 27619</b>	<b>polamrtp.com</b>

## CLUB'S ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

### INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 2009

WHEN: **Friday, October 2 - 12:00 PM to 10:00 PM**  
**Saturday, October 3 - 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM**  
**Sunday, October 4 - 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM**

WHERE: **Raleigh Convention Center**

PAC will represent Polish community with Cultural Exhibition and Food Booth. As always, we need the volunteers!

**PLEASE HELP TO MAKE THIS FESTIVAL ANOTHER SUCCESS FOR PAC!**

**CALL PIOTR GUCWA (919-466-9103) TO VOLUNTEER!**



### OGNISKO (BONFIRE)

WHEN: **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2009** From 3:00 pm to 9:00 pm

WHERE: **LAKE MONTAGUE 10403 PENNY ROAD IN CARY (NEAR OAK GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL).**

Entrance fee: \$3:00 per person, or \$5:00 per family. PAC will furnish kielbasa, plates, cups and beverages. Please bring a side dish, or desert, to share.

### **IN MEMORIAM**

The PAC members would like to extend our sincere condolences to Brenda and Mark Fountain on passing of Brenda's Mother who died on September 17, 2009. We will keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

### 2009 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - results

The scholarship committee awarded Mark Peter Wroblewski with \$500 scholarship grant from the Polish-American Club of the Triangle. Congratulations to Mark and best wishes for his upcoming college studies.

Mrs. Wanda Majchrowicz selected Joanne Krystina Wroblewska as a winner of her private scholarship. Joanne will receive \$1000 from Mrs. Majchrowicz for her undergraduate studies. Let's congratulate Joanne and wish her all the best in a college of her choice.

The Club would like to raise more funds for the PAC scholarship and be able to award a higher amount in the future. Your help is greatly appreciated.

### SLOWACKI CELEBRATIONS

An evening of Slowacki poetry is being planned for beginning of November in the Office of Polish Honorary Consulate, Spring Hill House, and 705 Barbour Drive in Raleigh (on the grounds of NC State University). The date and time will be announced soon. This event will recognize Juliusz Slowacki's bicentennial. He was born on September 4, 1809 and died on April 3, 1849, 160 years ago.

## **POLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES**

Lekcje języka polskiego dla dzieci rozpoczynają się w najbliższą sobotę 19 września, 2009. w siedzibie Konsulatu honorowego ( 705 Barbour Drive Raleigh, NC 27695 Spring Hill House). Więcej informacji można uzyskać pod telefonem 919-782-8734, Hanka Gracz, lub e-mail: hanna\_gracz@ncsu.edu <mailto:hanna\_gracz@ncsu.edu>

Polish Classes for children starting on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Location: Honorary Consulate of Republic of Poland, 705 Barbour Drive, Raleigh, NC 27695 Spring Hill House. More information at: 919-782-8734, Hanka Gracz, or e-mail: hanna\_gracz@ncsu.edu <mailto:hanna\_gracz@ncsu.edu>

## **SYMPOSIUM CELEBRATING THE POLISH CONSTITUTION OF MAY 3<sup>rd</sup> 1791**

On May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009, the Polish American Club organized an important event: a Symposium celebrating the May 3, 1791 Constitution. This was an evening full of Polish history, poetry and music, from XVIII and XIX century. Also please see below a full program of the Symposium.

### **Symposium Celebrating the Polish Constitution of May the third, 1791**

14:00 – 17:00, Saturday The Second Day of May A.D. 2009 at

***College of Textiles, North Carolina State University Raleigh NC 27695***

#### **ORDER of THE Symposium:**

##### **14:00 - General Welcome**

*Richard Kotek, President of the Polish-American Club of the Triangle, NC*

##### **14:05 - Polish Anthem**

*Izabela Naruszewicz*

##### **14:10 - The Polish Constitution of 1791**

*Dr. Mark Fountain, the Polish Honorary Consul*

##### **14:50 - Poetry of Juliusz Słowacki**

*Professor Regina Grol, Visiting Professor, UNC-Chapel Hill*

##### **15:10 - Fantazie Impromptu - Fryderyk Chopin**

*Garrick Ohlsson, piano*

##### **15:15 – 15:30 - Intermission/Refreshments**

##### **15:30 - On Tour with Madame Modrzejewska: Polish Actress, American Star**

*Professor Beth Holmgren, Duke University*

##### **16:15 - Mazurkas Op. 24 – Fryderyk Chopin**

**No. 1 in G minor, No. 2 in C major**

*Jean-Marc Luisada, piano*

##### **16:20 Discussion/Refreshments**

Professor Grol gave a lecture (please see an essay below) and presented three of Słowacki's poems:

"Hymn", "In the Album of Sophie Bobrowna" (*W pamiętniku Zofii Bobrówny*) and "My Testament" (*Testament mój*).

"Hymn," published in 1839, is one of Słowacki's best known poems, reflecting his longing for Poland, his profound sadness precipitated by his wandering and his émigré existence. The heartrending verses were written as Słowacki was approaching the Egyptian city of Alexandria by boat and was observing the sunset on the Mediterranean Sea.

The second poem expresses very movingly Słowacki's patriotic feelings. It was written for a little girl in Paris, who was about to go to visit her relatives in the Russian occupied part of Poland.

The third poem, titled *Testament mój* ("My Last Will") reflects the poet's serious reckoning with his life and his poetic accomplishments.

## Celebrating Juliusz Słowacki (1809-1849)

### An essay by Professor Regina Grol

Juliusz Słowacki, the great Polish Romantic poet, was wholeheartedly committed to the idea of Polish national autonomy and independence. This year we celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. April 3, 2009 also marked the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. Were I addressing exclusively people born and educated in Poland, I know I would be preaching to the choir. For several generations now, every child in Poland has known Słowacki as the national bard (*wieszcz* in Polish), and many could recite his poems, or at least phrases from his poems and plays. However, since the club membership does not consist exclusively of native Poles, I'll provide a very basic historical context, as well as some biographical information, before I mention Słowacki's literary achievements.

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Poland's independence came to an end in 1795, following the Third Partition of the country among the then political superpowers -- Russia, Prussia and Austria. When Słowacki was born on September 3, 1809 (or August 23 according to the Old Calendar), the eastern territories of Poland were under Russian control. A tiny Kingdom of Poland was created by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, yet it was totally dependent on Russia and did not fulfill Polish people's hopes and aspirations for freedom. Fifteen years later, the first armed insurrection took place in an attempt to create an independent Polish state -- the uprising of 1830, commonly referred to as the November Uprising (*Powstanie listopadowe*). The insurrection failed miserably, severe political repressions followed and precipitated a massive wave of emigration of Poles to the West, primarily to Paris. Słowacki was one of exiles.

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Born in the town of Krzemieniec, but raised in Wilno (today Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania), Słowacki was admitted to the Polish University in Wilno in 1825. He studied at the department of moral and political sciences (*wydział nauk moralnych i politycznych*). After graduation, from 1829 till 1831, he held an administrative job at the Treasury Commission in Warsaw. Following the failed November Uprising, on March 8, 1831 he left Warsaw and began the life of a migrant. He reached London, and then moved to Paris. In 1832 he went to Geneva and could not return to France, as the French government refused to let Polish political émigrés enter the country. Słowacki remained in Switzerland until 1836, when he embarked on a journey which led him through Italy, Greece, Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine. Following that trip, he stayed in Florence for two years, before succeeding to settle in Paris in 1838. Ten years later, in 1848, he managed to meet his relatives in the Prussian part of the former Poland, but he never returned to his native land. The publication of his third volume of poetry in 1833, a volume which contained explicitly patriotic verses which would not have been tolerated by the Russian censorship, effectively ruled out the possibility of his return to Wilno.

Słowacki died of tuberculosis in 1849 and was interred at the Montmartre cemetery in Paris. Only about 30 people came to his funeral. He had antagonized the émigré community by sometimes openly criticizing their political views (e.g., in "Anghelli"); the Catholic groups did not appreciate his attacks on the Vatican and few of his contemporaries appreciated his poetry. Yet, there were exceptions. The poet Zygmunt Krasiński declared that no one was better than Słowacki and few were equal to him (to quote Krasiński in Polish, "nikt wyższym nad niego, a równym rzadko kto"). Still, Słowacki's following during his lifetime was very limited.

However, a few decades later, in 1927, the coffin containing his ashes was brought to Poland and placed in the Wawel Cathedral next to the tomb of Adam Mickiewicz. On that occasion, Marshall Józef Piłsudski, who repeatedly had credited Słowacki with being his foremost teacher of the principles of democracy, used most lofty words in his eulogy on behalf of the Polish Government. Piłsudski stated: "And now lay him to rest among the royal tombs, that he be equal to the kings."

While Słowacki had hoped to be recognized, he never imagined the enormous impact he would have on the future generations of poets, prose writers, dramatists, and composers (e.g., Henryk Mikołaj Górecki composed music to his poetry) and on Polish culture in general. Born a poet, Słowacki died a poet, and a prophetic one at that. His words "*Tak będzie kiedyś pisała Polska*" (Poland will write like this some day) came to pass as his revolutionary imagery and literary devices were emulated by poets of subsequent generations. And not only was Poland resurrected as a country, as he had predicted, but his prediction of a Slavic pope (explicitly expressed in the poem "*Pośród niesnasków Pan Bóg uderza*") materialized as well. Not surprisingly, when the Polish pope John Paul II was elected, much was made of Słowacki's prophetic powers.

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Before I refer to Słowacki's literary works, I must mention a few individuals who were critically important in the poet's life. Foremost among them was his mother. One cannot overestimate the enormous influence of Słowacki's mother Salomea, twice married to Wilno University professors and twice widowed. Euzebiusz Słowacki, her first husband and Juliusz's father, was a professor of rhetoric and poetry at the university. It was his appointment to the University that resulted in the family moving from Krzemieniec to Wilno in 1811, when Juliusz was just two years old. Alas, professor Słowacki died of tuberculosis in 1814. Salomea's second husband, whom she married when Juliusz was 8 years old, was August Becu, a professor of medicine. Among his other accomplishments, Professor Becu is credited with introducing smallpox immunizations in Lithuania. Alas, the stepfather, too, died prematurely and under rather unusual circumstances. On August 26, 1824, a summer storm came upon Wilno suddenly and, as the window to his room was inadvertently left open, professor Becu was struck by lightning during his afternoon nap.

Mme Becu, Słowacki's mother, assumed full responsibility for her son's education. She was fortunate to receive pension from the university for both of her husbands, so her financial circumstances were sufficiently good not only to educate her son in literature, drawing and music, but to have an open house, and an active social life, involving very distinguished guests, including Mickiewicz.

Due to his mother's steering, little Juliusz was bilingual from early childhood. He could read with equal ease in Polish and French. Later he learned English and tackled Shakespeare in the original. Indeed, according to various sources, Słowacki was extremely well read as a child. As one of his biographers, Paweł Hertz, put it: "Maturity in those days didn't correspond to the number of years lived. Erudition preceded experience." (*„Dojrzałość w owym czasie nie pokrywała się z liczbą przeżytych lat. Erudycja wyprzedzała doświadczenie.”*)

Słowacki's mother was not only involved in her son's general education, she was also involved in helping him edit and polish his early poetry and commented on his writing (often critically!) in his later years as well. As their correspondence attests, the mother-son relationship was very close. Indeed, this often brutally honest correspondence is a wonderful source of information about the poet. His intimate thoughts contained in the letters often contradict the testimonials conveyed by people who knew him in Paris and elsewhere. For instance, he was seen by various acquaintances as much more emotionally aloof and less politically alert than he in fact was. His letters clearly attest to it.

Another very significant person in Słowacki's life was Adam Mickiewicz, the other national bard, who was 11 years Słowacki's senior and with whom Słowacki had a complicated relationship. Much as Słowacki initially respected and admired Mickiewicz, the older poet was often harsh and callous in his dealings with Słowacki. He remarked publicly, e.g., that Słowacki's poetry was like "a temple without God" (*świątynia bez Boga*). In his play *Dziady III* (The Forefather's Eve, Part III) Mickiewicz accused Słowacki's stepfather, August Becu, of being a traitor who had sided with the Russians. Most likely, it was a false accusation, yet it precipitated Słowacki's move from Paris to Geneva.

The younger poet had to fight all his life not to be overshadowed by Mickiewicz and to assert his artistic uniqueness. A much more private person than Mickiewicz and less blatantly politically involved, Słowacki suffered -- perhaps unjustly -- the frequent scorn of the émigré circles which preferred Mickiewicz's more public and explicitly political commitment to national causes. They also found the egotism of Słowacki's heroes offensive. So while Słowacki attempted to be non-partisan and promoted the Polish cause by writing and even reciting his poetry at various events (N.B., some of the events were attended by such notables as the Marquis de Lafayette), the poet ended up evoking suspicions of all the warring political factions. As one can see in the poem "My Last Will" (*Testament mój*), he fully realized how underappreciated he was as a patriot and a poet. To a large extent, the attitude of the Polish émigré circles contributed to Słowacki's fashioning himself through much of his adult life as a misunderstood Byronic hero.

And yet another significant influence, though short lived, was the mystic Andrzej Towiański. Under his influence Słowacki developed more fully a version of poetic Messianism (already present in his work *Anghelli*). He came to a rather fantastic mystical theory that a revolutionary movement will shutter absolute power, will lead to Poland's liberation, and -- more broadly -- will gradually promote the spiritual evolution of society until a society of angels will emerge (see his works *Genez Duchą* and *Król Duch* (1846-7)). Słowacki's concepts of sacrifice and victimhood leading to such revolution and his references to the realm of the ghosts struck many of the Paris émigrés as bizarre and inappropriate at a time when -- in their view -- direct political action was called for.

Slowacki never married. Among his romantic interests were Ludwika Śniadecka (4 years older, in Wilno); Kora Pinard (in Paris, daughter of the printer of Slowacki's 3 volumes, N.B., rejected by him, but she continued to put flowers on his grave and after marrying another still left in her will a request that her children continue putting flowers on the grave); and Eglantyna Pattey (daughter of his landlady in Geneva with whom he took walks in the Swiss Alps).

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Juliusz Słowacki's writings range from lyrical poems to hymns and sonnets, to epic forms and drama. The November Uprising of 1830-31 was a breaking point in his poetry. His early works, many of them created under the influence of Byron and Shakespeare were poems about exotic lands or tragedies based on historic events (e.g., *Maria Stuart*, *Jan Bielecki*). After the November Uprising the fight for independence became the central theme of his works.

Along with Mickiewicz, Slowacki was a most illustrious exponent, as well as co-creator, of national Polish ideology. In his works, he addressed the problems of his subjugated nation, but also the problems of other oppressed people and the universal moral and historiographic dilemmas. His works are permeated with visions of Poland's past and future, and with expressions of faith in Poland's resurrection. The plays *Balladyna*, *Lilla Weneda*, *Mazepa*, *Horsztyński* et al., all illustrate it. Yet he was more nuanced than Mickiewicz. Slowacki's romantic hero (e.g., Kordian in *Kordian*, 1832) struggles not only with foreign tyranny or the hypocrisy of the world, but also with his own weakness and inability to act.

A true master of the poetic form, Słowacki departed from the conventions of his predecessors, even of Mickiewicz, expanding and modifying them. He was a major innovator of poetic language, who did not hesitate to resort to bold aesthetics. He piled metaphors, reflecting ecstatic states and mystical visions. No one before him had ever gained such perfection, nor extracted such nuanced palette of feelings and meanings in verse. Also, in the words of the critic Antoni Bogusławski – Słowacki “soared the highest on the wings of inspiration.” As a dramatist as well he was innovative and original. It's not without reason that a major theatre in Krakow is named after him. The history of the reception of Slowacki's writings is a striking example of the fickleness of fate. Largely misunderstood and underappreciated during his lifetime, he gained posthumous fame and had tremendous impact on Polish culture in the XIX and XX centuries. In 1950s, under the Communist regime, while taught as a classic and a patriot, he was chastised by critics for his mystical leanings. Indeed, much of the literary criticism about him was tendentious and distortive. Stanisław Kasperski not without reason subtitled his recent book on Slowacki “a poet still topical but routinely distorted” (*poeta ciągle aktualny, ale okaleczony*). Lately, however, there appears to be an effort to accord Slowacki fair treatment. Several conferences have been organized to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 1999 and new books have been published. One of them, titled *Słowacki Współczesny* (Contemporary Słowacki) edited by Marek Troszyski [IBL, 1999] is a collection of very probing essays on numerous facets of Słowacki's *oeuvre*, which do the poet much more justice.

Alas, Slowacki's poetry has been the undoing of translators. It is truly difficult to translate and loses much in translation. No available translation conveys the melodiousness of his language, the sound and tone of Słowacki's verses which can be savored by those who read them, or hear them in Polish.

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## **ADVERTISING THROUGH PAC**

The Club decided to provide advertising opportunity to local businesses utilizing our web site. The annual cost of placing an ad is \$100 for members and \$160 for non-members.

For more information please contact Arthur Reichert, at: [secretary@polamrtp.com](mailto:secretary@polamrtp.com) , or Richard Kotek, at: [president@polamrtp.com](mailto:president@polamrtp.com)

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## **ABOUT PAC:**

### **MEETINGS:**

Our monthly meetings are scheduled every 1st Wednesday of the month. The agendas and summaries are posted on [www.polamrtp.com](http://www.polamrtp.com) few days prior, and after each meeting.

Meetings' location: Office of Honorary Consulate, Spring Hill House, 705 Barbour Drive in Raleigh

### **CLUB ACTIVITIES:**

Social events: Sylvester, Ostatki, Majowka, Ognisko, Christmas Dinner

Promotion of culture: Polish Festival, International Festival, Exploris Museum programs, Polish language classes, participation in local events promoting Polish culture and traditions

Annual Scholarship Program

Sports events: ski trips, chess tournament, bowling, soccer games

**MEMBERSHIP:**

Family: \$40.00 per family

Single: \$25.00

Senior over 70: FREE

You may now pay your dues on line at: [www.polamrtp.com](http://www.polamrtp.com).

**PAC E-MAIL LIST:**

You can subscribe to our internet group by going to [groups.google.com](http://groups.google.com). **NOTE:** After subscribing to googlegroups initially, you will receive an email from googlegroups asking for confirmation.

Visit our homepage at <http://www.polamrtp.com>.

**CLUB'S NEWSLETTER:**

"News Polonia" is distributed via mail, and also posted on PAC's website ([www.polamrtp.com](http://www.polamrtp.com)).

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE POLISH AMERICAN CLUB!**