



The Lira Ensemble

Performing Arts of Poland and America · An Illinois not-for-profit corporation

Artists-in-Residence at
Loyola University Chicago

For Immediate Release - Contact: Delores Robinson 312-595-5031 / Lucyna Migala 773-508-7040



"CELEBRATE POLAND!" at Navy Pier

Sunday, March 1, 2009

Navy Pier presents "**Celebrate Poland!**" once again this year: an admission-free festival on the eve of Pulaski Day in Illinois – on Sunday, March 1st from Noon to 6pm in the Crystal Gardens, a beautiful winter garden of palms, tropical plants, and jumping fountains on the second floor above the Family Pavilion.

"**Celebrate Poland!**" features six hours of continuous FREE entertainment – various styles of spirited Polish songs, dances, and music – from folk to jazz to Chopin – by some of Chicago's top Polish-American entertainers, both adults and children, in gorgeous, colorful Polish costumes. Vendors will offer Polish and Polish-American folk art and gifts, books, CD's, and of course, Polish food – by Kasia's Deli, a Chicago tradition.

The Polish Consulate and the Polish Museum of America will provide information and free handouts about Poland and Polish culture.

The entire afternoon will be narrated in English by mistress of ceremonies Lucyna Migala of WCEV Radio and the Lira Ensemble. Mr. Slawomir Skzypek, president of the National Bank of Poland, will be the Guest of Honor.

"**Celebrate Poland!**" is presented in cooperation with the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland and the Lira Ensemble – the nation's only professional performing company specializing in Polish music, song and dance. It honors the memory of General Casimir Pulaski, the Polish freedom fighter who gave his life for the cause of American liberty during the Revolutionary War. The state of Illinois celebrates Pulaski Day on the first Monday of March.

Last year's "**Celebrate Poland!**" event drew more than 2,000 people and even more are expected this year.

This year's featured performers are:

- Singers and Dancers from the Lira Ensemble
- Jazz singer Grazyna Auguscik and Eastern Blok
- The Lechici Dancers of the Polish Scouting Organization in the USA
- The Wici Song and Dance Company of the Polish National Alliance
- Storyteller Barbara Kozuchowska
- The Pytlik Brothers Polish Folk Band
- The Little Stars Children's Theatre Workshop
- Agnieszka Iwanska and Her Quartet

Historic Navy Pier, the Midwest's top-visited tourist destination, is located on Chicago's lakefront at 600 East Grand Avenue. For directions and information about public transportation, go to www.navypier.com or call 312-595-PIER (7437).

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EVENT SCHEDULE for “**Celebrate Poland!**” is as follows:
(schedule subject to change)

Noon to 12:10pm	Opening ceremonies with posting of U.S. and Polish colors by members of the Polish Scouting Association of Illinois, singing of both anthems, and comments from Consul General of Poland Zygmunt Matynia
12:10pm to 12:30pm	Little Stars/Warsztaty Teatralne - children’s theater Agata Paleczny, director
12:30pm to 12:50pm	Lechici Dancers & Wici Dancers joint performance Konrad Wiecek & Magda Solarz, directors
12:50pm to 1pm	Storyteller Barbara Kozuchowska & MC Lucyna Migala with comments about General Casimir Pulaski
1:00pm to 1:45pm	Grazyna Auguscik and her jazz ensemble
1:45pm to 2pm	Little Stars/Warsztaty Teatralne - children’s theater Agata Paleczny, director
2:00pm to 2:20pm	Lechici Dancers & Wici Dancers joint performance Konrad Wiecek & Magda Solarz, directors
2:20pm to 2:45pm	Soloists from the Lira Ensemble
2:45pm to 3:00pm	Storyteller Barbara Kozuchowska & MC Lucyna Migala with comments about General Casimir Pulaski
3:00pm to 3:20pm	Pytlik Brothers Polish Folk Band
3:20pm to 3:40pm	Lechici Dancers & Wici Dancers joint performance comments Konrad Wiecek & Magda Solarz, directors
3:40pm to 4:00pm	Pytlik Brothers Polish Folk Band
4:00pm to 4:20pm	Soloists from the Lira Ensemble
4:20pm to 4:45pm	Lechici Dancers & Wici Dancers joint performance Konrad Wiecek & Magda Solarz, directors
4:45pm to 5:00pm	Soloists from the Lira Ensemble
5:00pm to 5:15pm	Storyteller Barbara Kozuchowska & MC Lucyna Migala with comments about General Casimir Pulaski
5:15pm to 6pm	Agnieszka Iwanska & Quartet

Information about performers featured at “Celebrate Poland!”:

Lucyna Migala - MC

lmigala@liraensemble.com

Lucyna Migala is artistic director, general manager, and narrator of the Lira Ensemble. Born in Poland, Miss Migala immigrated to the United States with her family as a small child. Her parents, Joseph and Estelle Migala, became popular Polish language radio personalities in Chicago and prominent Polish-American community activists. Miss Migala is also a radio and television journalist who was a producer and reporter for NBC News for 13 years before resigning to create an ethnic-concept radio station with members of her family. She is now vice president and program director of WCEV/1450 AM Radio, one of Chicagoland's major multi-ethnic stations. She has won many awards and distinctions, among them the Cavalier's Cross of Merit from the president of Poland, for her work in popularizing Polish culture

Soloists from the Lira Ensemble

Lucyna Migala, Artistic Director and General Manager

www.liraensemble.com

The Lira Ensemble is the only professional performing arts company in the U.S. specializing in Polish music, song, and dance. The Lira Singers and Lira Dancers perform in authentic, colorful folk garb from various regions of Poland, in period gowns, or in traditional concert dress, depending on the music performed - and always with English narration, which explains the traditions behind the music and dance presented.. The name of the company, "lira," is the Polish word for "lyre," a traditional symbol of music. The Ensemble's performing groups present folk, classical, sacred and new music of Poland, sung in the original language, and Polish folk and court dances. The highly praised Lira company consists of The Lira Singers, Lira Symphony, Lira Dancers, Lira Piano Quintet, Lira String Quartet, Lira Chamber Chorus, and Lira Children's Chorus – "Dzieci" - who make about 80 appearances each year, in the Chicago area and around the nation. The Lira Singers have made six concert tours of Poland. Lira has issued nine recordings which are sold nationwide. The Lira Ensemble is artist-in-residence at Loyola University Chicago.

Philip Seward – Pianist

www.philipseward.com

Philip Seward is a pianist and co-conductor for the Lira Ensemble. He studied music and theater at the University of Vienna, in the New York Arts Program, at Wabash College, and completed his graduate studies at Northwestern University. He is also an accomplished singer and has toured widely throughout the U.S. and Europe.

Barbara Kozuchowska

Actress, radio/TV host and jack-of-all-trades Barbara Kozuchowska incorporates history, legend and entertainment into her dynamic storytelling. She has been involved in the cultural life of the Polish-American community for many years, directing the children's theater group "Zespół" for more than 16 years and also co-hosting the first Polish language television show outside of Poland, "The Bob Lewandowski Show." She

currently co-hosts a radio show, “To I Owo-Tu I Tam” on WPNA 1490 AM and volunteers at the Polish Museum of America.

Grazyna Auguscik

www.grazynaauguscik.com

Singer, composer, arranger, and producer Grazyna Auguscik has won the praise and admiration of music critics, jazz enthusiasts and even non-jazz audiences with a singular voice that speaks a universal language. Her professional music career began in Europe. She completed her studies in 1992 at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. She has since become a prolific collaborator, sharing the stage with such jazz notables as Jim Hall, Michael and Randy Brecker, Bobby Enriquez, John Medeski, Paul Wertico, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Robert Irving III, Michal Urbaniak, Terry Callier, Patricia Barber, John McLean, Andrzej Jagodzinski, Jarek Bester, and others. Since moving to Chicago in 1994, Grazyna performs at the legendary Green Mill, the Chicago Cultural Center, the Millennium Park, and major festivals including Chicago Jazz Festival and the World Music Festival in Chicago. Amidst her active European and American touring schedule, Grazyna has managed to record, produce and distribute fourteen albums. Her most recent CD, “Andança,” is a collaboration with Brazilian singer/guitarist Paulinho Garcia.

The Lechici Dancers of the Polish Scouting Organization in the USA

Konrad Wiecek, Artistic Director

Maciek Leja, Administrative Director

Founded in 1965, the Lechici Dancers is the oldest Polish Folk Dance ensemble in the Chicagoland area. The ensemble’s name derives from the legend of Lech, Czech and Rus. According to legend, Lech discovered the territory now known as Poland. His warriors were Lechici—thus the ensemble adopted the name to represent the youth and vitality of Poland’s first warriors. Lechici is the representative ensemble of the Polish Scouting Organization in the USA, a division of Polish Scouting abroad. Lechici members perform the five national dances of Poland, as well as songs and dances from 11 regions of the country. The ensemble places great value in preserving the authenticity of Polish folk culture, including its songs, dances and other folk traditions. Lechici performs approximately 25 times annually at various civic, cultural and social events within the Polish and American communities and has traveled throughout North America, Poland and Belgium.

The Wici Song and Dance Company of the Polish National Alliance of North America

Magdalena Solarz, Artistic Director & Choreographer

www.wicisonganddance.com

Founded in 1972 in Chicago, the Wici Song and Dance Company’s mission is to promote Polish culture in both the Polish and American communities through authentic song, dance and music. Wici presents Polish folk tradition with a vast repertoire, a beautiful array of authentic costumes, and original choreography. Since 1983, they are the official representative group of the Polish National Alliance, the largest Polish fraternal

organization in the U.S. Over the years, WICI have performed at various local, city and state events, throughout Chicago's neighborhoods, numerous other Illinois cities and towns, several states, as well as in Europe.

Pytlik Brothers Polish Folk Band

Stanislaw Pytlik, Czeslaw Pytlik, Roman Klocek, Jan Makowka, Adam Sikora

Originally from Poland, the Pytlik Brothers Polish Folk Band is a group of musicians who perform authentic Polish folk music as it is played in the villages of Poland. They appear in folk

garb from the Krakow region of Southern Poland. For the past 25 years, the Pytlik Band has accompanied the Lira Dancers and has toured with the Lira Ensemble across the Midwest. Prior to joining the Lira Ensemble, the band performed with the Polonez Dancers under choreographer Anthony Dobrazanski.

Little Stars Theatre Workshop (Warsztaty Teatralne)

Agata Paleczny, founder and director

www.warsztatyteatralne.com

For the past five years, the Little Stars Theater Workshop has helped children develop skills and connect with the Polish language, literature and culture. Consisting of more than 70 young actors ranging in age from three to 14 years old, performances by Little Stars blend texts and music, brilliant choreography and bright costumes. Agata Paleczny is an ensemble performer as well as founder and director. She has taken an interest and active part in the cultural life of the Polish community in Chicago for the past 15 years. An actress by profession, she has appeared with the "Bocian" Polish cabaret and has served as the host of the children's TV program "Dobranoc."

Agnieszka Iwanska and Quartet

Agnieszka Iwanska is a jazz vocalist, composer and lyricist. As a vocalist, Agnieszka has been hailed as the "voice of promise" by noted jazz critic Howard Reich from the *Chicago Tribune*. Agnieszka is a graduate of the Jazz Studies program at the University of Katowice in Poland. While in Poland, Agnieszka performed with some of the country's top jazz artists. After arriving in the US, she formed her own band: Agnieszka Iwanska & Quartet, featuring talented jazz musicians: Paul Scherer, Scott Angst, Stacy McMichael and Paul Townsend. Working with keyboardist and composer Paul Scherer, Agnieszka is currently completing her first full-length CD of entirely original material.

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