



ANN ARBOR POLONIA ASSOCIATION

Issue 3 (147)

November 2018

Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival November 7th-11th

The Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival is upon us! It is the 25th Jubilee year of the event, which has involved and still involves many from our Polish-American community.

This issue is devoted to celebrating this important anniversary. We present a series of short interviews with members of past and current festival committees to touch on the past and look towards the future of the festival, which is organized by the Polish Cultural Fund. Thank you to all who responded to our call for anecdotes and memories of the last 25 years. Enjoy!

Jola Nowak

(Founder and First Director of Festival)

AAPA: What do you remember about the first year?

JN: I thought it was going to be a fiasco! I didn't know if people would come or not. But people came! And they came the next year...and it's been going on for 25 years...

AAPA: If you had to think of one moment...

JN: I remember, for the second festival, I was waiting at my house for two guests – Director

Waldemar Krzystek and Actor Cezary Pazura. They were late coming in from Chicago and they were also responsible for bringing the film. I was so mad...no film...no guests! When they arrived with their driver, I found them in a great mood – they had received whiskey from someone in Chicago and were not completely sober. I remember I stood on my porch and yelled at them. Pazura came to me and said, “Don't get upset, Pani Jolu!” and started to talk about how great my home was, how great the festival was going to be. What a charmer! Needless to say, everything was fine.



Jola always held festival guests close to her heart. A Cezary Pazura jak najbliżej!

AAPA: What Polish film would you recommend to our readers?

Jola Nowak: Anything by Jan Jakub Kolski. They are like fairy tales for adults, great sense of humor. Any documentary by Marcel Łoziński.

Zbigniew Pasek

(First festival co-organizer, Former Director)

AAPA: What was the greatest accomplishment of your time with the festival?

ZP: I would think that biggest accomplishment was that it happened at all. The festival was a result of contributions from many different people who wanted to make it happen. It was a logistical feat, but in those pre-digital days you had to have some muscle, too. The movies were usually coming by train in traditional cans holding film reels (2-3 cans per movie), and a single can could weigh 30-40 pounds. After the showing, they had to be brought back to the train station to again be shipped to the next location.



AAPA: If you had to think of one moment...

ZP: For me, the most memorable was an encounter with Zbigniew Rybczynski, the first Polish Oscar winner for the animated short "Tango" (1980); he won the Oscar in 1982. His films today are considered high achievement of video art. In 2003, he was a

guest. We had a great chat and he autographed a book about him that I had.

AAPA: What Polish film would you recommend to our readers?

ZP: I have two suggestions: "Księga wielkich życzeń" (dir. Sławomir Kryński, 1997-screened in 1999 at the festival) is a touching confrontation of outlook on life takes place between those who are early in their life journey and those who are in their sunset years. Another film is "Magiczne drzewo" (dir. Andrzej Maleszka, 2008), a fantasy adventure which is also a TV series.

Iwona Wertenberger

(Current Director of the festival)

AAPA: What has been the greatest accomplishment so far with the festival?

IW: I think I'm most proud of how the festival now has broad inter-national participation. We receive submissions for the documentary competition from around the world, not just Poland, but Australia and England to name a few. It's encouraging to see that our influence is so far-reaching.

AAPA: If you had to think of one moment...

IW: I had the great pleasure to introduce a film and its director to the audience ... and then watch the audience's reaction to the fact that his movie was only four minutes long! That was a very entertaining moment...



AAPA: What Polish film would you recommend to our readers?

IW: I recommend a comedy, “Cudownie ocalony” (dir. Janusz Zaorski, 2004). I think you’ll enjoy it!

AAPA: What Polish film would you recommend to our readers?

AM: I like comedies – they’re difficult to pull off well. I would recommend “Killer” (dir. Juliusz Machulski, 1997) for those who just want to see a good movie.



Andrzej Myc, Vice President, PCF, Tomasz Stanko and PCF President, Andrzej Dolata. The Polish Cultural Fund (PCF) organizes the festival.

Andrzej Myc

(Current committee member, Former Director)

AAPA: What has been the greatest accomplishment so far with the festival?

AM: Every year, I think about the amount of stress, nerves, blood, sweat and tears that goes into the festival and I swear I’m not going to do it again. I think the greatest accomplishment is that my wife is still by my side and it really is her accomplishment to stick with me through this every year!

AAPA: If you had to think of one moment...

AM: Once we had a student rent us a hall – a great location – Rackham Hall. Everything was going great until, at the last minute, we asked about one small detail. Did they have a projector? Well, no, they did not have a projector! No projector, no movie, no festival! We had to find a new screening hall immediately. People ask why I always check and double-check the details. They really matter!

Andrzej Dolata

(Current committee member, Former Director)

AAPA: What has been the greatest accomplishment so far with the festival?

AD: I think the greatest influence I have had on the growth of the festival has been the institution of sponsorship. I believed that people and businesses would support our festival and, then, due to this success and support, we were able to move our venue to the Michigan Theater. We also provided ongoing promotion of documentaries and short films by establishing awards. Our awards for Best Debut, Best Short and Best Documentary raised the image of our festival. The awards also provide sponsors a concrete way to show their support. We then expanded the festival to include a children’s film series. All this was also possible with the formation of the Polish Cultural Fund, which was indispensable for dealing with our expanded financial efforts.

AAPA: If you had to think of one moment...

AD: I remember so clearly one year when the festival was going to start and I was put in the position of having to be the host at the last minute. Now, that's not the most comfortable place for me – I prefer that someone else introduce films - but it had to be done. So, I went out in front of the audience, totally unprepared, and began to speak. Grasping at straws, I saw Jola Nowak sitting in front of me and, I thought, "OK, now I'll say something funny and I'll rescue myself from this situation." So I said, "Fifteen years ago, this crazy woman had the idea to start a film festival." Silence. Not funny and not appreciated by Jola! I really dug myself a deep hole. In my defense, this would work in Polish! However, once translated... did I say that!?!

AAPA: What Polish film would you recommend to our readers?

AD: There have only been a few movies that I've seen, left the theater and didn't know where I was. Once of these was "Three Colors: Red" (dir. Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1994). It is a movie that is simply one of the best and it really affected me.

Danuta Podgórska

(Former Director)

DP: I truly cherish the time I was part of the Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival! I've always admired the selfless dedication and commitment of the organizers. Thank you all!

AAPA: What was the greatest accomplishment of your time with the festival?

DP: Three things: 1) Establishment of the Polish Cultural Fund, which contributed to festival's financial independence; 2) Moving the festival to the prestigious Michigan Theater; 3) Keeping documentary segments FREE of charge to further promote Polish culture, history and current social issues.

AAPA: If you had to think of one moment...

DP: One year, due to some mix-up, we were supposed to get a film sent to my house overnight by FedEx, to arrive by 9am on Sunday, just couple hours before its scheduled presentation. From



7am on, I sat by the window, drinking coffee, waiting anxiously for the delivery. Each time I spotted FedEx, I ran out on the street, in my pajamas, waving and screaming that they missed my house. And each time the driver would stop, check his route, and announce that it wasn't my package. Finally, the film arrived at 9:15 am on the fourth (!!!) FedEx van. I am sure, I was deemed as "The Crazy FedEx Lady." Who would have thought there could be so many FedEx deliveries on a Sunday morning in a very quiet residential neighborhood!

AAPA: What Polish film would you recommend to our readers?

DP: I just saw a new film at the Denver Polish Film Festival (by the way, it's a great festival!). It's a new film, "Powrot" (dir. Magdalena Łazarkiewicz, 2018). This social drama has universal values and examines issues of acceptance and hypocrisy.

Krystyna Bobowska

(Former festival committee member)

AAPA: What was the greatest accomplishment of your time with the festival?



KB: Before the festival moved to the Michigan Theater, it was screening in several different halls in the University of Michigan buildings. I was always in charge of selling the

tickets. I was proud that I was giving very good statistics to the committee -- how many tickets were sold, how many were regular vs seniors, and how many people came each day. This helped the festival predict future attendance.

AAPA: If you had to think of one moment...

KB: I always enjoy the short movies and documentaries. They have been giving me correct information about what was going on in Poland.

AAPA: What Polish film would you recommend to our readers?

KB: I like Andrzej Wajda's movies. Simply put, he has good insight into people and his characters are interesting.

Basia Alvarez

(Current festival committee member)

AAPA: What has been the greatest accomplishment so far with the festival?

BA: During my time on the committee, we established a children's program. It is unique to our festival; no other Polish Film Festival in the world has a children's series and a book fair.

AAPA: If you had to think of one moment...

BA: My favorite moment is to see kids and parents peruse the books at the book fair. It's so entertaining and also gratifying to know we offer this to our community.



AAPA: What Polish film would you recommend to our readers?

BA: I love all of Andrzej Wajda's movies. As I get older, I discover new things every time I watch one of his films.

Anna Bielińska

(Current festival committee member)

AAPA: What has been the greatest accomplishment so far with the festival?

AB: When we started the festival, there was no easy exchange of cultural events, especially films. I didn't expect that we would keep going for so long. Now we are bringing the newest and most acclaimed films to the community, even in this age of YouTube and Netflix. We continue to be relevant and part of the cultural heritage of the area.

AAPA: If you had to think of one moment...



AB: I love the feeling when the room fills up with people and the lights go down. There's the expectation of a beautiful experience and I'm also crossing my fingers that it all goes well in the next 90 to 120 minutes!

AAPA: What Polish film would you recommend to our readers?

AB: I still remember the film, "Historia kina w Popielawach" (dir. Jan Jakub Kolski, 1998). It's a little bit funny, sentimental, whimsical and is a wonderful observation of life which passed (but really never existed).

25th Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival Program November 7th-11th

At the end of the newsletter (pgs 9-10), you'll find the complete festival program for all days, November 7th through November 11th.

You can also access the program online at the festival website

www.annarborpolishfilmfestival.com.

Of special note:

Nov. 7: Wednesday Lorch Hall, UM 7pm Director Krzysztof Zanussi
Talk entitled "*Good recollections, bad recollections. Love at the time of Soviet domination.*"

Film: *A Year of the Quiet Sun*

Followed by Q&A with the director.

Lorch Hall (611 Tappan), UM Campus

100 Years of Polish Independence November 11th



Join us in celebrating our 100-year anniversary of Polish independence! Take a moment on November 11th to honor this great accomplishment for Poland.

Documentary Film Guest: Director Anna Ferenc November 17th

On November 17th, there will be a screening of the documentary film by Anna Ferenc:

"Rzeczpospolita. Reaktywacja." This film explores the reconstruction of Poland after 1918 and presents an historical overview of the growth of the young Polish Republic through the efforts of politicians, economists and scientists. The director will be available for a discussion after the film.

Details:

3:00 p.m. Saturday, November 17

Hatcher Graduate Library South

913 S. University Avenue

Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1190

Historical Exhibit

December 4th-21st

As part of the ongoing celebration, the Polish Cultural Fund and AAPA is sponsoring an exhibit from December 4th-21st at the Duderstadt Center, 2281 Bonisteel Blvd, on the University of Michigan Ann Arbor campus. Entitled “The Spirit of Polish Independence,” the exhibit from the Ministry

The Polish Spirit
of Independence
Polski Duch Niepodległości

of Culture of the Republic of Poland provides an overview of historical events

shared by Poland and America. This exhibit is highly encouraged for adults and as an educational activity for school-age children. Admission is free of charge.

Official Consular Visit - Hamtramck November 17-18

The Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago is organizing a consular visit the 17th and 18th of November. It will be held at the **Piast Institute** located at 11633 Joseph Campau, Hamtramck, MI 48212. During the visit the Consulate will only address applications or renewals of a Polish passport. Applicants are required to bring two passport photos. Applicants must call the Consulate to set up an appointment (Phone: 312 337 8166 ext. 230 or 231).

Upcoming Events

***November 7:** Special [Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival](#) Guest: Director Krzysztof Zanussi. Lorch Hall, UM Campus, Ann Arbor, MI. (see article)

***November 9-11:** 25th [Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival](#) - Jubilee Year, Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor, MI. (see pgs 9-10)



November 11: 100 Years of Poland's Independence (1918-2018). Celebrate!

November 16: Panel and Recital “*Poland's Centennial, an Evening of Reflection and Celebration*” Includes a political, cultural and musical look at 1918 Poland. Organized by [Kopernikana, the Copernicus Program in Polish Studies](#), University of Michigan.

November 17-18: Official visit of the Polish Consulate to the Piast Institute in Hamtramck. (see article)

***November 17:** [Polish Cultural Fund](#) Guest: Director Anna Ferenc screening of her documentary film "Rzeczpospolita. Reaktywacja." Q&A to follow (see article)

***December 4-21:** Exhibit “The Spirit of Polish Independence”, Duderstadt Library, University of Michigan Campus. [Polish Cultural Fund](#). (see article)

***December 15: Saturday.**
5:30pm Jasełka performed by our community's children (dir. Barbara Walkowc)
6:00pm Polish Mass, St. Francis of Assisi Church, lower chapel, Ann Arbor, MI
Followed by *Wigilia* in the Parish Activity Center (please bring dish to pass).

Upcoming Events (cont.)

***January 12, 2019: Saturday.**

5:00pm Pasterka Mass officiated by Bishop Earl Boyea (in Polish and English), St. Francis of Assisi Church, Ann Arbor, MI.

At 4:30pm, mass is preceded and followed by Polish Christmas carols/ Kolędy performed by guest choir, *Filareci*.

A reception follows in the St. Francis Parish Activity Center (please bring baked goods to share)

*AAPA sponsored and co-sponsored events

Ognisko was **Hot Hot Hot!**

Our Ognisko (Bonfire) event, held the end of September this year, was a great hit. The weather cooperated – a beautiful crisp Fall day and the rain politely waited until Sunday morning to fall.

Thank you to everyone who participated, brought food and tended the fire. Most of all, thank you to our musicians and singers. You made for a memorable evening, as shown below.





Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival

November 7-11, 2018

Michigan Theater

603 E Liberty St, Ann Arbor

<https://www.annarborphilmsfestival.com>

Wednesday, November 7

6:00 pm Talk by Krzysztof Zanussi
Rok spokojnego słońca / A Year of the Quiet Sun, dir. Krzysztof Zanussi, drama, 1984,
106 min, followed by Q&A with Krzysztof Zanussi; FREE ADMISSION
Location: Lorch Hall, 611 Tappan St, Ann Arbor

Thursday, November 8

7:00 pm Opening Gala (by invitation only)

Friday, November 9

7:00 pm Opening of the 25th Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival and announcement of the Festival
Awards and Lifetime Achievement Recognition for Sławomir Grünberg
Cicha noc / Silent Night, dir. Piotr Domalewski, drama, 2017, 100 min
9:00 pm *Kler / Clergy*, dir. Wojciech Smarzewski, drama, 2018, 133 min

Saturday, November 10

Children's program, ages 3+

10:00 am *Żubr Pompik*, animation, 28 min
Intermission and Children's Book Fair
11:00 am *Basia*, animation, 33 min
Children's Book Fair

Documentary and short films

12:30 pm *Ciche godziny / Quiet Hours*, dir. Paul Szynol, 13 min
Ostatni misjonarze / The Last Missionaries, dir. Simon Target, 75 min
Tamtej nocy / Off the Hook, dir. Pat Howl Kostyszyn, 24 min
Świtezianka / The Nixie, dir. Julia Bui Ngoc & Mai Bui Ngoc, 19 min
Praca / Labor, dir. Mateusz Gołębiowski, 21 min
Modus Operandi, dir. Remigiusz Biernacki, 20 min
3:30 pm *Podróż Bogdana / Bogdan's Journey*, dir. Michał Jaskulski, Lawrence Loewinger, 86
min; FREE ADMISSION

Feature films

6:00 pm *Kamerdyner / The Bulter*, dir. Filip Bajon, drama, 2018, 150 min
followed by Q&A with Filip Bajon
9:00 pm *7 uczuć / 7 Feelings*, dir. Marek Kotowski, comedy, 2018, 116 min

Sunday, November 11

Children's program, 6+

10:00 am **Tarapaty / Double Trouble**, dir. Marta Karwowska, 2017, 85 min
Children's Book Fair

Documentary and short films

12:30 pm **Universam Grochów**, dir. Tomasz Knittel, 39 min
Niebo bez gwiazd / A Sky without Stars, dir. Katarzyna Dąbkowska-Kułaczk, 52 min,
followed by Q&A with Katarzyna Dąbkowska-Kułaczk; FREE ADMISSION

Feature film

2:30 pm **Warsaw'44 / Miasto 44**, dir. Jan Komasa, drama, 2014, 130 min
FREE ADMISSION, part of the Polish History in Film Masterpieces Series

5:00 pm Closing Reception (by invitation only)

Films are not rated and are all subtitled in English.

Films represent contemporary trends in Polish cinema and do not reflect views and opinions of the organizers.

The organizers reserve the right to change the program without notice.

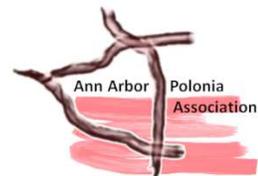
Tickets: \$10 general admission, \$6 seniors and students, free for UM Students with valid ID

Children's program: \$5 general admission, \$15 family ticket for 4 and more

Free admission to selected screenings



POLSKI INSTYTUT SZTUKI FILMOWEJ
POLISH FILM INSTITUTE



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Check us out on FaceBook!