



Chopin Notes

Chopin Society of Atlanta Quarterly

October 2016

www.chopinatlanta.org

Vol. 12, No. 2

Anchor Sponsors for 2015-16



Embassy
of the Republic of Poland
in Washington, D.C.

*Halina and Alek Szlam
Philanthropic Foundation*



OF
RAYMOND JAMES

Inside:

<i>Exclusive Interview</i>	1
<i>CSA Gala</i>	3
<i>Chopin in Art</i>	4
<i>Essay Contest for the Youth</i>	5

Upcoming Events:

Multi Trio
Sunday, September 9, 2016
7:00 PM
Roswell Cultural Arts Center

CSA Gala
November 19, 2016
Dunwoody Country Club

Marek Drewnowski, piano
Sunday, March 19

Concert tickets are always discounted for members of the Chopin Society of Atlanta.

To become a member, join online at www.chopinatlanta.org or call 404-245-6133

Chopin Notes Editorial Staff

Dorota Lato
President, Chopin Society of Atlanta

Bożena U. Zaremba
Editor

Mim Eisenberg
Proofreader

PASSING THE BATON

Exclusive Interview with members of the Multi Trio, **Ewa Pobłocka** (piano), **Ewa Leszczyńska** (soprano, piano) and **Maria Leszczyńska** (cello, piano)

By *Bożena U. Zaremba*



Bożena U. Zaremba: As a 12-year-old student in a music school, you started accompanying your mother, a classical music singer, on the piano. Now you play with your two daughters. Can you see any difference?

Ewa Pobłocka: Definitely, because whereas I listened to my mother, my children contest everything.

So it is more difficult?

EP: Exactly. The generation gap is enormous. I was used to a notion that everything my parents said was sacred. I tried to raise my children in the same way, but they always want to have it their own way. Then again, I must say that this collaboration brings me a lot of satisfaction. Let me assure you that I don't play with my daughters just because they are my daughters, but because they are both very sensitive musicians. They are inquisitive and interested in the world around them and in music. They don't consider playing or singing merely a profession; they treat it with passion, so it is worthwhile to invest time in such people.

I conclude you are pleased that your daughters chose a career in music?

EP: I will say this: As a musician, I am, but as a woman, I am not sure, because only I know what my life looked like on the other side of the stage. It is not so simple. It is especially difficult nowadays as everything needs to be done faster—you need to make decisions faster, get to recitals faster, and you have to even play faster [*laughs*]. In the past, I could afford to sit at a window and watch the rain, while young people today don't give themselves this time.

Continued on page 2

Chopin Society of Atlanta has grown a cult following among local piano mavens.

— Pierre Ruhe, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 2007

Exclusive Interview—Continued from page 1

How did you manage to be a successful musician and a mother at the same time?

EP: I tried. The moment I dashed home from the airport, I put on the “mother suit,” trying to make up for the time I was gone. It does not work that way, though, because you need to be there for your children regularly. You need to have time to talk to them, and to listen. In this profession, you need to choose—either you spend more time practicing or more time talking to your children.

Did you try to get them interested in things outside of music?

EP: To be honest, in our home, there was no time for anything else, because we are all musicians and our life revolves around music, either making music or organizing musical events (that’s my husband’s job), such as opera shows, concerts, or festivals. On the other hand, my career has taken a slightly different path these days than, let’s say, fifteen years ago, and I now give myself more time to do things I didn’t have time for. For example, I will stay at a museum longer, rather than just dash in and out just to check it off.

How did it come about that Mikołaj Górecki and Roxanna Panufnik wrote compositions especially for your trio?

EP: Our trio is unusual, first, because I have not heard of a mother dragging her two daughters on stage [laughs], but also because of the lineup: piano, soprano, and cello. When we created our ensemble a few years ago and worked on our repertoire, we hit a wall, because there was nothing to play. We found one or two 19th-century pieces, and also asked a composer to transpose Schubert’s songs, but it was really an *ersatz*. At one point, I realized that we need to ask someone to write music especially for us. I decided on Mikołaj Górecki, because I know and like his music. This choice was purely instinctive. I met with him and told him who we are, what we are capable of, and what we are all about. I also told him about our distinctive personalities. Roxanna Panufnik was an automatic choice since I used to play her father’s compositions. It turned out that she had written compositions to Shakespeare’s texts for an English tenor, and so she adapted them for us. These compositions will debut in Poland in a few days, but the American premiere will take place during our U.S. tour.

Mikołaj Górecki is a son of the renowned composer Henryk Górecki. Roxanna Panufnik’s father Andrzej Panufnik was a fantastic composer as well. Now you are passing the baton to your daughters.

EP: I was just thinking about that today, about those connections, not only family but personal as well. I think it will all play out during our concerts. Some things are difficult to put into words, but they are revealed through emotions.

The program of your recitals—with pieces by Polish composers only—shows the depth of Polish classical music.

EP: Absolutely. We have rich repertoire of songs, solo pieces and chamber music. Interestingly, I presented two program options [to the organizers], the other one with an international repertoire, but everyone chose the program with entirely Polish music. We will eventually expand our repertoire, because these are fantastic concerts, though difficult, at least for me. The biggest problem is one mirror in the dressing room, as we all ladies want to look beautiful [laughs]. But on a serious note, I remember the reaction of the audience during the recitals with my mom, and those unique additional emotions. The audience can sense them perfectly.

also deal with the additional baggage of our mom being such an experienced and accomplished musician. I thus find it more difficult to pose my own suggestions. I am sure this is somehow connected with the defiance coming from a peculiar nature of the mother-daughter or younger-older sister relationship. My sister is a very talented young musician, and her playing is out of this world, but her personality is as strong as our mother’s. My role in this trio is to alleviate all conflicts. The moment we go on stage, however, all tensions disappear and something unfathomable connects us all. This is most beautiful! Our toil during rehearsal pays off.

Is your mother still the most important role model in music?

EL: Mother is simply a mother. I appreciate all her musical achievements and success, as well as her experience, but she is first and most of all my mother.

Why did you decide to be a singer rather than, like your mother, a pianist?

EL: Maybe because she is a pianist [laughs]. At the beginning I did not really have a choice. I simply started with the piano. Singing was my choice. Perhaps I really needed to make my own decision.

What kind of singing are you interested in—songs, opera or choral?

EL: I am interested in all forms of singing



How about you? How do you see the collaboration with your family members?

Ewa Leszczyńska: It is definitely stressful and challenging. You need to be careful what you say and how you say it. We

and in all kinds of music, although Baroque is my favorite period. I don’t like to be labeled and to limit myself to one kind of form. It is true that so far, I have focused on songs, but I have just had an

2016 Chopin Society of Atlanta's Fundraiser



Join us for an
Evening with Chopin Gala
and Dancing

to benefit the musical advancement of our youth

Saturday, November 19, 2016, 6:00 PM

***New Venue:* Dunwoody Country Club**
1600 Dunwoody Club Drive, Atlanta, GA 30350

Part of the gala program will be dedicated to the memory of the late Elżbieta and Krzysztof Krawczyński, former CSA board members and our beloved friends, who tragically died in January 2016. The Elżbieta and Krzysztof Krawczyński Fund for the Chopin Society, established by their daughter, Dr. Anna Paré, will give us all a wonderful opportunity to honor two exceptional people, who dedicated their lives to serving others.



Photo by Paweł Łoj

Mingle with other music lovers and supporters

Bid on and win fabulous merchandise and services

Dance to a DJ's fine selection of world-class music

John Lemley, radio personality, will be our Master of Ceremonies



GSU piano students at the 2015 Chopin Gala
Photo by Aga Sulewska

Highlights of the Program

Welcoming glass of champagne

Piano recital by young artists

Dinner prepared by the club's famous chef

Exciting silent auction and door prizes

Dance and more

Dress: formal; dance shoes (optional)

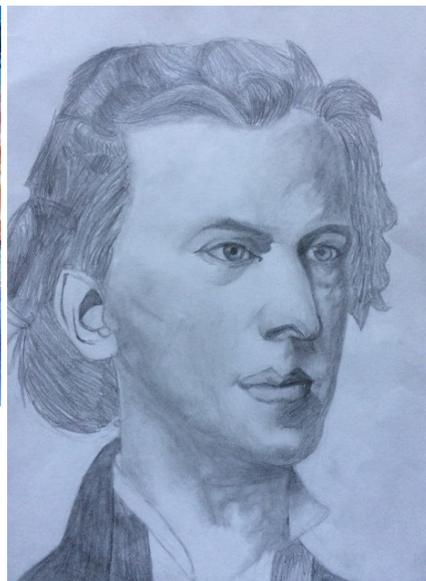
Purchase tickets at
www.chopinatlanta.org

Prize Winners of our Chopin in Art Contest

Winners received cash prizes. See www.chopinatlanta.org for details.



Sarah Hunter, 4th grade
1st Prize, Elementary School



Shravika Billakanti, 6th grade
1st Prize, Middle School



Robert Hunter, 9th grade
1st Prize, High School



Maja Brooker, 3rd grade
2nd Prize, Elementary School



Charles Dsouza, 7th grade
2nd Prize, Middle School



Delaney Dsouza, 9th grade
2nd Prize, High School



Julian Brooker, 1st grade
3rd Prize, Elementary School



Emilia Olson, 4th grade
3rd Prize, Elementary School



Maria Szamrej, 6th grade
3rd Prize, Middle School

Enchanting Conversations with the Piano

Essay Contest for Young Music Lovers

First-time as well as experienced, though still young, members of the audience share their impressions after the unforgettable Georgijs Osokins's recital on April 17, 2016.

"Georgijs Osokins's piano recital was the first classical music live performance I ever attended. To listen to Chopin's celebrated music performed by such a virtuoso pianist as Osokins was already enough to make the evening special.

As the instrument gave away the first sounds of Peteris Vasks's *Music for a Summer Evening*, goosebumps rose across my back, and Osokins's unique, expressive way of playing occupied my attention. By the end of the first piece, I could claim that it would be my favorite, yet I eagerly anticipated hearing the rest of the recital. However, the next pieces appeared even better than their predecessors.

It seemed for me that in the beginning of the recital, Osokins looked unsatisfied, as if searching for greater perfection and power. He often looked up from the instrument, waving one of his hands, while the second was still running across the keys. He reminded me of a chef attracting and breathing in his creation's aromas and then coming back with a hint of salt or seasoning.

However, when I heard the first sounds of Fryderyk Chopin's *Mazurka in C-sharp minor, Op. 50, No. 3*, I realized that Osokins found what he was looking for and reached the peak of his brilliance for the recital. I felt enchanted with the piece's powerful dynamic and multiple repetitions, what made the mazurka especially memorable. Even though the melody seemed familiar, Osokins's bold, powerful way of playing bewitched me as well as the rest of the audience. Coughs, wrapping rustlings and chair creaks all ceased. A couple of times, Osokins laid his hand on the piano as if calming down the instrument, which was challenged with the powerful playing.

Chopin's *Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58* followed. The last [movement] seemed to be a soothing rainbow after the rainstorm of emotions that preceded it. However, as I was leaving the Roswell Cultural Arts Center, my mind was still filled with the mazurka's enchanting repetitions and powerful dynamics."

—Anna Poznyak

"I really enjoyed Georgijs Osokins's unique and fascinating piano concert. My favorite part was after the intermission, because there was a lot of energy and it looked like Georgijs Osokins was having a conversation with the piano. It reminded me of Chopin's quote, 'I tell my piano the things



I used to tell you.' I have never seen someone play the piano with as much energy as him. It was amazing and breathtaking. Also, he put a lot of emotion into the pieces. Sometimes he played as quiet as a mouse, and other times he played like a roaring lion. That's what made his concert so special. Out of all the concerts I have been to, this one was definitely the most exciting. I hope I can see him perform again sometime."

—Oliwia Mikrut

"This was my first real concert! I enjoyed every minute of it! My favorite music was Fryderyk F. Chopin's, but I liked all of it. The music made me think only the happiest thoughts. When he played Beethoven, it felt like it was Beethoven himself who was playing, not Georgijs Osokins. I never heard such beautiful music before! His music warms the heart; it is like the dazzles of nature, like flowers blooming, trees growing, and the beauty of animals. The part I didn't like about it is that it had to end. I could listen to his music forever and ever and ever. I love that some of his music is sometimes calm and sometimes exiting, and that it [conveys] emotions. At the concert, I closed my eyes often, which helped me hear the music more clearly. Then I stared at the pianist's fingers with amazement as they danced across the piano. Georgijs Osokins, thank you for your beautiful music! I wish to see you perform again!"

—Emilia Olson

Thank you all for participation. The writers of the essays were awarded iTunes gift certificates. The excerpts have been edited for space and clarity. Please see our website for details about how to participate in the contest.

important operatic debut in *Semiramide riconosciuta* by Leonardo Vinci, which has not been staged for 300 years.

Which singers have influenced you most?

EL: I have always appreciated Jessie Norman and Cecilia Bartoli; I also like a contemporary singer Dorothee Mields, who sings mainly Baroque music. But to tell you the truth, I have been more influenced by pianists, especially Dang Thai Song, Maria João Pires, Nelson Freire, and Martha Argerich.

What do you admire about them most?

EL: Phrasing. Also something that I would call a “non-instrumental” treatment of the instrument.

What do you value in Chopin’s songs? They say they are not easy to sing.

EL: It is true, because they are considered to be simple. It applies both to the singing and the accompaniment. But this is a misconception. Especially nowadays, all simple things are most difficult, and keeping the interest of the audience is exceptionally hard to do. It requires an effort on the singer’s part, as well as the audience’s, because we don’t deal with dazzling virtuoso arias.



Is playing with your family as difficult for you as it is for your mom and sister?

Maria Leszczyńska: On the one hand, it is easier because we know each other so well, but sometimes we have a short fuse. When we play with other people, even with friends, it is easier to keep a distance.

Have you ever managed to convince your mother to your music vision?

ML: I try doing it all the time [laughs]. Yes, sometimes I get it

through. My mom and I have similar personalities—we want everything our way. But we are all open to suggestions, and we strive to get consensus so that each of us is comfortable in her playing. This is really important.

How did you choose cello as your main instrument?

ML: I started with the piano, because it provides the basis for music, but as a child I always wanted to play the violin. It was my sister who convinced me to pick up the cello. And I fell in love with it.

Which cello players are your role models?

ML: My teachers, Professor Marcin Zdunik and Professor Andrzej Bauer, have been most instrumental and inspiring. If we talk about international players, I would say Gautier Capuçon and Jacqueline du Pré have been most influential. Unfortunately, Jacqueline du Pré is no longer alive, but what she left behind is unbelievable.

Did you ever think of a profession outside of music?

ML: Of course. When I was considering middle school, I wanted to go to the art school; I wanted to be a painter. But I settled for music, which was hard to escape.

Do you listen to music other than classical?

ML: Yes, I do, even though I was brought up with listening to classical music. When I prepare for a recital or competition, I often listen to pop music, which works as a stress relief.

What do you think about the compositions written specifically for your trio?

ML: This is very cool. It is a new experience for me, because I have never played pieces written just for us. It is fantastic to go deep into a composition which has never been performed before. I have always worked on pieces that have been played, recorded, and analyzed, and here, we are in a sense creating the template for other people to follow—or defy.

You will be graduating from high school next year. What next? Music academy?

ML: Definitely. I am not sure where, though. Many people try to convince me to study abroad. Maybe it will happen one day, but right now, I need to start from where I am, where I

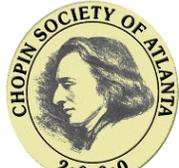
have been raised. Then we will see.

Do you want to have a solo career?

ML: I would love to. I love to be on stage. It is my dream to play with a philharmonic orchestra— to bow, sit down, and play the whole cello concerto. This must be an incredible feeling.

Official website: www.poblocka.com

Photos of the Multi Trio: Maciej Grzybowski



Johns Creek Center for the Arts & Design
10700 State Bridge Road
Suite 12
Johns Creek, GA 30022
www.chopinatlanta.org

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Chopin Society of Atlanta. Visit our website at www.chopinatlanta.org for more details.