

2007

Kopernikana

The University of Michigan
Copernicus Endowment





Brian Porter-Szűcs

From the Director

BRIAN PORTER-SZŰCS

The past academic year demonstrated the breadth of our Polish studies program, with major presentations covering topics ranging from politics to culture and the arts. Former President Aleksander Kwaśniewski visited us in October, and in March the director of the Borderlands Foundation, Krzysztof Czyżewski, delivered the Annual Copernicus Lecture. We were also treated to an extraordinary series of nine concerts featuring every one of Chopin's 129 works for piano, performed by the students of Professor Arthur Greene. Information about all these events is included in this new expanded version of *Kopernikana*.

We are looking forward to equally exciting programming during the 2007-08 academic year. In December we will be hosting Agnieszka Graff, a prominent writer and cultural commentator and the author of *Świat bez kobiet. Pleć w polskim życiu publicznym* [*A World Without Women: Gender in Polish Public Life*]. She will be participating in a symposium entitled "The New Lines of Tolerance and Intolerance in Poland," examining how contemporary Polish society is re-drawing old boundaries of exclusion and inclusion (and drawing new ones). Later in the year we will welcome the famous British journalist Neal Ascherson, author of *The Polish August* (1981), *The Struggles for Poland* (1988), and many other books on topics ranging from the Belgian Congo to the Black Sea.

This year brought both sad and happy news about our faculty. Bogdana Chętowska Carpenter, the great literary scholar and our colleague since 1983, has announced that she will be retiring this coming year. Softening this blow somewhat is the fact that the Slavic Department will be hiring Benjamin Paloff, an up-and-coming polonist who recently received his Ph.D. from Harvard University. Even during this time of transition, we are confident that the University of Michigan will continue to demonstrate its leadership in the study of Polish culture, history, and society.

Agnieszka Graff, scholar and writer, visits the campus in December 2007.

Pianist Krystian Zimerman to Perform in Ann Arbor

Friday, October 12, 8 pm | Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor

The Polish studies program welcomes Krystian Zimerman to U-M this fall. Born in Zabrze, Poland, his career was launched when he won the prestigious Warsaw International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition in 1975 at the age of 19. Zimerman, who travels with his own instrument, comes from a family with rich music-making traditions. Musicians would meet almost daily in his home to perform chamber music, affording Mr. Zimerman a most intimate, natural, everyday contact with live music and providing an early impetus to his musical career. Sponsored by the University Musical Society. For ticket information, call 734.764.2538 or see <www.ums.org>.

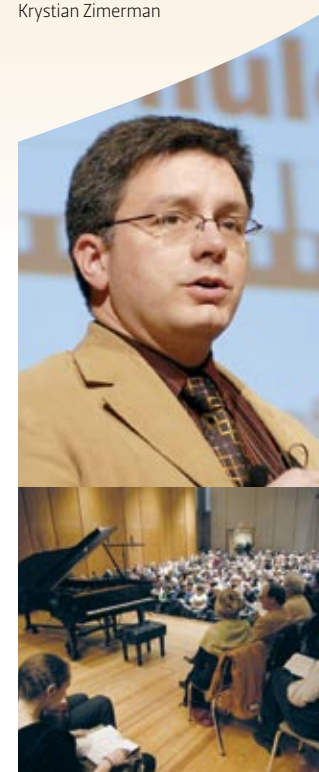


Krystian Zimerman

The University of Michigan Chopin Project

From March 6-April 24, 2007, the piano studio of Professor Arthur Greene performed all of the 129 piano compositions of Fryderyk Chopin in chronological order. The series of concerts, nine in all, drew audiences of more than 300 at each event. Arthur Greene's accomplished team of 17 graduate student performers hail from Belarus, China, Korea, Japan, Northern Ireland, Russia, Taiwan, and the U.S. Professor Greene, a gifted pianist and the winner of many international piano competitions, performed alongside his students. The words of one concertgoer summed up the experience: "For nearly every piece performed in this nine concert series, I have CD recordings performed by the likes of Rubinstein, Ashkenazy and Cherkassky. Yet, I find the experience of listening to live performance unparalleled. Both of my sons are now studying piano under the guidance of one of the performers. I could only envy their good fortunes of working with her. Maybe they don't realize now, but they sure will benefit from these performances tremendously. Love of classical music takes a long time to cultivate. Thank you all for giving us nine magical nights."

Each performance in the series was preceded by a lecture, and the series culminated in a symposium whose participants included Jeffrey Kallberg, author of *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (1998); University of Michigan faculty Mark Clague (musicology & American culture); Nadine Hubbs (musicology & women's studies); and Wayne C. Petty (music theory). Recordings of the complete project will be released on Block M Records, <www.blockmrecords.org>, and information about the series and the symposium may be found at <www-personal.umich.edu/~agreene/chopin.html>.



Top: Mark Clague of U-M's School of Music, Theatre & Dance presented "Celluloid Chopin: the Rhetorics of Chopin's Piano Works in Hollywood Film."
Center: Final Chopin concert, April 14, 2007
Lower: Arthur Greene

“Democratic Revolutions, International Conflict, and Global Citizenship”

President Aleksander Kwaśniewski Visits U-M
October 21–28, 2006

BY WALTER WASACZ

His lecture and question and answer session over, Aleksander Kwaśniewski stood up, buttoned the top button of his suit and waved to the crowd, which numbered an estimated 700 people at the University of Michigan’s Rackham Auditorium. Lines began forming on either side of the stage, as the young people attending the lecture waited patiently to get a closer look at the former president of Poland. But Kwaśniewski did more than that. He invited them on stage for an impromptu autograph and photo session. He talked and laughed with them, asking them where they came from. Many said they were Polish or American, but others told Kwaśniewski they’d come from other parts of Europe and Asia.

The scene on October 25, 2006 helped define an event that was less a formal lecture by one of the key geopolitical players in recent East Central European history than it was a wide-ranging talk that focused on Poland’s place in NATO and the European Union, two



President Aleksander Kwaśniewski talks with Huron High School students after the October 25th lecture.



Left: President Aleksander Kwaśniewski jokes with Anna Grzymala-Busse, associate professor of political science.

Below: Kwaśniewski and Ronald N. Weiser, former Ambassador to Slovakia, prepare for a University of Michigan football game.

milestones reached during his 10 years as the country’s leader. The former president’s personal style was casual, his English speech articulate and filled with entertaining tangents about meetings with presidents Jacques Chirac of France and Vladimir Putin of Russia. He mixed humor with more serious observations about trends toward nationalism in Poland that veer away from reforms required by its membership in the EU. Asked if he would like to have continued influence on the national level in Poland, he answered, “What is a former president to do?” He said he spoke to former U.S. President Bill Clinton about being in this unique position and said they agreed it was “both frustrating and liberating.” During his lecture, Kwaśniewski often used the words “dialogue” and “compromise,” saying they were important “not only in politics but in life.”

While in Ann Arbor, Kwaśniewski also took part in seminars, one in Polish, one in English, with U-M faculty and students. In these smaller sessions, he was equally engaging and in good humor. But Kwaśniewski’s sense of humor did not prevent him from thoughtfully addressing issues ranging from Turkey’s potential candidacy for membership in the EU (he supports it as long as Turkey adheres to all the requirements for women’s and human rights as well as other provisions stipulated by the EU), to Islam’s growing presence in Europe, to the emergence of China’s economic power in the East. He said he took exception to U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s remark that Poland represented the “New Europe” (as Kwaśniewski put it, “Poland is over 1,000 years old—we are not new”), and he urged internal reforms at the United Nations, where “everyone wants to talk, nobody wants to listen.”



Kwasniewski’s visit was sponsored by U-M’s Center for Russian and East European Studies, European Union Center, and Office of the President. Audio files of his lectures are available at: <www.ii.umich.edu/ces-euc>.

The Annual Copernicus Lecture

Krzysztof Czyżewski, “Line of Return: Practicing ‘The Borderland’ in Dialogue with Czesław Miłosz,” March 31, 2007



The Annual Copernicus lecturer Krzysztof Czyżewski with a copy of Czesław Miłosz’s *Utwory Poetyckie*, published in 1976 by Michigan Slavic Publications.



Left: Poet Czesław Miłosz

Below: Director Brian Porter-Szűcs introduces Krzysztof Czyżewski.



Krzysztof Czyżewski defies easy categorization: he has been (often simultaneously) a poet, a social activist, a publisher, an essayist, a teacher, a theatrical performer, and more. None of these labels really work, because he bundles them together in ways that are distinctly his own. In 1990 Czyżewski created The Borderlands Foundation of Arts, Cultures, and Nations, in the small town of Sejny, near the Polish border with Lithuania. Just as it is hard to put a label on Krzysztof Czyżewski, it is similarly difficult to describe the Borderlands Foundation. On the one hand it is a cultural institute, and its associated publishing house has a rich catalogue of books dealing with the multicultural diversity of East-Central Europe. They have released many translations into Polish of Lithuanian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, and Yiddish literature, both contemporary and historical, and they publish a periodical called *Krasnogruda* that is dedicated to preserving and recreating the atmosphere of cultural dialogue and the embrace of diversity that once characterized the ethnically, linguistically, and religiously mixed regions of Eastern Europe. They have also

published material posing difficult and painful questions about that legacy, including works exploring interethnic violence. But the Borderlands Foundation is much more than just a publishing house. It also organizes educational activities, stages theatrical productions, sponsors museum exhibits, sustains a library and an archive, and organizes a wide variety of activities all aimed at promoting Czyżewski’s distinctive understanding of what a “borderland” should be: not a line dividing cultures and people, but a broad space where diversity can flourish and mutual understanding can be promoted. This vision was articulated most succinctly in Czyżewski’s 2001 book, *The Path of the Borderland*, and it is embodied in the day-to-day activities of the Borderlands Foundation both in Poland and, increasingly, around the world. These activities strive to spread the view that diversity is not a problem, not an “issue” that needs to be “resolved.” Diversity is, instead, an opportunity for cultural enrichment, a lens through which we can better perceive and understand each other, and a means towards the establishment of real and lasting peace. Certainly Eastern and Central Europe has long been a particularly rich site for the intermingling of cultures, but the concerns and the opportunities of the borderland extend far beyond that region, ultimately encompassing us all.

The 2007 Copernicus lecture will appear in its entirety in the Fall issue of the *Michigan Quarterly Review*.

Faculty News



Professor of Polish language and literature, Bogdana Chętkowska Carpenter, who retires in December 2008, with a selection of her publications.

Bogdana Chętkowska Carpenter, professor of Polish literature in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, retires from the University of Michigan in December 2007. Since she arrived at U-M in 1983, Professor Carpenter has been teaching courses that span the centuries of Polish literature from the Middle Ages to the present.

It was at Berkeley that she came under the influence of her teacher, Czesław Miłosz, and developed her lifelong dedication to 20th-century Polish poetry. Over the years she has been the authority chosen by many aspiring poets searching validation for their writing; her passion for poetic texts always allowed her to find the time to read just one more manuscript or collection of verse, and to respond with kind comments, opinions, and suggestions. With her husband, John Carpenter, she has translated countless works of poetry and essays by Czesław Miłosz, Zbigniew Herbert, Julia Hartwig and other poets; she has authored numerous scholarly articles and was co-editor of an annotated selection of Miłosz essays, *To Begin Where I Am* (2001). Her first book was *The Poetic Avant-Garde in Poland, 1918-1939* (1983), followed by *Monumenta Polonica, The First Four Centuries of Polish Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology* (1989), which remains a classic compilation. The most recent Carpenter team collaboration is the forthcoming volume *In Praise of the Unfinished*, a translation of the poetry of Julia Hartwig.

A masterful teacher of the Polish language, she energetically helped build the U-M Polish language program into one of the finest in the country. U-M currently offers four years of language training and has incorporated the study of contemporary culture into its new undergraduate concentration program.

Bogdana Carpenter obtained her M.A. in Romance Philology from the University of Warsaw and her Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. She was director of the Copernicus Endowment from 1991-95, and has been a faculty associate of the Center for Russian and East European Studies since her arrival at Michigan in 1983. She has served as chair of the Slavic Department and is an associate in the Program in Comparative Literature. Her service and contributions to these programs and to the College of Literature, Science and the Arts will have a lasting impact on Slavic—and especially Polish studies—for the years to come.

Benjamin Paloff, a specialist in Polish literature, was accepted into the Michigan Society of Fellows beginning in Fall 2007. He will teach four courses over this three-year post-doctoral fellowship and will start a tenure-track appointment in Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature in Fall 2010. Paloff received his Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures from Harvard University in June 2007 and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing and Poetry from the University of Michigan in 2001. Please join us in welcoming him back to Ann Arbor!

Student and Miscellaneous News

The Copernicus Graduate Fellowship was awarded to **Arielle Sokol**, a graduate of the University of Denver who will begin REES M.A. studies in Fall 2007. Copernicus Endowment summer research fellowships for 2007 were awarded to **Wojciech Beltkiewicz** (history), **Alexandra Gerber** (sociology), **Alicja Kusiak-Brownstein** (history), and **Jessica Robbins** (anthropology). **Rachel Enoch** received the Annual Excellence in Polish Language award in April for her overall performance in 1st and 2nd year Polish.

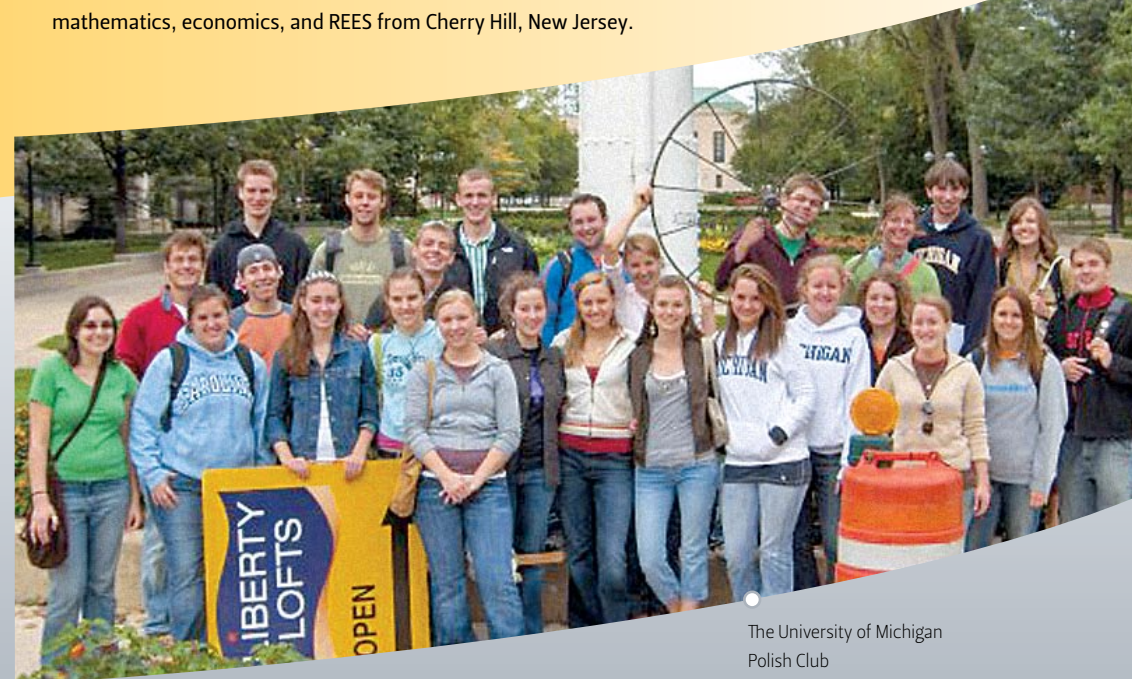
Walter Wasacz is a writer, editor, and photographer based in Hamtramck, Michigan. His subjects include music, art, urbanism, and contemporary society. Wasacz writes a column for Detroit's *Metro Times* and has contributed articles and photos to magazines in the U.S., Canada, and the EU. He also co-founded the sonic/visual art collective, *Paris '68*, which is based in Detroit and Pittsburgh, and lectures on music and popular culture. Wasacz began contributing stories and photos to the University of Michigan's Polish studies program in 2006.

The **14th Annual Polish Film Festival** will be held November 10-11, 2007 in the Michigan Theater. The event is sponsored by the Polish-American Congress, Ann Arbor Chapter, and the the U-M Polish Club.

The **University of Michigan Polish Club** ("UM-Polska") is a student-run organization that promotes Polish culture on campus and to the surrounding region. The Club brings together Polish students, citizens, and their friends by organizing social and cultural events that allow members and friends to interact. The Polish Club participates in the Annual Polish Film Festival and Copernicus Lectures, celebrates Polish holidays, and is planning its own visitor series in 2007-08. The president of the Polish Club is Christopher Sczygiel, a senior majoring in mathematics, economics, and REES from Cherry Hill, New Jersey.



Rachel Enoch, the winner of the Prize for Excellence in the Polish Language, with Michael Makin, professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Piotr Westwalewicz, lecturer in Polish, April 30, 2007



The University of Michigan Polish Club

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The Nicolaus Copernicus Endowment

The Nicolaus Copernicus Endowment was established in 1973 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the great Polish astronomer’s multifaceted genius. Initially created with the cooperation of students, faculty, and the Polish–Americans of Michigan, the Copernicus Endowment is sustained today by the energy and financial assistance of hundreds of individual supporters. The principal goal of the Endowment is to enable faculty appointments, programming, and student fellowships in Polish studies. Income from the Endowment makes the Annual Copernicus Lecture possible, and ensures the continued scheduling of public events dedicated to advancing a deeper understanding of the people, culture, and politics of Poland.

The Amelia Kulesa Konopka Endowment

This fund was established in 2001 by the family of Amelia Kulesa Konopka to improve knowledge of Poland’s culture and history among undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students at the University of Michigan. In 1913 Mrs. Konopka came to the U.S. where she studied her new language and culture. These fellowships memorialize her quest for knowledge and her Polish heritage.

The John J. Świdorski Fund

This fund was established in 1997 for the support of student research and travel abroad. We are grateful to Suzanne Świdorski Gruhl for her generous gift in honor of her father in support of this important fellowship program; we hope to make many John J. Świdorski awards available to worthy students in the coming years.

The Annual Copernicus Lectures

Since 1980, the University of Michigan has hosted prominent political, cultural, and academic figures from Poland as part of the Annual Copernicus Lecture series. Prominent presenters in this series include Leszek Kołakowski, Czesław Miłosz, Stanisław Barańczak, Timothy Garton–Ash, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Adam Michnik, Jacek Kuroń, Krzysztof Penderecki, Henryk Górecki, Krzysztof Zanussi, Ryszard Kapuściński, President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Kora Jackowska, Adam Zagajewski, Zbigniew Libera, Krzysztof Cyżewski, and many more. A complete list is available on the Copernicus website.

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> **Pianist Krystian Zimerman
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See inside for details.