

International Polonaise Ball 1999

COMMEMORATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHOPIN'S DEATH AND HONORING JAPAN A COUNTRY IN LOVE WITH CHOPIN'S MUSIC

Land of Cherry Blossoms – Japan

At the beginning of this Century, imperial Russia suffered in the Far East a series of defeats from Japan - by losing Port Arthur, Mukden and other tactical sites. In Europe, the Poles in their Russian-occupied territories considered Russia their arch enemy. The great anti-Russian Polish political leader, Joseph Pilsudski, during his visit to Tokyo, secured for his paramilitary anti-Russian organization in Austria occupied Poland, substantial help in military equipment and cash equivalent today to \$75 million, as well as the friendship of many high staff and operational generals. Marshall Kawamura was later decorated with Polish Virtuti Militari with fifty other Japanese officers.

After the Russian revolution in 1917, thousands of Polish orphans were stranded in Siberia. They were moved to Manchuria and Charbin, where they were rescued by the Japanese Red Cross. The orphans were transferred to Japan for recuperation and then transported by Japanese ships, free of charge, to Poland and to the United States. The gratitude of those children and their relatives was so immense that each year a reunion was organized by the Japanese Embassy in Warsaw. Between Japanese and Poles, love and incredible ties were sustained.



The Polish American Folk Dance Co. of New York

At the onset of WWII, Japan joined the "Axis Pact" with Hitler and Mussolini, but that did not preclude the Japanese Military Mission in Berlin from helping Poles in occupied Poland to organize transfers of money, documents, correspondence, passports and people in clandestine operations. There, also, the Japanese proved themselves that "a friend in need is a friend indeed."

The Japanese are simply crazy about Frederick Chopin's music. In families who can afford pianos, children begin the long road to mastering Chopin's music in hope of participating in the renowned quinquennial International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw.



Lady Blanka Rosenstiel with Maturiza Taiko Drummers

The Polish world-renowned film director, Andrzej Wajda, won the precious Japanese distinction KIOTO from the Inamori Foundation. He magnanimously donated his prize to build the Japanese Cultural and Technical Museum and Institute, MANGHA, in Krakow, Poland. The project was eventually supported financially by the Japanese Government and thousands of ordinary citizens of Japan. This Japanese pearl has been shining in Krakow since 1994.

How profound and remarkable is the mutual esteem and neighborly love between Poles and Japanese despite differences in culture, religion, race and at such an enormous geographical distance!

THE FREDERIC CHOPIN SOCIETY OF JAPAN

The society was organized in 1960 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of chopin's birthday. Besides the tokyo headquarters, there are at present several active chapters in such towns as Sapporo, Obihiro, Hakodate, Sendai, Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe.

The purpose of the society is to support young pianists and to promote chopin's music by organizing regular concerts, recitals, lectures and seminars. publications of the society include chopin magazine and the "zelazowa wola" newsletter. In addition, the society has initiated a series of concerts of chopin's collected works and holds chopin piano competitions for pupils of schools of music and other young pianists



**Consul General of Japan Ken Shimanouchi , Lady Blanka Rosenstiel ,
Mr. Peter Miyamoto , Minister MiroSlaw Sawicki**