

International Polonaise Ball 2003

THE 31ST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL POLONAISE BALL

The history of Europe has been one of turbulence. Royal dynasties became established, flourished, and vanished, cruel and seemingly endless wars have rolled over the continent, borders have shifted, making atlases obsolete in every century Yet most of the world's cultural achievements have been born in Europe: developments in architecture, science, industry law, technology trade and finance.



Poland's history has been equally turbulent, because Poland has been for the last thousand years a part of Europe. situated in the center of the area between the Atlantic and the Urals, and western in its history and outlook, it has been a bridge between Western and Eastern Europe. Trade routes met and crossed in Poland. Oriental and occidental cultures intermingled.

Poland started to make its position felt in the medieval period. The University at Krakow was one of the earliest significant seats of learning. Polish students also went abroad, enrolling in Italian and German universities, and upon return to their homeland brought new ideas and developments in politics and culture.



In the Golden Age, the union of Poland and Lithuania under the Jagiellonian Dynasty created the largest country in Europe. Polish royal courts became home to many European artists and scholars, whose masterpieces are to be admired in Polish museums and

galleries today.

After Poland's partitions and failed nationalistic uprisings, many Polish intellectuals found refuge in Western Europe. The greatest works of Polish Romanticism were created in France and Italy.

Today the western half of Europe has succeeded in creating a European Union, which will soon be extended to embrace 10 eastern countries, including Poland. The extension reminds US that Europe contains such cultural centers as Krakow, Prague and Budapest. Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and the Baltic States are not foreign areas, and need to be treated as countries naturally belonging to the union of European countries.

Today the European Union consists of 15 countries that grew from an original group of six: Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Italy. Later they were joined by Austria, Denmark, England, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. The EU has a Parliament, a Council of member states, a Commission that is its executive body, and a Court of Justice charged with making European law consistent throughout the Union. Membership requires component countries to make a partial surrender of sovereignty in exchange for the vast benefits of a customs-free common market, free travel and relocation, a common economic policy, and a common currency.

At the present moment, Poland and nine other countries have been approved for admission to the EU. These countries are the Baltic States, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta. The accession of the ten is scheduled to take place on May 1, 2004.

A VERY SPECIAL BRUNCH Sunday, February 9, 2003 11: 00 am - 2:00 pm Starlight Room	GALA DINNER DANCE Saturday, February 8, 2003 7:00 pm Mediterranean Grand Ballroom	THE FORUM ON EUROPEAN UNION Friday, February 7, 2003 at the University of Miami campus
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