

Beauty and Kindness

by Ernesto Fiocchetto

“O azure morning! Bell of air with your warm tongue of dew.”



On November 15, 2019 the Mary Ann Wolfe Theater at the FIU Biscayne Bay Campus treated an enthusiastic audience to a charming stage presentation about the life and poetry of Zbigniew Herbert - *Beauty and Kindness*. The European & Eurasian Studies Program at FIU, in collaboration with The American Institute of Polish Culture, the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Poland, and the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, hosted this theatrical evening which brought many of Herbert's poems to life and was presented in Polish with English subtitles projected onto a screen.

Zbigniew Herbert was one of the best known post-war Polish word artists - a poet, playwright, and essayist. He was born in Lwów, Poland which became Lviv in the Soviet Ukraine after WWII. During the war, Herbert joined the resistance movement against the German occupation. His poetry, marked by direct language and a moral core, was shaped by his experiences under both the German and Soviet dictatorships.

Herbert gained an international reputation upon the publication of his works into 38 languages and was nominated several times for a Nobel Prize in literature. His poetry is intense yet inspiring, with a strong social conscience. His poems explore the deepest and most

personal human emotions, but they also impart a sense of joy and hope, and beauty and kindness.

It is worth noting the emotional, sincere, and heartfelt work of the three starring actors who gave life to Herbert's poetry. They were mother and daughter Maria Nowotarska and Agata Pilitowska, and Krzysztof Jasinski from The Salon of Poetry, Music and Theatre in Toronto, Canada. The beauty of the words and the truth of their performances drew a warm round of applause from members of the audience who were treated to a very special work of art.

A reception provided by the Institute followed the performance, and everyone chatted with the actors, discussed poetry, and posed for photos.



Mrs. Christine Caly-Sanchez, Mr. Krzysztof Jasinski, Mrs. Maria Nowotarska, Lady Blanka, Ms. Agata Pilitowska, Mrs. Beata Paszyc, Nel Velez-Paszyc, Dr. Markus Thiel, Dr. Marzia Lavinia DiPietro