

Program:

Our concert begins with a Polonez composed by Kazimierz Sikorski. Kazimierz Sikorski was a Polish composer, whose life mirrors the Polish struggle for independence. He was born when Poland did not exist on the map of Europe, and lived until 1986, witnessing Poland's struggle for independence during World War 2 and its continuation after the War was over. Kazimierz Sikorski's arrangement of the "Mazurek Dąbrowskiego" is currently used as the Polish national anthem.

Marianna Łacek

Translated by Abbi Latecka

Let's listen to the Polonaise composed by Kazimierz Sikorski

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Andrzej Roman Kurylewicz is another Polish contemporary composer. His works range from serious music, including both chamber and symphonic pieces, to theatrical, film, ballet, and jazz.

He wrote congenial [song cycles](#) set to poems that follow the history of Poland through Polish literature. Beginning with the Renaissance poet [Jan Kochanowski](#), then going through the poetry of the Romantic classics Adam Mickiewicz, [Juliusz Słowacki](#), [Zygmunt Krasiński](#), [Cyprian Kamil Norwid](#), They were all forced to migrate to France in order to escape repercussions for their involvement in the November Uprising in 1830.

Suita Symfoniczna Polskie Drogi, / The Polish Ways is a romantic piece of music that really depicts of the Polish Spirit in the long and uneasy path to independence.

Polskie Drogi - A Kurylewicz

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Poland has always been a country open to others. For example we can recall the Jagiellonian Dynasty. The 15th century began with the marriage of Polish Queen Jadwiga to the Lithuanian heir to the throne Władysław Jagiełło. Almost two centuries of the dynasty ended with the official Union of both countries signed in Lublin in 1569 – known as the famous Unia Lubelska. Even then Poland was a multicultural country. In addition to original Poles, there were Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Germans and large numbers of Jews, who fleeing persecution in many European countries, found their home in Poland. The Polish Jagiellonian University, one of the oldest in Europe, welcomed students from all nations.

And so, I would like us to welcome Hank Zhao, who will perform for us the violin concerto in b-minor composed by German violinist, Oscar Rieding

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As a result of Poland's location in the very centre of Europe, the history of the country is rather complicated. There were many situations when thousands of Poles had to flee their homeland, to find peace and happiness far away. Many settled in Australia, and helped enrich this country's multicultural society. A large wave of migration after the Second World War, in the 1940s and 50s, was then followed a generation later, by another only slightly smaller wave of Poles - the Solidarity migration. Although maintaining their traditions, Poles integrated well into the host nation, enriching it intellectually and culturally.

Olivia Kowalik is an example of this successful cultural mix – Australian by birth, maintaining close spiritual connections with Poland, and appreciating the mix of cultures that this country has to offer.

Olivia will perform Oblivion, composed by Astor Piazzolla an Argentinian musician and composer who revolutionised the traditional tango into a new style termed nuevo tango.

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Now, for the next piece of music we move through our thoughts and spirits to the endless plains of Eastern Europe – that extend from Russia, across Ukraine to Poland. We will be accompanied on this journey by a selection from the Nutcracker Suite by famous Russian composer - Piotr Tchaikovsky.

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One of the greatest Polish composers, Stanisław Moniuszko, lived in the 19th century, when Poland lost her independence for 123 years, after being partitioned by the neighbouring powers of Russia, Prussia and Austria. Yet the Polish spirit did not cease for one moment. Its spirit lived on in literature, in paintings and especially in music. We all know Chopin, but it was also Stanisław Moniuszko, who has made an enormous impact on the world's music. In addition to composing operas like *Straszny Dwór* and *Halka*, Moniuszko gathered many Polish folk songs making them into musical masterpieces. They were the songs originally performed on social gatherings during long Autumn and Winter nights. Songs of the soldiers, who left their sweethearts to join the Napoleonic army, as he promised to bring freedom to Poland. Songs of the girls who remained waiting till the war was over. Now, we will listen to Anita Kyle who will perform for us five Songs by Stanisław Moniuszko

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The last piece of music we will have pleasure to listen to, has been composed by the contemporary Polish musician – Romuald Twardowski. Twardowski is famous for composing several ballets and operas- *Lord Jim*, being one of them. In 1955 he composed an *Oberek*, based on the Polish folk dance. Now, the musicians from Australian multicultural string orchestra *L'armonica* will perform *Oberek* composed by Romuald Twardowski.