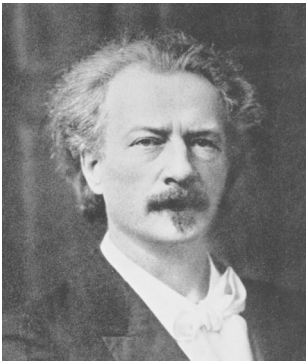


DURBIN, U.S. SENATE MARK 65th ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF IGNACY JAN PADEREWSKI



Washington, DC - U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) announced that the Senate passed a resolution by unanimous consent on June 14, 2006, recognizing the accomplishments of the extremely popular Polish musician, composer, statesman and philanthropist Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941).

Ignacy Jan Paderewski was born in Kurylowka, in Russian partitioned Poland. Educated by tutors, at the age of 12, he entered the Warsaw Conservatory of Music. He graduated in 1878 and was hired there to teach piano. He was befriended by prominent violinist, Wladyslaw Gorski, with whom he teamed up for concert tours. In 1880, Paderewski married Antonina Korsak, also a pianist. Their son, Alfred, was born that year but Ignacy's wife died in childbirth. Ignacy composed a eulogy and immersed himself in musical compositions. In 1882, he went to Berlin to study composition and was encouraged to become a piano virtuoso. Ignacy moved to Vienna in 1886 to study under Teodor Leszetycki. His rapid progress launched his career as a concert pianist. He made a joint appearance with the famous actress Helena Modjeska in Krakow, where they were well received. Ignacy then debuted as a virtuoso in Paris in 1888 and was an instant success.

By 1891, his popularity as a concert pianist was well established in London, so Paderewski made his American debut at Carnegie Hall in New York on November 17, 1891. Over the next 130 days, he gave 109 concerts in his U.S. tour, achieving phenomenal popularity. Paderewski also worked tirelessly to have Poland - which had been partitioned by Russia, Prussia and Austria in the late 1700s and had thus been wiped off the map of Europe - restored as an independent country. He donated the proceeds of his concerts to the Polish cause for freedom and used his friendship with leading statesmen to draw attention to Poland's dilemma. In 1917, he wrote a document about a New Poland, which was delivered to Col. House on Jan. 12, 1917, who in turn gave it to U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. On January 23rd, President Wilson spoke of a "New Poland" saying, "I take it for granted that statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, autonomous Poland." This became Point 13 of Wilson's proclamation, which insured an independent Poland after World War I.

Paderewski was considered an expert on matters connected with Poland. He served as the first Prime Minister of the New Poland. At the end of WWI, the Big Four (Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Orlando) unanimously expressed their opinion of Paderewski as the Polish Prime Minister in a joint letter signed by them: "No country could wish for a better advocate."

By 1920, Paderewski had resigned his post and returned to his music, giving concert tours in Europe and the US. Even though Paderewski aspired to be a great composer and considered it his most enjoyable pursuit, he had little time to devote to it. He composed several dozen works: 2 operas, a symphony, 2 piano orchestral pieces, a violin and piano sonata, several songs and numerous pieces for the piano. His most inventive piano works are Sonata, Op. 21 and Variations and Fugue, Op. 23. Two popular piano pieces are the Cracovienne Fantastique and Chants du Voyageur, Op. 8. He also composed the famous Minuet in G.

When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, President Franklin Delanor Roosevelt invited Ignacy to come to the U.S. For years, Paderewski had donated much of his earnings to charitable causes and established the American Legion's Orphans and Veterans Fund. Although he had retired from the stage, he began giving concerts again to raise money to assist war-torn Poland.

Paderewski died suddenly in New York City on June 29, 1941. He lie in state in St. Patrick's Cathedral, then his body was conveyed on a gun carriage pulled by 8 horses to Pennsylvania Station where it was sent by special train to Washington, D.C. By an act of Congress, he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. By his own stipulation, his remains were not to be transferred to Poland "until the country is free and independent." His heart, however, was enshrined in the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA in 1986.

Durbin said, "That shows the respect and admiration that America has for Paderewski. He embodies the democratic spirit and I'm proud to be an original co-sponsor of this resolution."

Fifty-one years passed before Paderewski could be laid to rest in a free Poland. On July 5, 1992, his remains were re-interred in the crypt of Warsaw's St. John's Cathedral. US President George Bush and President Lech Walesa of Poland participated in the ceremony.

With the 65th anniversary of Paderewski's death having occurred on June 29, 2006, the U.S. Senate acknowledged Paderewski's role in forging close ties between Poland and the U.S. This resolution also calls Poland an ally and a strong partner in the war against global terrorism.

- This article appears courtesy of Polish Museum of America.

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