



UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Skalny Center

FOR POLISH & CENTRAL EUROPEAN STUDIES

Distinguished Guest

At the Polish Film Festival



By Krzysztof Polakowski

Mr. Filip Bajon, one of Poland's leading film directors, recently presented his last film *Przedwiosnie* (*Flame of the Spring*) at the Polish Film Festival in Rochester's Little Theatre. Considered one of the most influential figures in contemporary Polish cinematography, his first production film, *Powrot* (*The Return*) 1977 won a Gold Camera award in 1977. His first international success came two years later with the film *Ariadla Atlety* (*Aria for the Athlete*). That movie was showered with

awards making Bajon's name known the world over. Since then, Filip Bajon met great success with other films, including *Clinch* (1979); *Wahadelko* (*Pendulum*), 1981; *Magnat* (*The Magnate*), 1986; and *Une petite ville tranquille* (*Small quiet town*), 1991.

Filip Bajon is also a recognized writer, receiving a prestigious Wilhelm Mach literary award for his novel, *Biale niedzwiedzie nie lubia, slonecznej pogody* (*White Bears do not Like Sunny Weather*). Having an accomplished artist of Bajon's caliber was a wonderful honor for the city of Rochester.

The Polish Heritage Society of Rochester and the Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies invited Bajon to present his film *Przedwiosnie* at the Little Theatre on East Avenue on Sunday, October 28. In addition to hearing his formal remarks, the Skalny Center faculty and Friends of the Center also had the opportunity to speak with Bajon informally throughout the weekend of his visit.

Bajon based *Przedwiosnie* on a well known novel by Stefan Zeromski, which essentially emphasized the main character's (Cesary Baryka), struggle with new, revolutionary ideas and the future of Poland following its independence after WWI. In his short presentation before the screening, Filip Bajon described the difficulty associated with transferring the novel to the screen. The most challenging aspect, perhaps, was meeting the expect-

ations of Polish audiences who are well versed and appreciative of Zeromski's unmistakable literary style, a style impossible to portray in the medium of film.

Also, as Mr. Bajon himself noted in different conversations with Skalny Friends and faculty, the reception of *Przedwiosnie* varies according to the audience. Many Poles, who either read the original novel, or experienced life under the harsh Bolshevik political regime, find the movie an inadequate representation of both. Others may find it hard to accept the main character's philosophical captivation with Bolshevism. Americans, who have not read the novel, nor experienced Bolshevik rule, are far less critical of the film's romantic portrayal. In one of our many illuminating conversations with him, Bajon told us that when watching the film with Polish audiences, he feels the film is not political enough. In contrast, he remarked that when viewing it with American audiences, he felt the film was *only* about politics.

Rochester's Polish Community was very pleased and honored to have an opportunity to meet Filip Bajon. His visit was a part of cultural events sponsored by the Louis Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies at the University of Rochester.

Filip Bajon



SPRING

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October 12
Great Day for the Center

October 12 Great Day for the Center

By Kathleen Parthé

The Cavalier Cross of Merit

Director Ewa Hauser introduced Agnieszka Magdziak-Miszewska, the Consul General of the Republic of Poland, and Dr. Boguslaw Winid, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Polish Embassy in Washington, DC. The Consul General presented a Cavalier Cross of Merit (Kryz Kawalerski Orderu Zaslugi RP), one of Poland's most significant honors, to Joseph, Anna, Stasia, and Frederic Skalny in recognition of all that they have done through the Louis Skalny Foundation to advance knowledge about their homeland and to enable so many people to enjoy its cultural riches. Joseph Skalny spoke on the family's behalf in expressing his gratitude for the awards.



The four recipients of the Cavalier Cross of Merit: Joseph, Stasia, Anna, and Frederic Skalny.

After the festivities surrounding the dedication and the awards ceremony, guests reassembled in the Palestra for a panel discussion moderated by Professor Randall Stone. This event brought together former UN Ambassador Dr. Jeane Kirkpatrick, Deputy Chief of Mission Winid, and Grzegorz Kolodko (former Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Poland, and John C. Evans Visiting Professor at the University of Rochester). The session drew an audience of 600 people who were treated to a lively 75-minute exchange of opinion and insight on key questions about the expansion of political and economic freedom in Poland and other areas of Central and Eastern Europe. The quality of the speakers and the size of the audience underscore the impact that the Skalny and Klimasewski gifts have had on the university. Polish and Central European Studies were not only a crucial aspect of Meliora Weekend 2001, but are a shining example of the University of Rochester's mission of "Meliora," always striving to make this the best institution it can be.



When I agreed to become Acting Director of the Skalny Center for 2001-2002, I had no idea of what an exciting year it would be, but I was very happy that Director Ewa Hauser would be pursuing a prestigious Fulbright program in Warsaw, and that History graduate student Mara Kozelsky would be assisting me. From late August until mid-October we focused on making sure that the new offices were ready in time for the Meliora Weekend dedication, which would include an awards ceremony and a panel discussion. During the weeks leading up to this day, Mara and I were involved in everything from deciding about rugs, furniture, art work, and movers, to making arrangements for visiting dignitaries, but with the help of the College Deans Office, Fairbank Alumni House, Public Relations, Pam Ferguson (Administrator, Political Science Department), Ovide Corriveau (Senior Operations Officer in the College), Paul Spaulding (Project Manager, University Facilities and Services), the construction crew, and a host of others, it all came together by the appointed day.



The reception area of the new office suite in Harkness Hall. There are five faculty offices and a seminar room.

Before the reception began at 1:30 on October 12, the assembled guests were able to tour the new facilities. For those of you who haven't yet had a chance to stop by 101 Harkness Hall, the suite consists of a large and welcoming reception area, a seminar room, and five faculty offices. Those who had seen what this area looked like prior to the renovation

Boguslaw Winid congratulates Robert Klimasewski

were truly amazed at the transformation that took place in so short a time. Through the generosity of Robert and Jill Klimasewski and Bob's 35th Reunion gift, this is now one of the most attractive program spaces on the entire River Campus, and a worthy setting for the Skalny Center. As in any new home, a few details remain to be taken care of: the College will be sprucing up the hallway outside the Center, and we will be adding display cases and other improvements. The reception was held in a large neighboring classroom which was itself magically transformed with flowers, live music by a classical guitarist, and elegant refreshments, and by a 150 guests from



Karolina Zareba (senior and tutor in the language classes), Kalina Popova (winner of the Klimasewski Dissertation Award), and Justyna Witczak (senior, President of the Polish Club, and assistant in the Center).

the local Polish community, the University, and the diplomatic corps. In honor of the day, I revived my long-dormant Polish language skills, and after welcoming guests with a short speech in Polish, I introduced Dean of the College William Scott Green, who, more than anyone else at the University of Rochester, is responsible for the establishment and rapid growth of this center.

Dean Green recounted the history of the enterprise from the time it was an interesting idea to the present day where we have strong ties to the community through the Lecture and Artists Series and the annual film festival, an exchange agreement with Jagiellonian University, and an increasing number of enthusiastic students for language, culture, and political science courses in the College and on summer and semester programs in Poland. Before helping to unveil the plaques that will be prominently displayed in the new Center, Dean Green paid tribute to the generosity and foresight of the Skalny and Klimasewski families. Looking to the future, the dean noted that thanks to their support, the stage is set for further development of this already impressive program.



The Emerging Democracies Panel



Grzegorz Kolodko, Boguslaw Winid, Agnieszka Miszewska

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William Scott Green and Boguslaw Winid



Joseph Skalny speaks on behalf of the Louis Skalny Foundation. Seated: Jill and Robert Klimasewski, Kathleen Parth

October 12 Great Day for the Center



Other Center Activities



Consul General Miszewska presents an award to Stasia Skalny

This fall saw a variety of other events organized and sponsored by the Skalny Center. The Polish Film Festival brought Director Filip Bajon to Rochester for a discussion and showing of his film *ÒThe Spring to Come (ÒPrzedwiosnieÓ)* and a reception courtesy of Rochester's Polish

More Honors for Friends of the Skalny Center

¶ **Randall Stone** of the UR's Political Science Department and a member of the Center's Academic Council, was recently awarded unlimited tenure at the University and promoted to Associate Professor. Stone is an expert on the politics and economics of Eastern Europe and the former USSR. His latest book, *Lending Credibility: The International Monetary Fund and the Post-Communist Transformation*, will appear during the first half of 2002.

¶ **Heathra King**, a University of Rochester senior who has studied Polish both here and in Krakow, received an award in the Study Abroad Essay Contest conducted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures.

¶ **Jacqueline Levine**, Assistant Dean and Director of the UR's Study Abroad Program, and a long-time friend of the Skalny Center, was given the Professional Development Award by the Institute for the International Education of Students. The ceremony took place at the Institute's annual conference in Chicago.

Heritage Society, our partner in so many endeavors. Philosopher and dissident Svetozar Stojanovic spoke at our luncheon lecture series on November 6 about the situation in Serbia one year after the ousting of Milosevic (this talk was co-sponsored by the Russian Studies Program, of which I am the Director). Greg Kolodko presented his latest work on globalization and Poland's economic future to a large audience at our November 27th luncheon. On Sunday December 2, Kolodko and Randy Stone appeared on the television interview program *ÒPerfectly Clear,Ó* which began with a conversation with Ambassador Kirkpatrick taped during Meliora Weekend. And on December 5, we welcomed back

but we want to bring to your attention two events. On Tuesday, February 6, Kosciuszko Visiting Professor Wieslaw Krajka will continue our 2002-2 luncheon lecture series with a talk on the writer Josef Konrad, the subject of his 7-week course at the university. And we are delighted to announce that in conjunction with the Polish Heritage Society, we will bring the famed Penderecki Quartet to Kilbourn Hall on Sunday, March 17, at 3:00 pm. The concert will be followed by a reception to which all concert-goers are welcome. Several other lectures are in the works and as soon as we have additional information we will send it out to all of you.



Stasia Skalny and Dean Green unveil a plaque thanking the Skalny Foundation, while Frederic Skalny and Ewa Hauser look on.

Adam Urbanski (Vice-President of the Polish-American press in the years after World War I, when Poland had been reconstituted and America was becoming wary of foreign entanglements and continued waves of emigration. The fall also featured a variety of courses taught by Professors Kolodko, Stone, and Dr. Krzysztof Polakowski, and the revival of our Polish Club, led by UR senior (and our invaluable student assistant) Justyna Witzak.

Our spring schedule is still being final-



Mary Ann Skalny, Ewa Hauser, Stasia Skalny, Agnieszka Miszewska, Anna Skalny

Ewa K. Hauser



The Skalny Center's Director, Dr. Ewa K. Hauser, is on leave for the 2001-2002 academic year. She is a senior Fulbright Fellow and is teaching at the University of Warsaw...

The Fulbright scholars' orientation meeting was held on December 14, and attended by Christopher Hill, US Ambassador to Poland. Even in Warsaw we felt the effects of September 11, as the Fulbright office had removed an identifying sign from its Nowy Swiat 4 office for security reasons. At noon on the 14th, we broke for a somber remembrance in front of the Embassy. People stood still on the streets, cars sounded their horns, and the city stopped. The Ambassador, visibly moved, thanked the Poles for their outpouring of support. He also assured us that despite the attacks on America, there would be no change in any of the US-sponsored international programs and the Fulbright academic exchange would go on.

On October 1, the academic year in Poland commences with a long ceremony in my alma mater's main hall, the "Auditorium Maximumum". With US Embassy representatives on my left, I faced the Warsaw University Senate and the Rectors in their full regalia, along with cabinet ministers from the Presidential Palace and other guests, as students crowded the gallery. The last time I was in this room was in 1989, when the Citizens' Committee (Komitet Obywatelski) was constituted here following the euphoria of Solidarity's first electoral victory over the Communists.

I also remembered the last philosophy lectures given here by Professor Bronislaw Baczko. He was later dismissed from the University during the darkest hours of the Communist-led anti-Semitic campaign. I once slept in this room during a student occupation, part of a strike protesting these policies and demanding democratization and academic and political freedom. My recollections were interrupted by speeches, as at the end of the ceremony, my thesis advisor, Professor Zofia Szyfelbein-Sokolewicz received a presidential award of merit. I was very happy to witness this event. I found myself counting the handful of women among the robed senators, with not one in the presidium, although more than half the students are women. Among the handful of women senators is Agnieszka Graff, the youngest member of the Senate and a member of my new department. Graff is a literary critic and an American-educated feminist. Clearly there is hope and promise for further democratic changes and the inclusion of women.

Ten years ago I had a chance to spend a year in Warsaw, and the changes that have occurred since then are truly astounding. Some things didn't change: there are still wonderful parks, museums, and monuments. There are actually more monuments now of writers and heroes like Joseph Pilsudski, as Poland reclaims its past. The changes are all for the better, with hundreds of street cafes and wonderful restaurants. On every block you can find take-out places not just with pierogi, but also offering Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, and Middle-Eastern food.

The premier Polish university is also changing, with its brand new library featuring an ultra-modern



Greetings from Warsaw

- even post-modern - metallic green facade. Ten years ago, a proposal to transfer the Communist Party headquarters to the University of Warsaw to use as a library was rejected, and the old Party building now houses the Warsaw Stock Exchange. The most interesting changes are in the curriculum, with a brand new department of Gender Studies, as well as numerous centers granting degrees in previously unheard-of disciplines, such as American Studies and European Studies. Unlike inter-disciplinary programs in the US, these programs function as departments with their own faculty lines.

I am teaching in the best program in American Studies in Poland. Housed in the former Party school, the American Studies Department has some 20 faculty members, most trained in the US. The department is under the patronage of the US Embassy, and received the Embassy's library of American books. I met the US Ambassador a second time in November when he came to talk to the faculty and students about US military efforts to combat terrorism. At this meeting, some of the younger faculty and students asked the US diplomats some difficult questions about the war, which the Ambassador only half-jokingly called "hostile."

The American Studies faculty are specialists in international relations and US foreign policy as well as US history, and in American literature and literary criticism. We have weekly seminars to discuss members' current research. Topics range from traditional issues of regionalism and domestic and foreign policy to African-American literature and the latest literary theory. I will be presenting a seminar on the American view of Polish feminism. These meetings last many hours on Friday mornings with very lively discussion - it is really quite impressive.

But most impressive are the students and their enthusiasm and curiosity about American culture and politics. Even though Polish is my native language, Director Lewicki suggested that I teach in English like most of the center's faculty. The students are well prepared and it is easy to encourage them to participate so the classes are mostly seminars with lots of discussion. On Mondays, students come to my apartment in the center of Warsaw and we watch Hollywood films on my large-screen television. They bring pastries and I provide the tea. They ask me about American students' interest in Poland and are happy to hear that UR students are learning about their history and their regional and national concerns.

Beside my Fulbright teaching, I have already participated in two conferences organized by the US Fulbright Commission. In Lodz I spoke about "American Culture in the Era of Globalization." At a day-long symposium for Polish University administrators, held in the Warsaw Library exhibition hall, I was asked to give the main presentation on the "Perspectives of Future Polish-US Academic Collaboration." In preparing for the talk I interviewed people from various disciplines, mainly "pure" scientists - physicists, microbiologists, and mathematicians - learning, among other things, about the University of Rochester's role in the development of such fields as quantum physics, and about how joint projects are funded. I spoke about the current impasse in collaboration, which is partly due to new and anticipated opportunities for collaboration with other European countries. Polish scientists prefer the American connection: it offers more possibilities and less bureaucracy, and draws on a long and distinguished history of contact between the two nations. Andrzej Rabczenko, the former Scientific Attaché to the Polish Embassy in Washington told me that "there are so many Polish academicians at universities in the US, that if we gathered them together, we could easily open an entire university with most of the disciplines well represented." It was Dr. Rabczenko who in 1997, in the name of the Polish Ambassador, brought the Amicus Polonia medal for Dean William Scott Green in honor of his contribution to Polish-American exchanges.

With the support of the Dean's Office, I was able to travel to Rochester in October for the opening of the Skalny Center's new suite of offices - the beautiful result of a gift from Robert and Jill Klimasewski - and for the awarding by the Consul General of Polish government medals to Joseph, Anna, Stasia, and Frederic Skalny. I am thankful to Professor Kathleen Parth for leading the center with the help of graduate student Mara Kozelsky, and to Dr. Krzysztof Polakowski for our expanding our Polish language instruction, and to everyone who has helped with the Skalny Lecture Series.

In November I had the pleasure of assisting Dean Green in his meetings at Jagiellonian University and in interviewing candidates to teach during the 2002-3 academic year. He gave an excellent lecture to administrators in the Renaissance Senate Room in Collegium Novum, and then met with Rektor Franciszek Ziejka and Vice Rektor Maria Nowakowska to discuss changes in the Agreement between the two universities, including the introduction of short-term teaching visits by scholars from each institution. Dean Andrzej Mania invited Dean Green to come to JU to give a series of lectures. In the evening, the Rektor gave a dinner and reception in honor of Dean Green. My daughter Marta, who has been studying at JU's European Studies Center, was also included in this memorable event.

In my talks with various Polish university administrators I was surprised at their reluctance to send their students for a semester or year in America. The problem is that many of these students wind up staying in the States. I explained to the administrators that my own daughter Marta was trying to decide whether to continue at Jagiellonian or go back to her American college, which surprised my Polish counterparts. The world is getting smaller, and this is very good.

A Prague Spring...or Fall

By Marc Weinstein



My experience at Charles University was a wonderful one on many levels. Prague is a remarkable beautiful city, only bested by St. Petersburg during the White Nights. Unfortunately the word has gotten out and the Czech capital is overrun by tourists during the warmer months, but even during the winter and spring, it is full of life, especially on weekends.

The young American tourists were actually very polite, and having a large English-speaking community came in handy at times, like when I felt like taking in a Premier League football match or a jazz or blues show. I used the summertime crowding in the Old Town as an incentive to explore other areas of the city, which really deepened my appreciation of Prague. It was possible to walk down quiet side streets,

shop at small fruit and vegetable shops and delicatessens, and dine inexpensively in traditional restaurants and pubs, all only a short tram ride from Wenceslas Square. I also traveled to other parts of the country, like the wonderful old town of Ceske Budejovice [see photo]. It was when I wandered off the beaten path that I had my most interesting experiences.

The highlight was when an elderly Czech man joined me for dinner and we ended up having a long conversation. He turned out to be a member of the generation that grew up in the 1930s idolizing America, a generation I had read about but never met. He began the conversation by naming all fifty states and later sang show tunes from Broadway musicals. Another trick I discovered was to take late

evening walks, after the tourists had gone to bed. Charles Bridge, barely navigable during the day, is calm and peaceful - and no less beautiful - at night. I learned a great deal about Czech language, culture, and European Union during the day. After class and on weekends I learned how to explore one of Europe's great cities.

My Time in the Golden City



Jacqueline Levine, Assistant Dean and Director of the Center for Study Abroad and Interdepartmental Programs in the College, reports that a number of UR students are choosing Central Europe for a study abroad semester. Along with Krakow and Warsaw, our undergraduates have travelled to Budapest and Prague, cities of great historical and cultural importance as well as vibrant centers of the new Europe. Last spring, four students enrolled in the CIEE (Council for International Educational Exchange) program at Charles University in Prague: Anne Geddes, Jarlath McGuckin (after a fall CIEE semester in St. Petersburg, Russia), Marissa Schultz, and Marc Weinstein. Marc describes his own Prague spring below. He took courses in Czech literature and language, as well as in the politics and economics of East Central Europe and the European Union. Marc (class of 2002) is a double major in Economics and Russian Studies and a member of the Skalny Center's Polish Club.

Adam Urbanski's Lecture at the University of Rochester



On December 5th, Adam Urbanski presented an evening lecture, "*Americanism and the Polish-American Press, 1916-1925.*" The lecture described, among other things, the period of rapid growth and

intense activity of the Polish-American press during the years surrounding US involvement in WWI. The Polish-American press, according to Dr. Urbanski, enabled Poles to preserve their ties to Poland and to retain their cultural heritage while adopting an American identity. Dr. Urbanski delivered his highly engaging lecture to an intimate audience composed of faculty, students and members of the community. A lively discussion followed his presentation, revealing the relevance of Polish-American history for promoting the unity of the Polish American community and understanding the challenges to that unity. Urbanski based his lecture on his doctoral dissertation for the University of Rochester's Department of History, which is currently in revision for publication through UR Press.

Celebrated Quartet to Visit Rochester

The Skalny Lecture and Artist Series will present the Penderecki String Quartet, one of the world's most celebrated chamber ensembles, on March 17.

The quartet takes its name from the famous Polish composer known for his experimentation and neo-Romanticism. Krzysztof Penderecki urged the group to form in 1986 and together they have produced the authoritative interpretation of his complete works for string quartet. In the years since, the quartet has released more than a dozen recordings and works regularly on commissions from contemporary composers.

Though founded in Poland, the Penderecki String Quartet travels the world—from international music festivals in Poland and Venezuela to concert dates across the United States and Canada. The quartet lives and teaches in Canada and has become a premier artistic resource as students are drawn for chamber music and studio instruction to Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario.

Reviews of the quartet's concerts applaud the precision and faithfulness the group brings to its music as well as the excitement and energy captured in its performances.

The Penderecki String Quartet will play at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 17, in Kilbourn Hall of the Eastman School of Music, 26



Gibbs St., in downtown Rochester. Ticket prices range from \$5 to \$15. All concert-goers are invited to a post-performance reception sponsored by the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester in the Cominsky Promenade. Beginning Jan. 15, tickets will go on sale.

They can be purchased at the Ticket Express box office at 1000 East Ave. for face value. Tickets also can be ordered by telephone through Ticketmaster at (585) 232-1900 or Ticket Express at (585) 222-5000 for an additional fee.

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