

## OGINSKI Male CHOIR



PICTURE TAKEN by Grzegorz Worwa  
after the mass for LI Polonia at Saint Agnes' Cathedral on Long Island, in January 2014

### **Oginski Male Choir**

features a repertoire of patriotic, religious, folk and lyrical art songs.  
The Choir is a non for profit organization and performs by invitation.  
Music Director: Malgorzata Strzelecka, tel. 631– 889-1093

### **Membership** in the Choir

is open to boys and men who love to sing and are interested in Polish culture.

**The rehearsals** are held Wednesdays from 7 to 9 PM.  
at the Polish National Club, 329 Peninsula Blvd., Hempstead, NY 11550,

To contact us, please call: 516 - 822-0358 ; 516– 205-5378

**! Zapraszamy do chóru mężczyzn, którzy lubią śpiewać !**

The Choir's origin began in Europe.

It was formed in the fall of 1945, in the Wildflecken Camp in northern Bavaria, Germany. Former POW's, slave workers and concentration camps survivors were all gathered there. Originally the chorus had over 100 singers; men and women. Their concerts and theatrical performances uplifted the spirits of those who went through the horrors of WW II. Towards the end of war, in Yalta, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the treaty with Stalin. They agreed that Poland, their ally, would fall under Russian control. Additionally, they allowed Russia to take over half of Polish territory for Stalin's promise of help in the war against Japan. Many singers lost their homes (there were now in Russian territory), while others were afraid to return to their homeland that was ruled by a regime established by Russians. The singers (and most other camp inhabitants) sought ways to immigrate but it was not easy - no western country wanted to accept these so-called displaced persons. New Zealand was the initial country to accept a small group of women only, followed by Australia, Canada and Argentina.

In 1949, forty men received a permit to settle on Long Island, thanks to Captain Feliks Ciejko (one of the singer's who had relatives in the USA) together with sponsors Benjamin Rogozenski, Lemont family and attorney Henry Kalinowski. A month after they came, rehearsals began at the Polish Museum in Port Washington. Their first Music Director was Peter Gorecki, former POW, like the singers. The choir joined the Polish Singers Alliance of America (PSAA est. 1894) and chose Prince Michal Kleofas Oginski (1765-1833) as their patron. He was a Polish patriot, politician (member of Parliament which passed the Constitution of May 3, the first in Europe, just two years after the American constitution), soldier (participated in the Kosciuszko Insurrection), emigrant, and musician. Oginski's polonaise *Pozegnanie Ojczyzny* (Farewell to the Fatherland) became the Choir's theme song.

The rehearsals were moved to the Polish National Club in Hempstead and the legendary Dr. Antoni Kazmierczak took over. He also served as the General Music Director of the PSAA for 27 years. During his 38-year tenure (1952-1990) for which he refused to be compensated, the Choir grew in popularity, new singers joined, including soldiers from General Anders' army, most of them former Siberian exiles. The forty performances each year included appearances at the prestigious Carnegie Hall, the Academy of Music in Philadelphia and in Brooklyn, as well as recordings for radio and TV. The choir also performed for famous individuals included Generals Anders, Bor-Komorowski, Haller, Sosnkowski, and also Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, Archbishop Jozef Zycinski. In addition, the choir sang with Jan Kiepusza and folk group Mazowsze.

During the years 1990-97, Wojciech Tyrowicz, an alumnus of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and New York University served as the choir's conductor.

The next Music Director, Dr Barbara Miluk-Kolasa, an alumnus of the Academy of Music in Lodz and the University of Cincinnati. In March 2005, thanks to her initiative the Choir sang in Rome for John Paul II and recorded a CD especially for him. The Choir under her guidance won (for the second time in their history) the prestigious Cardinal Hlond trophy, the highest award given by the PSAA during the PSAA Convention in Albany, in 2007.

In 2008-9 the choir was conducted by Adam Sulicz. His work was continued by Bogna McGarrigle, from 2009-2011. Since 2011, Malgorzata Strzelecka has been the Choir's Music Director.