



ARTSBEAT... and Culture

by Staś Kmiec



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Polish Stars Shine at the Met Opera

The Metropolitan Opera unveiled its new production of Massenet's romantically tragic opera *Manon* on March 26 with nuanced and magnificently sung performances by Polish tenor Piotr Beczala, Polish-Brazilian baritone Paulo Szot, and Russian-born soprano Anna Netrebko in the title role.



Choosing wealth over love, the young coquette with a fatal weakness for pleasure and riches finally realizes the folly of her ways. Despite its tragic story, the opera is full of French charm and vitality – typified by the ambitious *Manon* herself. Her plight is a subtle play of innocence and calculation of character. The

score contains sparkling arias, dynamic ensembles, emotional and rapid mood shifts and is delivered with perfect dramatic timing.

Netrebko, who is renowned as a contemporary interpreter of this role, has meticulously embodied the progression of her character in movement, look and voice transforming from a precocious girl of 16 to a rich man's sophisticated mistress, who eventually ends up impoverished and imprisoned. She tackles the demands of the score alternately with drive, subtlety, and mesmerizing bravura.

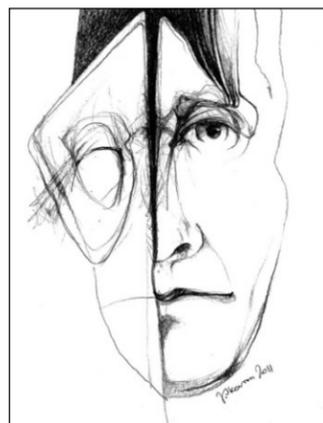
Manon's first love, Chevalier des Grieux – whom she abandons and then wins back, is played in a tempered, layered and passionate performance by Beczala. His tenor is powerful, bright, and delicately emotional as in Act II's "Le Rêve."

Szot gives *Manon's* cousin, Lescaut an entertaining component that is not often found in this role. He commands the stage and his Act 3 centerpiece is an engaging tour de force.

The opera is presented both as period and contemporary drama; the costumes are exquisite and the unappealing sets seemed to grow acceptance as the story progresses. In today's opera productions, the traditional ballet component is often overlooked or discarded. Dancing inventive choreography by Lionel Hoche *en pointe*, the 16 dancer *corps de ballets* of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet – evoked a Degas period style with black velvet chokers and full length tutus and were a welcome relief to the intensity of this 4-hour opera. The stage direction by Laurent Pelly was precise and utilized fluid stage movement and composition within the vocal contingent.

Audiences across the nation can see the Met's new *Manon* on April 7 when the matinee will be transmitted live to more than 1,700 movie theaters around the world as part of the Met: Live in HD series, as well as broadcast live via the Toll Brothers–Metropolitan Opera International Radio Network. Subsequent stage performances will be on April 11/14/17/20/23 and 28.

Art Exhibit by Janusz Skowron



Janusz Skowron Sketches – new paintings and drawings will be on display April 1-30 at the Starbucks Gallery – 910 Manhattan Ave, Greenpoint-Brooklyn, New York.

Born in Poland, Skowron studied Fine Arts at the University of UMCS in Lublin. Since 1989 Janusz has been living and working in New York City. He is a member of the international multimedia art group "Emotionalism" and took part in more than a two hundred exhibitions, displaying his works in Poland, Hungary, USA, South Korea, China, France, Denmark, and Germany.

A Global Approach To The Arts

By Anna S.

Have you ever wished that there would be a magazine that encompassed all art forms, highlighting renowned and undiscovered artists from around the globe without solitary emphasis on New York City?

Well, look no further. Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Olga Zapisek, has created GALO Magazine, an online weekly, in which global arts and artists are the main focus. In fact, the trademarked magazine acronym title itself stands for "Global Art Laid Out" further portraying the magazine's mission of bringing global art closer to both an American as well as an international audience.

GALO's content is knowledgeable and sophisticated, spanning from features, reviews, profiles, and even Q&A's on art, music, theatre, fashion, photography, and film as well as numerous other sections inclusive of travel and food. The magazine even has an "expressions" section that showcases the artistic side of photojournalism, telling stories through photographs and multimedia, much like the photo essays found on Magnum Photos. In recent weeks, GALO has featured profiles and exclusive interviews with renowned figures such as musician Kevin Gordon, who just released his album "Gloryland," the founder of the exclusive boutique stylehaus, Lion Shirdan, the Spanish band Canteca de Macao, 3-D pavement artist Kurt Wenner, Polish filmmaker Lech Majewski, and Polish Hollywood dialect coach, Aleksandra Kaniak, among others. But besides highlighting those that are already in the limelight, GALO also gives room to those who are just starting out in the artistic world or are unknown in certain areas of the world.

"I wanted to make a magazine that would provide the reader with both realms of the artistic world, giving readers a chance to further discover those whose names they already might know, as well as introduce the art of those who are starting out, or might only be known in one area of the world. Moreover, I specifically wanted to introduce Polish art to American readers, being Polish myself, since, in my opinion, in large part it is overlooked by the media here," Ms. Zapisek said.

"We even have a new section called "One of Us" which focuses on regular people making a difference in the art world," she added.

Aimed at curious and imaginative readers as said in the magazine's mission statement, the magazine doesn't fall short on its promise of balance as it delivers the perfect combination of articles focused on the arts scene specifically in New York, America, Europe and Poland, as well as the rest of the world. In addition, it aspires to the highest of journalism standards and ethics.

(PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 41)

By Ewa Bronowicz

Polish In America: A Profile



Dear Readers of the Post Eagle: this is a new column especially for you! Every two months, I will present to you a Polish person living in the United States. They may be famous, infamous or virtually unknown—but they must have an interesting story to tell. If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact me via my website: www.literatka-nyc.com. Enjoy!

A Woman With Many Monodramas

Wioleta Komar never thought of acting while she was growing up in Poland. "I didn't have teachers who inspired me, the way some people do," she says, with a hint of regret in her voice. She still had no idea what she wanted to do with her life when, during her second year at university in Slupsk (she majored in Resocialization), she heard the word "theater." It sounded interesting, different, powerful. She decided to go to the local theater, Teatr Rondo, and knock on the door. She did—knock, and the door opened. That was twelve years ago, and Komar hasn't left theater ever since. It became her home. She recited poetry and performed monodramas; she started her own theater group and travelled around the world with the monodramas. She won dozens of awards for acting, reciting poetry, and theater directing. When she heard about the United Solo Theater Festival in New York City, an annual festival featuring plays from different parts of the world, she immediately applied, and got accepted. "I felt that I'd accomplished a lot in Poland by then, and I wanted a new challenge," she said about coming to New York.

"DIVA," written especially for Komar, was a success. Komar received Best Actress award at the United Solo Theater Festival. "DIVA" is a one-woman show about Nora Sedler, a Holocaust survivor and an artist. Komar presents her tragic story both powerfully and intimately. "My favorite role so far, most mature, and most demanding," Komar says. She is also hoping to perform "DIVA" again in New York. Asked about her dream role, she says she's never had one. **"I am interested in complicated**



Photo by Jarry Zalez

characters, but they are all complicated, because why make a movie or a play if they are not?" she explains. In general, she is interested in outcasts, "people living on the margins of society who find themselves in mega-critical situations."

Komar, who is currently a student at the NYFA (she is simultaneously pursuing a PhD in Theater from the University of Gdansk), says that she loves New York City but has yet to find "her own theater" there. She believes that she will, and would like to stay in America, at least for a while. She is now applying for an artist visa. "You need a social security number to apply for serious roles," she explains. Asked about culture shock, she talks about the infamous American optimism. At the NYFA, her teachers praise everyone's work. "Everything is great, even when it's not!" she says. But Komar stops herself short of criticizing. "Now I am in the stage of exploring. I am standing aside and watching."

Passaic County 2012 Film Festival Set

PATERSON, NJ – Passaic County Film Festival 2012 will be held 10 a.m. Saturday, April 14 at the Fabian Theater in the upper level at City Center Mall, 301 Main Avenue, Paterson.

A selection of films will be seen on the big screen. There is free admission to the festival and it is open to the public.

Free parking voucher for the underground parking garage at City Center Mall will be given out at the film festival.

Seventy-five films were received from area high schools, colleges and independent film makers and entered into the festival.

They were judged by members of the Passaic County Film Commission in February.

Winners will be announced after the films are shown in four categories: general, public service announcement, music video and documentary.

The Film Festival is sponsored by the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders with additional financial support from the Passaic County Cultural and Heritage Council and Passaic County Community College Foundation; Bascom Corporation, Columbia Bank, Patriot Pickle and Jacobs Enterprises.

– www.passaiccountynj.org

