

**Dr Teresa Kaczorowska /Poland/**

**Relations Between Ignacy J. Paderewski and Mieczysław Haiman,  
Founder of the Polish Museum of America in Chicago; and the  
creation of the „Paderewski Room”**

Mieczysław Haiman (1888-1949) was one of the most valued persons in the Polish diaspora community (Polonia) in America and in Poland. Before his emigration from Lvov to America in 1913, he was a sailor and traveller. During his first years in the USA he became an active member of the Polish Falcons of America and a poet, in addition to working in physically demanding jobs. He later worked as a journalist, writer and translator, Polish activist, collector, archivist, librarian, the Polish Diaspora's first historian, benefactor and in the years 1935-1949 - first curator of the Archive and Museum of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA)<sup>1</sup> – currently the Polish Museum of America in Chicago.

Haiman often collaborated with historians, Polish activists, universities and organisations dealing with Polish history – both from the Americas and Europe. He had many friends, but few mentors; one of that scant number was Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941). Haiman had much in common with him, although Paderewski was 28 years his senior<sup>2</sup>. Crucially, they were both born on land under the occupation of Austria-Hungary (Haiman was born in Złoczów, and Paderewski in Kuryłówka - now Ukraine). Their families were impoverished nobility, and both men lost their mothers in early childhood. Both grew up in Catholic and patriotic Polish environments, which emphasized love of their country and its independence. As a result Haiman and Paderewski shared a similar system of values, which they followed their entire lives.

---

<sup>1</sup> Most biographical information from: T. Kaczorowska, *Herodot Polonii amerykańskiej Mieczysław Haiman (1888-1949)*, Muzeum Wychodźstwa Polskiego Łazienki Królewskie, Warszawa 2008. [*American Polonia's Herodotus: Mieczysław Haiman (1888-1949)*, Museum of Polish Emigration Royal Baths Park, Warsaw 2008]

<sup>2</sup> Biographical information from: *Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Pamiętniki*. [*Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Diaries*.] Collected by Mary Lawton, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1982 and: M. M. Drozdowski, *Zarys biografii politycznej [Political Biography Outline]*, Wydawnictwo Interpress, Warszawa 1981.

In America, both men were affiliated with the Polish Christian democratic community. They also belonged to the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA), to the Polish Falcons of America, and later – to the Polish Army Veterans' Association of America.

Both men greatly loved America, and aligned themselves with the city of Chicago. Paderewski became an honorary citizen of the „Windy City” on March 11, 1932, and Haiman spent most of his active life in Chicago (1927-1949).

### **Communication between Haiman and Paderewski**

They met for the first time during World War I. At the time, Paderewski was a famous artist, while Haiman – as a former soldier and sailor – joined the Polish Falcons of America immediately after coming to the USA, and became one of the most distinguished members of his country's „Premier National Guard”<sup>3</sup>.

Haiman probably met Paderewski at a groundbreaking, extraordinary convention of the Polish Falcons of America on April 1-4, 1917 in Pittsburgh. The pianist presented a fiery speech, appealing for the creation of a Polish Army<sup>4</sup> (and became a member of the Polish Falcons of America). The men must also have met November 4, 1917, during the opening of the Kosciuszko camp in Niagara on the Lake in Canada – the main assembly place for volunteers, future soldiers of the Polish Army in France – where Haiman had worked as a journalist for the „Boston Kuryer”<sup>5</sup>.

Reverend Dr. Aleksander Syski (1876-1945), formerly rector of the St. Adalbert parish in Hyde Park in southern Boston, was the Editor-in-Chief of the „Boston Kuryer”. The priest also was the publicist, writer, educator, an active member of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Haiman must have encountered the Polish Falcons during their beginning, in Lvov, where the Polish Falcons' Association was created February 7, 1867, and from whence it moved to other countries, including North America (The Polish Falcons of America was created in 1894 by capt. Feliks Z. Piotrowicz from Lvov, after he moved to America in 1887). A „Falcon” – with the motto „A sound mind in a sound body”, or „Strong arms serve their country” – was from its very beginning a secret group fighting for Polish independence in Galicia, a symbol of Poland waking from sleep, getting ready to fight for its freedom – A. L. Waldo, *Sokolstwo. Przednia Straż Narodu. Dzieje idei i Organizacji w Ameryce* [Falconry. Premier National Guard. History of the Idea and Organization in America], published by Polish Falcons of America, t. I-V, Pittsburgh 1953.

<sup>4</sup>Group work, *Pod znakiem Srebrnego i Złotego Orła* [Under the Sign of the Silver and Gold Eagle], Polish Army Museum, Warsaw 1998, s. 61.

<sup>5</sup> M. Kot, *Mieczysław Haiman – historyk amerykańskiej Polonii* [Mieczysław Haiman – American Polonia's Historian], „Dziennik Związkowy” [„Union Journal”], Chicago, 5-2 July 2002, s. 1-28.

Polish Roman Catholic Union, and Paderewski's close associate (he gave sermons over Paderewski's and his wife Helen's caskets). Reverend Syski became Haiman's spiritual mentor, and discovered the younger man's talent. Syski introduced Haiman to the Christian Democracy camp; to Paderewski, and to President Thomas Woodrow Wilson (Haiman dedicated the poem *To President Wilson* to him on January 9, 1918)<sup>6</sup>.

Without a doubt, Haiman encountered Paderewski in the course of his work as a journalist. After all, Haiman worked for some of the most prominent Polonia newspapers in the USA – the „Boston Kuryer” in Boston, „Polak w Ameryce” („Pole in America”) and „Dziennik dla Wszystkich” („Everybody's Daily”) in Buffalo and „Dziennik Zjednoczenia” („Polish Union Daily”) in Chicago. These newspapers always published accounts of Paderewski's travels and his work for Polish independence<sup>7</sup>.

Haiman wrote about Paderewski not only in newspaper articles<sup>8</sup>, but also in several of his periodicals – „Annals of the Polish Roman Catholic Union Archives and Museum” and „Polish American Studies” - and historical books<sup>9</sup>.

Even as the author of textbooks such as *Poles in America. The History of Polish Immigration to the United States* for Polish parish schoolchildren, Haiman underlined Paderewski's role in freeing their homeland.

*Polish Impressions in America. Historical essays* contains 35 poems praising Poland and the Polish people, written by American poets – it also has hymns, odes and paeans honoring Ignacy Jan Paderewski<sup>10</sup>.

Haiman's last work, *The Polish Roman Catholic Union in America 1873-1948*<sup>11</sup>, contains the most complete account of Paderewski's accomplishments. The historian

---

<sup>6</sup> M. Haiman, *Prezydentowi Wilsonowi [To President Wilson]*, in: M. Haiman, *Herodot Polonii poeta. Wiersze wybrane [Polonia's Herodotus and poet. Selected poems]*, choice, order, introduction and poetry biography outline T. Kaczorowska, Wydawnictwo PWP „Gryf” S.A., Ciechanów 2005, s. 23.

<sup>7</sup> M. Haiman, *Zjednoczenie Polskie Rzymsko-Katolickie w Ameryce 1873-1948*, ZPRK [*Polish Roman Catholic Union of America 1873-1948*, PRCUA], Chicago 1948, s. 452.

<sup>8</sup> *Polonia Musi Się Zdobyć Na Dawną Jedność, Zdaniem Mistrza Paderewskiego [Polonia must regain her former unity, according to Paderewski]*, „Naród Polski” [„Polish Nation”], November 14, 1940, s. 1.

<sup>9</sup> M. Haiman, *Polacy w Ameryce, Historia Wychodźstwa Polskiego w Stanach Zjednoczonych [Poles in America. The history of Polish immigration to the United States]* (for use by parish schools in America), Polish Catholic Publishing Company, Chicago 1930, 88 s.; M. Haiman, *Ślady Polskie w Ameryce. Szkice historyczne [Polish impressions in America. Historical]*, „Dziennik Zjednoczenia” [„Union Journal”], Chicago 1938, 298 s.; M. Haiman, *Zjednoczenie Polskie Rzymsko-Katolickie w Ameryce 1873-1948 [The Polish Roman Catholic Union in America 1873-1948]*, PRCUA, Chicago 1948, 597 s.

<sup>10</sup> M. Haiman, *Polska w poezji amerykańskiej [Poland in American poetry]*, in: *Ślady Polskie w Ameryce... [Polish impressions...]*, op. cit., s. 243-298.

emphasized the artist's active role in the life of the émigré community and his countrymen, as well as the USA – especially during World War I, when he abandoned his artistic career in order to devote his energy and influence to the fight for Polish independence.

Paderewski must have been aware of at least a few of them, as they had been sent to him<sup>12</sup>.

Haiman confessed to having met Paderewski twice in a private and personal setting: in 1938 and 1940. The second meeting, on November 8, 1940, was especially significant<sup>13</sup>. Haiman met the pianist while accompanied by the PRCUA chairman, Józef L. Kania, in the Ritz Tower hotel in New York. By that point, the artist was elderly, but he was still very much interested in the fate of Hitler- and Stalin- occupied Poland and in the goings-on of the Polish émigré community. It was during that meeting that Haiman met the artist's sister, the „still vivacious” Antonina Paderewska-Wilkońska (1858-1941), which resulted in her donating Paderewski's collections to the Polish Museum in Chicago after his death.

When Paderewski died in the Buckingham hotel in New York on June 29, 1941, Haiman wrote that the greatest of Poles had passed away<sup>14</sup>. When presenting his condolence to Paderewski's sister he emphasized his deep grief, because „With his death, Poland has lost the greatest of sons, the world a remarkable genius, and Polish émigrés their most devoted advocate and noble guide<sup>15</sup>”.

Antonina Paderewska- Wilkońska died a few months after Paderewski, in the beginning of October 1941.

## Creation of the PRCUA Museum and Archive

---

<sup>11</sup> M. Haiman, *Zjednoczenie Polskie Rzymsko-Katolickie w Ameryce 1873-1948* [*The Polish Roman Catholic Union in America 1873-1948*], PRCUA, Chicago 1948, 597 s.

<sup>12</sup> „*Poland and the American Revolutionary War*” idzie w świat amerykański [„*Poland and the American Revolutionary War*” comes to America], „*Dziennik Zjednoczenia*” [Union journal], nr 179, 1 sierpnia 1932, s. 4; M. M. Drozdowski, *Zarys biografii politycznej* [*Political Biography Outline*], Wydawnictwo Interpress, Warszawa 1981, s. 160, fot. 3, 4.

<sup>13</sup> M. Haiman, Materials concerning his meeting with I. J. Paderewski in New York in 1940, Polish Museum of America.

<sup>14</sup> M. Haiman, *Zjednoczenie Polskie...* [*Polish Roman Catholic Union...*], op. cit., s. 483.

<sup>15</sup> M. Haiman's letter to A. Paderewska-Wilkońska from June 30, 1941, Polish Museum of America, Awł., sygn. 188.

The PRCUA Museum and Archive was created on October 15, 1935, during a PRCUA directors' meeting<sup>16</sup>. The initiators were the PRCUA chairman Józef L. Kania and Mieczysław Haiman, who was appointed custodian of the newly formed Museum on October 19, 1935 and who initially donated his own collection of antiquarian texts, books, annals. Among them were documents concerning Ignacy Jan Paderewski<sup>17</sup>. Alongside Haiman's gift, the Museum's first collections were to constitute the National Committee files (Paderewski initiated it on April 12, 1916) - these documents (in 20 crates), held in the PRCUA building<sup>18</sup>. Ignacy Jan Paderewski must have followed the evolution of this new institution, as he sent a congratulatory telegram<sup>19</sup>.

The future Polish émigré Museum couldn't rest on its laurels. Shortly after the resolution that created the Museum, Haiman began appealing to the public to send in items for the „Polish memento treasury”. He turned to many people and organizations for help: he advertised through newspapers, parishes, during PRCUA branch meetings – and sent many letters to private individuals<sup>20</sup>. Thanks to Haiman's popularity, gifts from the Polish communities around the country came in large numbers, often in entire crates, inundating the PRCUA headquarters. These were books, letters, old documents, papers, souvenirs, newspapers, works of art – and items associated with I. J. Paderewski. By opening night, on January 12, 1937, the Museum already possessed Paderewski's letters in its collections<sup>21</sup>.

Souvenirs associated with Paderewski continued to arrive at the Museum in the following years. In 1940, the collections gained Paderewski's portrait, by Jan J. Libera. The next year, 1941, was an important, as the Museum gained all the

---

<sup>16</sup> P.R.C.U.A Chronicles, P.R.C.U.A Archives, Chicago, s. 332; *Board Meeting, June 1935- December 1935*, P.R.C.U.A., s. 332; *Proceedings of the P.R.C.U.A. Executive Lounge, Jan.1935. to Dec.1935*, P.R.C.U.A. Archive, Chicago.

<sup>17</sup> *Zjednoczenie Pol. Rz. Kat. Tworzy Archiwum i Muzeum Wychodźstwa* [Polish Roman Catholic Union Creates an Emigration Archive and Museum], „Naród Polski” [„Polish Nation”], 3 listopada 1935.

<sup>18</sup> *Zjednoczenie Pol. Rz. Kat. Tworzy Archiwum i Muzeum Wychodźstwa* [Polish Roman Catholic Union Creates an Emigration Archive and Museum], „Naród Polski” [„Polish Nation”], 3 listopada 1935.

<sup>19</sup> T. Kaczorowska, *Herodot Polonii amerykańskiej...* [American Polonia's Herodotus...], op. cit., s. 163.

<sup>20</sup> Polish Museum of America, Sp.MH, sygn. 22-26.

<sup>21</sup> *Sprawozdanie kustozza Archiwum i Muzeum Z.P.R.K. z działalności Polskiego Towarzystwa Historyczno-Muzealnego w Ameryce za rok 1937* [The PRCUA's Archive and Museum curator's report concerning the activities of the Polish Historical and Museum Association in America for the year 1937], Chicago 1938.

furnishings from Paderewski's last apartment in the Buckingham Hotel in New York, following the artist's death. Thus was the „Paderewski Room” created.

### **Creating the „Paderewski Room”**

According to Haiman, the „Paderewski Room” was created thanks to Antonina Paderewska-Wilkońska, the composer's sister, and the support of Consul Sylwin Strakacz and Paderewski's last secretary – Ignacy G. Kołłupajło. It was their effort and struggle that provided the Museum with Paderewski's furniture, which he had used during the last months of his life, as well as several other Paderewski mementos from the USA<sup>22</sup>.

This gift was brought to the Museum in Chicago by Ignacy G. Kołłupajło himself<sup>23</sup>, two days before the death of Wilkońska. Part of the collection was given to the Museum in perpetuity (the complete furnishings of Paderewski's last salon and bedroom, musical scores, books, autographs, souvenirs, and his Steinway piano), and part as a deposit (letters, musical scores, personal mementos such as his concert stool, jewelry)<sup>24</sup>.

It should be noted that during Haiman's curatorship of the Archive and Museum of the PRCUA, the Museum was the leading émigré institution, called the „American Rapperswil”, and Haiman was considered a great authority. He assiduously collected mementos, organized their delivery, exhibition, transport, and carried on a wide correspondence with donors. By July 1941, in a tribute to the late Paderewski, Haiman organized an exhibit consisting of manuscripts and Paderewski's concert programs. In the same year, he managed to obtain the bust „Paderewski” by Józef Mazur, and a valuable collection of Paderewski's letters. Donors' names were also carved on a wooden panel by professor W. Gawliński, alongside the names of the Museum's

---

<sup>22</sup> *Sprawozdanie kustosza... za 1941 r. [The PRCUA's Archive and Museum curator's... for the year 1941]*, Chicago 1942.

<sup>23</sup> M. Haiman, *Zjednoczenie... [Polish Roman Catholic Union...]*, op. cit., s.508-509.

<sup>24</sup> Detailed lists *Kolekcji Pamiątek [Memento Collection]*, signed by Ignacy Kołłupajło and Sylwin Strakacz and Mieczysław Haiman (the gift recipient on October 10, 1941) located in the „Paderewski Room” exhibition in the Polish Museum in Chicago.

greatest friends<sup>25</sup>. Haiman also promised to designate a special room for the unusual gift from Paderewski's sister – „the most beautiful, separate room on the second floor” and name it „Paderewski Room”.

The opening of „Paderewski Room” took place on November 3, 1941, and was a cultural event not limited to the émigré community<sup>26</sup>. That same year, during the Council of American Polonia, Sylwin Strakacz and Mieczysław Haiman started the Paderewski Fund (using donations from Museum visitors), for the upkeep and development of the „Paderewski Room”. Haiman corresponded with Sylwin Strakacz - told him about the state of the collection and regularly informed of the balance of the Paderewski Fund. Thanks to this association, Strakacz sent several additional items to complete Paderewski's collections throughout the following years.

Haiman also worked with the artist's last secretary, Ignacy Kołłupajło from New York. This resulted in the donation of Paderewski's white vest and tie, which had been his signature accessories. Sylwin Strakacz also gave Haiman parts of Paderewski's new wardrobe, a top hat, tuxedo, pumps, suit, embroidered handkerchiefs, and even drapes and curtains, among others<sup>27</sup>.

According to Sabina Logisz, custodian's assistant, the Paderewski exhibits were a „sacred place” for Haiman. „Once, he even forbade me from holding the items so that reporters could photograph them” – she recalled<sup>28</sup>. Sabina Logisz witnessed the creation of the „Paderewski Room” and believed that only the trust Antonina Paderewska-Wilkońska had in Haiman allowed her to „donate her brother's souvenirs to the émigré community”<sup>29</sup>.

The curator Mieczysław Haiman cared very well for mementos of the pianist's life and continually tried to expand the collection. In 1942 the Museum bought two

---

<sup>25</sup> *Sprawozdanie kustozsa... za 1941 r.* [ *The PRCUA's Archive and Museum curator's... for the year 1941* ], op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Entries by visitors at the opening ceremony of the „Paderewski Room” can be found in the visitor's log in *Muzeum i Archiwum Zjednoczenia Polskiego Rzymsko-Katolickiego, 1941* [ *Museum and Archive of the Polish Roman Catholic Union, 1941* ]; M. Haiman, *Zjednoczenie...* [ *Polish Roman Catholic Union...* ], op. cit., s. 509.

<sup>27</sup> Detailed list *Dodatkowego Spisu Pamiątek* [ *Additional Memento List* ], signed by Sylwin Strakacz and Mieczysław Haiman (as the recipient of the gift December 17, 1941) located in the „Paderewski Room” exhibition in the Polish Museum in Chicago.

<sup>28</sup> Conversation with S. Logisz, February 5, 2004.

<sup>29</sup> Sabina Logisz died on November 9, 2010 in Chicago. She was 94 old years.

beautiful oil portraits of Paderewski by Strayer and Posla. A year later it acquired a miniature of „Paderewski at the piano” by Jan Gawlik and published a series of postcards about Ignacy Jan Paderewski. In this, 1943, Haiman confessed:

„I was very happy to organize the national Polish Museum as part of the PRCUA’s plan. [...] We started from zero. Polish enthusiasm was so great, however, that today the museum’s collection is worth \$350 thousand and takes up two floors of the PRCUA’s spacious building in Chicago. One of the museum’s greatest treasures is the room dedicated to the memory of I. J. Paderewski<sup>30</sup>”.

In 1944 the curator acquired an original letter by Paderewski, a few concert programs, discs from the artist’s funeral in New York, and a lace shawl that Paderewski had bought for his sister, the late A. Paderewska-Wilkońska. On September 18, the Museum had the honor of welcoming the former President of the USA, Herbert C. Hoover, who was especially interested in the „Paderewski Room”. A year later President Hoover sent the Museum assorted documents regarding Paderewski and Poland. While soliciting for gifts for the Museum, Haiman asked a friend from his days at the „Boston Kuryer”, Bronisław A. Jezierski who had been „a friend of the artist”, for „benevolent memory [...] especially in regards to souvenirs [...] for the ‘Paderewski Room’<sup>31</sup>”.

In 1945, the year of the tenth anniversary of the Museum’s creation, Paderewski’s collection gained the original *Hej, Orle Białe* (*Oh, White Eagle*) composition and a drawing from Paderewski’s 1916 concert in Chicago.

In 1946, very favorably for the Museum and Archive of the PRCUA, the Museum acquired, among others, several more of Paderewski’s letters.

In 1947 the Museum also gained new items: four of the pianist’s letters and correspondence that concerned him, a 16-page manuscript of a speech by I. J. Paderewski, Paderewski’s *Virtuti Militari* Cross, and a collection of several minor mementos.

It should be noted that after Haiman’s sudden death (on January 15, 1949), and the subsequent interruption in the development of the „Paderewski Room” and planned

---

<sup>30</sup> W. Romig, *The Book of Catholic Authors*, Detroit 1943, s. 116-117.

<sup>31</sup> M. Haiman’s letter to B. A. Jezierski from June 21, 1944, Polish Museum of America, Awł., sygn. 96.

expansion of the Museum, Kazimiera Haiman donated books and mementos of her late husband to the Museum's library. In a catalogue kept in the Polish Museum of America archives<sup>32</sup> are listed 120 books and 47 personal items of the first curator, including an autographed photograph of I. J. Paderewski.

## Conclusion

Ignacy Jan Paderewski was unquestionably Mieczysław Haiman's revered mentor. The Reverend Dr. Aleksander Syski, Paderewski's close colleague, had a hand in forming this relationship and simultaneously discovering Haiman's talent. The curator considered Paderewski to be the most remarkable living Pole and world-renowned genius, Poland's greatest son and „devoted advocate and noble guide of the Polish émigré community of America”. Haiman admired his artistic talents and identified with his political beliefs. Both men were affiliated with the Polish Christian democratic community and belonged to the some organizations: PRCUA, the Polish Falcons of America, and the Polish Army Veterans' Association of America.

Haiman wrote about Paderewski in his newspaper articles, periodicals and books – publicizing Paderewski and his accomplishments. „The father of the history of the Polonia in America” also collected material about the artist, many of which he later donated to the newly founded Museum. He encountered Paderewski as a Falcon and journalist, met him personally during his time as curator and kept in close contact with Paderewski and his closest associates. Haiman saw him for the last time in New York, a few months before Paderewski's death, where he also met the artist's sister, Antonina Paderewska-Wilkońska. All this resulted in the donation of the furnishing from Paderewski's last apartment in the Buckingham hotel in New York to the Archive and Museum of the PRCUA, where the „Paderewski Room” was opened on November 3, 1941. The exhibit was Haiman's pride and joy. The “Paderewski Room”

---

<sup>32</sup> *Książki i pamiątki po śp. Mieczysławie Haimanie darowane do Biblioteki i Muzeum Z.P.R.K. przez panią Kazimierę Haiman dnia 13-ego lutego 1949 r. [Books and mementos of the late Mieczysław Haiman gifted to the Library and Archive of the PRCUA by Mrs. Kazimiera Haiman on February 13, 1949], Polish Museum of America, Sp.MH, sygn. 141.*

made Haiman's Museum even more famous in the years 1935-49; it gained the moniker "American Rapperswil".

*[Translated by Paulina Sliwinska, University of Edinburgh]*

The Lecture was presented at the International Conference "Chopin & Paderewski" (Loyola University Chicago, November 12-13, 2010)

**Fot. (Polish Museum of America in Chicago):**

1. Mieczysław Haiman (1888-1947)
2. Polish Museum of America (Chicago, N. 984 Milwaukee Avenue, Il.)
3. Mieczysław Haiman next to the bust „Paderewski” by Józef Mazur, in the first room of the Polish Museum and Archive of the PRCUA in Chicago