

IGNACY JAN PADEREWSKI

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Ignacy Jan Paderewski, was born on 18 November 1860 and died on 29 June 1941. He was a Polish pianist and composer, a politician, and spokesman for Polish independence and a favourite of concert audiences around the world. His musical fame gained him access to diplomacy and the media. He was the prime minister and foreign minister of Poland in 1919, and represented Poland at the Paris Peace Conference.

Paderewski was born to Polish parents in the village of Kuryłówka (Kurilivka), in the Podolia Governorate of the Russian Empire and this village today is part of the Khmilnyk region of Vinnytsia Oblast in Ukraine. His father, Jan Paderewski, was an administrator of large estates. His mother, Poliksena, née Nowicka, died several months after Paderewski was born, and he was brought up by distant relatives.



From his early childhood, Paderewski was interested in music and this was when while he was living at the private estate near Żytomir where he had moved with his father. However, soon after his father's arrest in connection with the January Uprising of 1863, he was adopted by his aunt. After being released, Paderewski's father married again and moved to the town of Sudytkov near Shepetovka. His father had been exiled in Siberia having worked for many years for the freedom of his native country.

Initially, the boy took piano lessons with a private tutor. At the age of 12, in 1872, he went to Warsaw and was admitted to the Warsaw Conservatorium. After graduating in 1878, he was asked to become a tutor of piano classes there, which he accepted.

He was said to be the greatest pianist since Anton Rubinstein. He was also known for his prolific amount of hair.

In 1880, Paderewski married Antonina Korsakówna, and soon afterwards, their first child was born. The following year, they discovered that the son was handicapped. Soon afterward, Antonina died.

Paderewski decided to devote himself to music, and in 1881, he went to Berlin to study music composition with Friedrich Kiel and Heinrich Urban. In 1884, he moved to Vienna, where he was a pupil of Theodor Leschetizky and it was in Vienna that he made his musical debut in 1887. He soon gained great popularity and his subsequent appearances in Paris in 1889, and in London in 1890 were major successes. His brilliant playing created a furore which reached to almost extravagant lengths of admiration, and his triumphs were repeated in the United States in 1891. His name at once became synonymous with the highest level of piano virtuosity. However, not everyone was impressed. After hearing Paderewski for the first time, Moriz Rosenthal said: "Yes, he plays well, I suppose, but he's no Paderewski".

But to return to 1882, or thereabouts, we consider the Six Concert Humoresques Op 14 with its famous Minuet in G. The second piece is a dignified Sarabande and then follows the Caprice which is truly joyous. The Burlesque may conjure up a sleigh ride and the Intermezzo pollaco is a work contrasting grandeur and melancholy while the final piece, Cracovienne Fantastique has rhythmic interest and is dance like.

The year 1885, saw the appearance of the Variations on an original theme Op 11, a set of fourteen variations with a fugal finale. The theme is straightforward lasting sixteen bars and the first few variations are typical and it is said that it owes something to Brahms. There is a noble funeral march and a pastiche of variations in styles of early composers but the work is full of imagination and it is one of the few works of variations that hangs together satisfactorily.

In 1887, he began work on his Piano Sonata in E flat minor Op 21. He was rather fatigued by his concert tours. The work opens with a real sense of power and the music is both turbulent and exciting. It is in sonata form but does not adhere to the key. The music is passionate and there are flamboyant gestures and some may detect a hint of Tristan and Isolde. The development section recalls all the ideas. The second movement has been likened to a Song without Words and the final is a movement of technical difficulty and there appears to be a kinship with Rachmaninov and there is a fugal section. It is an impressive work and probably the best piano sonata by a Polish composer.

The Piano Concerto in A minor Op 17 of 1888 is a truly first class concerto and probably the finest Polish piano concerto. It begins with a grand orchestral introduction and the memorable piano theme hints at a folk song style. The music becomes more agitated and strong with cascades and arpeggios. It moves into A major and the cadenza reverts to the minor key and is surprisingly marked Largo. The movement ends Allegro molto.

The second movement is a Romance in 2/4 time with an introduction from the orchestra. The main theme becomes grandiose.. The finale is marked allegro molto vivace and is a strong bravura movement with a brief largo section before the presto conclusion.

Some commentator has said that parts of this work are reminiscent of Chopin, an utterly irrelevant remark. Chopin could not write music as good as this.

In 1893, there appeared his Polish Fantasy which begins with what could be called a folk type theme in dance form which is interrupted by piano flourishes and has welcome contrasts. It is a 20 minute showpiece.

In 1899, he married Baroness de Rosen.

In 1901, his sole opera *Manru* received its world premiere at Dresden and then it had its American premiere in 1902 at the Metropolitan Opera. To this day, it remains the only Polish opera by a Polish composer ever performed there. Paderewski, his second wife, entourage, parrot and Erard piano gave concerts in Australia and New Zealand in 1904, in collaboration with Polish-French composer, Henri Kowalski.

his Variations on an original theme in E flat Minor Op 23 appeared in 1903. The key of E flat minor was very popular at this time as seen in these Variations and the Piano Sonata. These variations have a pesante theme on octaves. Some have said that this work reflects Debussy and/or a French connection but what is interesting is the hints of Brahms and MacDowell. The fifteenth variation is in the key of F sharp which suggests an atonal feel and the final fugue is highly imaginative and the work ends in a resounding celebration in E flat minor

In 1909, came the premiere of his Symphony in B minor "Polonia", a massive work lasting 75 minutes. It would be his last composition, apart from a hymn for male chorus written in 1917. The first movement, Adagio maestoso, takes 176 pages and at figure 22 to 40 there is an allegro vivace section. The second movement, Andante con moto, employs 46 pages while the finale, Vivace, takes up 213 pages. It is too long.

In 1896, Paderewski donated \$10,000 (U.S.) to establish a trust fund to encourage American-born composers. The fund underwrote a triennial competition that began in 1901 called the "Paderewski Prize". Paderewski also launched a similar contest in Leipzig in 1898. He had earned some considerable wealth from his concert performances but by the early 1920s his fortune dwindled yet he still raised funds for humanitarian causes in America, Poland and England

He was also active in pursuing various philanthropic causes. In 1910, he funded the erection of the Battle of Grunwald Monument in Kraków, in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the event. In 1913, Paderewski settled in the United States.

On the eve of World War I, and at the height of his fame, Paderewski bought a 2,000-acre property, Rancho San Ignacio, near Paso Robles, in San Luis Obispo County, on the central coast of California. A decade later he planted Zinfandel vines on the California property. When the vines matured, the wine was made for him at the nearby York Mountain Winery, then, as now, one of the best-known wineries between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

He was extremely popular internationally, to such an extent that the music hall duo "The Two Bobs" had a hit song in 1916, in music halls across Britain, with the song "When Paderewski plays". He was a favourite of concert audiences everywhere and it was women especially admired his performances.[]

During World War I, Paderewski became an active member of the Polish National Committee in Paris, which was soon accepted by the Entente as the representative of the forces trying to create the state of Poland. He became a spokesman of that organization, and soon formed other social and political organizations, among them the Polish Relief Fund in London. It was then that he met the English composer Edward Elgar, who used a theme from Paderewski's *Fantasia Polonaise* in his work *Polonia* written for the Polish Relief Fund concert in London on 6 July 1916, the title no doubt recognizing Paderewski's *Symphony in B minor*. Paderewski did not like Elgar whom he found to be pompous, self-important and a today.

In April 1918, in New York City he met with leaders of the American Jewish Committee in an unsuccessful attempt to broker a deal whereby organized Jewish groups would support Polish territorial ambitions in exchange for support for equal rights. However, it soon became clear that no plan would satisfy both Jewish leaders and Roman Dmowski, head of the Polish National Committee, who was strongly anti-Semitic.

He played an important role in meeting with President Woodrow Wilson and others in obtaining the explicit inclusion of independent Poland as point 13 in Wilson's peace terms, the Fourteen Points.

At the end of the war, with the fate of the city of Poznań and the whole region of Greater Poland in doubt and Wielkopolska still undecided, Paderewski visited Poznań. With his public speech on 27 December 1918, the Polish inhabitants of Poznań began a military uprising against Germany, called the Greater Poland Uprising. He worked hard to get Dmowski and Józef Piłsudski to collaborate, but Piłsudski won out.

In 1919, in the newly independent Poland, Paderewski was appointed by president Piłsudski as the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (January 1919 – December 1919). He and Dmowski represented Poland at the Paris Peace Conference. Paderewski at the time tried to somehow whitewash to the press the role of the re-created Polish Army in the Jewish pogroms happening at the time in the Polish-Soviet War. He signed the Treaty of Versailles, which restored the territories of Greater Poland and Pomerania around the City of Gdańsk to Poland. Although this fell short of what the Polish delegates had demanded, these territories provided the core of the restored Polish state.

After being abandoned by many of his political supporters, Paderewski resigned as foreign minister on 4 December 1919, and took on the role of Polish Ambassador to the League of Nations.

In 1922, he retired from politics and returned to his musical life. His first concert after a long break, was held at Carnegie Hall, and was a significant success. He also filled Madison Square Garden with its 20,000 seats and toured the United States in a private railway car.

Soon he moved to Morges in Switzerland. After Piłsudski's coup d'état in 1926, Paderewski became an active member of the opposition to Sanacja rule. In 1936 a coalition of members of the opposition was signed in his mansion; it was nicknamed the Front Morges after the name of the village.

By 1936, two years after the death of his wife, Paderewski consented to appear in a film presenting his talent and art on the screen. This proposal had come at a time when Paderewski did not wish to appear in public. However, the film project did proceed, and the selected film script was an opportunity to feature Paderewski. The film *Moonlight Sonata* was filmed throughout 1936.

In November 1937, Paderewski agreed to take on one last pupil for piano. This musician was Witold Małcużyński, who had won second place at the International Chopin Piano Competition.

After the Polish Defensive War of 1939, Paderewski returned to public life. In 1940, he became the head of the Polish National Council, a Polish parliament in exile in London. The eighty-year-old artist also restarted his Polish Relief Fund and gave several concerts (most notably in the United States) to gather money for it. However, his mind was not what it had once been. Scheduled again to play Madison Square Garden, he refused to appear, insisting that he had already played the concert, presumably remembering the concert he had played in the 1920s. He was 79 when the Nazis invaded Poland, the Poles and their allies looked to him to lead them. He was in Switzerland and in poor health but when to Paris to inaugurate a new government and went to the USA for support for the Polish cause

During one such tour in 1941, Paderewski was taken ill. This was on 27 June. Nothing was discussed with his personal secretary or entourage. But at the initiative of Sylwin Strakacz, physicians were called in for consultation and diagnosed pneumonia. Despite improving health and signs of recovery, Paderewski died in New York at 11:00 pm, aged 80. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, in Arlington Virginia, near Washington DC. In 1992, his body was brought to Warsaw and placed in St. John's Archcathedral. His heart is encased in a bronze sculpture in the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa near Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

Early in 1941, the music publisher Boosey & Hawkes had commissioned 17 prominent American or North America-resident composers to contribute a solo piano piece each for an album to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Paderewski's American debut in 1891. However, his death in June caused the album to become a posthumous tribute to his entire life and work. *Homage to Paderewski* was published in 1942.

The Polish Museum of America in Chicago received a donation of the personal possessions of Ignacy Jan Paderewski following his death in June 1941. His sister, Antonina Paderewski Wilkonska were among the enthusiastic supporters and generous sponsors of the Museum. Antonina, executor of Ignacy's will, decided to donate these personal possessions to the Museum as well as artefacts from his apartment in New York. This space was officially opened on 3 November 1941.

Paderewski's star is on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

In 1948, the Ignacy Paderewski Foundations was established in New York City, on the initiative of the Polish community in New York with the goal of promoting Polish culture in the United States.

Two other Polish-American organizations are also named in his honor and dedicated to promoting the legacy of the maestro; the Paderewski Association in Chicago as well as the Paderewski Music Society in Southern California were formed

Due to the unusual combination of the notable achievements of being a world-class pianist and a successful politician, Saul Kripke used Paderewski in a famous philosophical example in his article "A Puzzle about Belief". Paderewski was so famous that in the 1953 motion picture *The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T* (written by Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss), piano teacher Dr. Terwilliker tells his pupils that he will "make a Paderewski" out of them.

There are streets and schools named after Paderewski in many major cities in Poland. There are also streets named after him in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and Buffalo, New York. In addition, the Academy of Music in Poznań is named after him. As we have said, Paderewski has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles, awarded in 1960.

Order of the White Eagle

Order of Virtuti Militari, Silver Cross (posthumously)

Order of Polonia Restituta, Grand Cross

Legion of Honour, Grand Cross (France)

Honorary Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire (1925)

Honorary doctorates from universities in Lvov (1912), Krakow (1919), Poznan (1924) and Warsaw (1931), as well as several American universities.

Honorary citizen of Warsaw

Honorary Studentenverbindung Patria

Academic Golden Laurel of the Polish Academy of Literature for oratory

On October 8, 1960, the United States Post Office Department released two stamps commemorating Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Poland also honoured him with postage stamps on at least three occasions

Works with Opus number

- Op.1 Prelude e capriccio, Minuetto 2 Piano Pieces (ca.1886)
- Op.2 Gavotte, Melodie, in C major, Valse melancolique 3 Morceaux for Piano (ca.1881)
- Op.3 Stara suite for piano: Prelude in d, Intermezzo in B, Air in F, Fugue in d.
- Op.4 Elegie for Piano (1883)
- Op.5 3 Danses polonaises for Piano (ca.1883), arrangement also for Piano 4-hands
- Op.6 Introduction et Toccata for Piano (ca.1884)
- Op.7 4 Songs (after Adam Asnyk) for Voice and Piano (1885)
- Op.8 Chants du Voyageur, 5 Pieces for Piano (ca.1883)
- Op.9 6 Danses polonaises for Piano (ca.1883)
- Op.10 Album de Mai, 5 Scenes romantiques for Piano (ca.1884)
- [Op.11 Variations et Fugue sur un Theme original for Piano \(ca.1883\)](#)
- Op.12 Tatra Album, Tänze und Lieder des polnischen Volkes aus Zakopane for Piano (ca.1883), arrangement also for Piano 4-hands
- Op.13 Violin Sonata in A minor (1882)

- Op.14 6 Humoresques de Concert for Piano (ca.1887)
- Op.15 Dans le Desert, Tableau musical in Forme d'une Toccata for Piano (ca.1888)
- Op.16 Miscellanea, Series of 7 Piano Pieces (ca.1888)
- Op.17 Piano Concerto in A minor (1888)
- Op.18 6 Songs (after Adam Mickiewicz) for Voice and Piano (1893)
- Op.19 Polish Fantasy on original Themes for Piano and Orchestra (1893)
- Op.20 Manru, Lyrisches Drama in 3 Aufzügen (1892-1901), Libretto in German by Alfred Nossig
- Op.21 Piano Sonata in E flat minor (ca.1903)
- Op.22 12 Melodies sur de Poesies de Catulle Mendes, 12 Songs for Voice and Piano (ca.1903)
- Op.23 Variations et Fugue sur un Theme original in E flat minor for Piano (ca.1903)
- Op.24 Symphony in B minor 'Polonie' (1903-09)

Works without Opus number

- 2 Canons for Piano
- Canzone in G major, Chant sans Paroles for Piano (ca.1904)
- Et vitam venturi for Chorus, contrapuntal excercises
- Hej, Orle bialy (Hey, White Eagle), Hymn for male Chorus and Piano or Wind Orchestra, Words by composer (1917)
- Ich will den Herrn for Chorus, contrapuntal excercises
- Impromptu in F major for Piano (ca.1879)
- 2 Intermezzi in G minor and C major for Piano (ca.1885)
- Krakowiak (Fantasy) for Piano (1884)
- Kyrie Eleison for Chorus, contrapuntal excercises
- Mazurka in G major (1896)
- Miniatura in E flat major
- Moment musical (1892)
- Overture in E flat major for Orchestra, 1884
- Piece in F major for Violin and Piano (1878)
- Powodz (The Flood)
- Suite in E flat major for Piano (ca.1879)
- Suite in G major for String Orchestra (1884)
- Valse mignonne for Piano (ca.1876)

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