

Outside In: Dariusz Skoraczewski

Dec 23, 2019 | Blog, Outside In | 0 comments



Frédéric Chopin statue in Warsaw: photo by

Bartosz MORĄG

Chopin's monument in Warsaw is deeply ingrained in every

Pole's memory and heart—as it is in the memory and heart of **Dariusz Skoraczewski**, the principal cello of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. The statue is located in a big park where many outdoor concerts take place, but it is visible from a major street nearby, and Dariusz passed it countless times riding a bus to school as a child. “Chopin’s music, as you can imagine, is a very important part to every Polish person who decides to emigrate,” he says. “It keeps one’s patriotism alive, brings up memories, gives hope, but also makes one miss the old country.”

Dariusz was born in Warsaw and grew up there for the first eighteen years of his life. In fact, he went to the same music elementary school as the Polish born pianist, Emanuel Ax. Dariusz realized this when Ax was a soloist with the BSO recently, playing the Brahms Second Piano Concerto—a work that features a huge cello solo—and that connection prompted a moving encore of Polish music by cellist and pianist at the November concert.

The first time that Dariusz ever visited America was when he was still in high school and he attended the Interlochen Arts Camp, the annual summer camp in Michigan that draws young artists from around the world. He fell in love with way that music is taught in the U.S., and he felt he could broaden his education on the western side. He says, “Poland is really wonderful because it has a lot of mainly Eastern and Russian influence in string teaching, which is fabulous for technique, but I thought I could really benefit from a different type of

education.”

It was at Interlochen that Dariusz made the connection with the Peabody Institute of music at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Different schools go to the camp and present their brochures and things like that, and when Dariusz went back to Poland to complete his high school education, he applied to several universities and conservatories in the United States. He ended up choosing Peabody, in part, because of the reputation of the cellist and pedagogue, Stephen Kates, who was Juilliard trained and had been a prizewinner at the Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow—of which Dariusz also became a laureate years later. Dariusz has remained in Baltimore since he came to the city as a student, joining the cello section of the Baltimore Symphony, and becoming its principal cello in 2011.

The most difficult part of immigrating for Dariusz was learning the language. The first six months were really tough for him because he was put into regular classes and he really had no idea what was happening. He ended up taking an accelerated class for second language taught by Rheda Becker, the arts philanthropist and long time narrator of children’s concerts for the symphony. Dariusz still misses the fact of being able to speak Polish every day. He also misses the architecture, and still feels that he’s European in that respect, even though he’s been here so long. “When I go back, it’s like a feeling that overcomes me that I’m home again—and it doesn’t have to be really in Poland, it can be England or Germany or something. It

feels different.”

Dariusz has American citizenship now but, as is so often the case, it was a complicated route to achieve that status. “I started as a student on a student visa for many years,” he says, “and then there was something called practical training, and, through my first job at Kennedy Center, where I played for less than a year, I got this H1B.” He got a green card through marriage, and took the decision to apply for American citizenship fairly recently. “I don’t want to get political,” he says, “but when I saw that certain politics are going to be changing hands in the United States in 2016, I decided to apply for citizenship and, at that time, it was pretty quick.”

Like most immigrants, Dariusz feels as if he has two homes. The strangest part is that when he goes back to Poland he’s treated like an immigrant there too. “I’m not up to speed with the political situation there,” he says, “and it’s very complicated there too, so I feel a foreigner back home.” He definitely feels that America is his home, but when he goes back to Poland, he also feels that’s home. He says that he’s very happy with his American citizenship, though, and delighted that he got it. For him, the best part of being in America has been being a part of the wonderful musical community, “being able to contribute to it, and take from it.” Certainly, we are truly lucky to have him—at the BSO, in Baltimore, and in the country.

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)

Recent Posts

Outside In: Dariusz Skoraczewski

Agatha Christie from the page to the stage

The Winter Newsletter

Past Ten

The Ides of October

New Book

Menu

- [Contact](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Outside In](#)
- [Old New Worlds](#)

Recent Posts

- [Outside In: Dariusz Skoraczewski](#)
- [Agatha Christie from the page to the stage](#)
- [The Winter Newsletter](#)
- [Past Ten](#)
- [The Ides of October](#)

Search

Contact Info

Judith Krummeck

Baltimore, MD

judith at judithkrummeck dotcom

