

Cultural Bulletin

“Katyn’s” official premiere in Moscow

I have never thought I would live to see it, Poland’s film director Andrzej Wajda said after the premiere of his “Katyn” which took place in Moscow on Tuesday with Kremlin senior officials in attendance.

“I am tremendously moved that the film was shown in Moscow,” Wajda said. “I have never thought I would live to see it.”

The premiere was attended by Russian president’s advisers: for the development of contacts with EU Sergey Jastrzembski and for culture Yuri Laptiev. Present were artists, academics, human right fighters, NGO activists, students.

“I am happy that I live in new Russia, that there is new Europe and that there is free Poland on the map of the free Europe,” Jastrzembski said after the show.

The Cinema House in Moscow was packed with people, with many sitting on stairs between rows or standing along the walls.

“I have seen the film for the second time,” Russian historian Natalia Lebedeva said. “And I was stunned for the second time, although I know everything about the Katyn crime.”

Wajda stressed that the film was not aimed against Russia. “There is no hatred or anger in the film,” Wajda said. “This is not propaganda. This is an objective presentation of the situation which took place.”

Wajda said that the film was directed against the system. “We have never accepted the Stalinist system and will never do.”

Wajda confirmed that “Katyn” producers have so far failed to find a distributor of the film in Russia.

The film presents the events surrounding the 1940 mass killing of Polish army officers by the Soviet Union in the Katyn Forest. The film was nominated for Oscar in the category of the best foreign language film of the year.

■ The 9th Aleksander Gieysztor Award was granted to the Ossolińskich national publishing house in Wocław at a ceremony held in Warsaw on March 18. The award is granted by the Leopold Kronenberg Foundation for the protection of Poland’s cultural heritage.

■ More than 100 musicians played in Paris on March 19 during a concert promoting the newest Zbigniew Preisner’s disc “Silence, Night and Dreams” in France. The concert coincided with the disc launching on the French market.

■ Katarzyna Rosłaniec’s movie entitled “Galerianki, a story about 14-year-old girls seeking „sponsors” in shopping malls won a mention at the 9th International Film Festival in Aubagne, France.

■ Ukraine’s Nazar Fediuk won the 5th under 16 George Philipp Telemann Violin Competition that ended in Poznań on March 17. The competition was attended by 44 violin players from Poland, Germany, Hungary and Ukraine. The winner took 3.5 thousand zloty and was admitted to the Master’s Competition at Henri Marteau House in Lichtenberg (Germany). A winners’ concert followed the competition. Culture and National Heritage Minister Bogdan Zdrojewski was the honorary patron of the event.

■ The script of “Summer Solstice” (Letnie przesilenie) by Michał Rogal-

Exhibition entitled “Letters from Uprising” opens

Post stamps, envelopes and letters dating back to the time of the 1944 Warsaw anti-Nazi Uprising purchased at an auction in Duesselforf are on display at the exhibition entitled “Letters from Uprising” (Listy z Powstania) that opened at Warsaw Uprising Museum in Warsaw on March 18. The unknown-source collection of war-time letters is accompanied by a unique audio-visual commentary by Uprising-time postmen and photos from Uprising. The gala inauguration was attended by Minister of Culture and National Heritage Bogdan Zdrojewski, Warsaw mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz and Uprising postmen who survived WW2. The exhibition will be on until the end of July.

“Unpainted Jew 2,” exhibition in Warsaw

The “Unpainted Jew 2” (Żyd niemalowany II) exhibition presenting reprints of the 19th century drawings and woodwork about the Jewish community in Poland has opened in the InfoQultura culture centre in Warsaw. All exhibits come from a private collection.

“Unpainted Jew 2” is a successive exhibition of woodcuts from the 19th century Warsaw periodicals. In 2007 some exhibits of the collection were presented at several Polish cities like in Częstochowa. The collection was also shown in Warsaw during the Singer Festival and now is on display for the 2nd time.

Warsaw mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz and the embassy of the State of Israel took the honorary patronage over the event. The exhibitions closes on April 21.

Marc Minkowski takes over as music director of Sinfonia Varsovia

World renowned conductor and Paris-born Pole Marc Minkowski has been appointed music director of Sinfonia Varsovia orchestra under a related document signed in Warsaw on March 17 during a press conference by Sinfonia Varsovia CEO Janusz Marynowski and Warsaw mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz. The agreement had

ski set in Poland during WW2 won the prestigious Hartley-Merrill award for the best script. The winning script was selected by jurors of more than 130 scripts. The Polish edition of Hartley-Merrill competition was chiefly sponsored by the Andrzej Wajda Master School of Film Directing in Warsaw.

earlier been signed by the orchestra artistic director Krzysztof Penderecki.

“Nothing better could happen to Sinfonia Varsovia,” said Janusz Marynowski. In his opinion the presence of two outstanding artists in the orchestra leadership, namely Krzysztof Penderecki and Marc Minkowski is an exceptional situation.” “There is no other orchestra in the world that would have two renowned artist on board,” Marynowski said.

Marc Minkowski stressed that also for him the new function was a mention. “Sinfonia Varsovia is my 2nd child after Les Musiciens du Louvre,” the artist said. He stressed personal dimension to the function giving his Polish origin.

60th anniversary of Polis cartoon

A gala “Gloria Animatoris” celebration in Wrocław on March 16 marked the 60th anniversary of the Polish cartoon starring jazz singer Urszula Dudziak. Present at the ceremony Minister of Culture and National Heritage Bogdan Zdrojewski handed “Gloria Artis” medals to outstanding cartoon makers like Witold Giersz, Zbigniew Rybczyński and Jerzy Kucia.

The ceremony was attended by Hugh Welchman, British producers from BreakThru Films, who together with director Suzie Templeton won this year Academy Award for “Peter and The Wolf” (Piotruś i wilk), the best foreign short movie. The Briton thanked the Polish crew for its work on the movie saying that “Piotruś i wilk” was the result of hard work and creativity of more than 100 people in Poland.

The gala in Wrocław officially inaugurated the Cartoon Year in Poland. The agenda envisages promotion events and festivals in Warsaw, Łódź and Bydgoszczy as well as new cartoon series. The events are coordinated by the Polish Audio-Visual Publishing House.

■ The 14th Catholic Publisher Fair will be held in Warsaw on March 28–30 under the honorary patronage of prime of Poland Cardinal Józef Glemp, Metropolitan of Warsaw Archbishop Kazimierz Nycz and Minister of Culture and National Heritage Bogdan Zdrojewski

■ Famous US singer, composer, writer and poet Bob Dylan will give a concert in Warsaw’s Stodoła students club on June 7. Bob Dylan, one of the most influential pop musicians of last decades has sold 90 million discs to become the most inspiring artist for young and experienced rock musicians.

■ Discovery-History (Discovery-Historia) television Channel is shooting a movie about the 1655 defence of the Jasna Góra Marian shrine. The filming involves actor Daniel Olbrychski who years ago played the main part of Kmicic in Jerzy Hoffman’s “The Deluge” (Potop). According to the producers the movie will have its premiere in June.

Paintings of Wierusz-Kowalski, Boznańska sold for record high price at auction

Alfred Wierusz-Kowalski's painting entitled "Hunters' Avant-garde" (Awangarda myśliwska) of 1880 was sold for a record high price of 1,360,000 zloty at an auction organised by Agra-Art Auction House on March 16, 2008 (calling price was set at 550,000 PLN).

This was the highest price set this year in Poland and the highest in history price paid for a painting by Alfred Wierusz-Kowalski.

Olga Boznańska's "Thinking Girl" (Zadumana dziewczynka) was sold for 1,150,000 PLN with the calling price set at 560,000 PLN.