

# Bonsoir Monsieur Chopin



The play **Bonsoir Monsieur Chopin** is a musical drama aimed at creating a closer acquaintance with the works of the composer and with the sources of his artistic inspiration. Frédéric (Fryderyk) Chopin was not only a distinguished pianist and composer, he was also a fascinating human being. He left his homeland, Poland, for France at barely 20 years old, but he had already become a success as a fully accomplished artist. In Poland, Chopin received an excellent education as a student of the Warsaw Conservatoire. His talent, passion, and an extremely diligent work ethic opened the doors of musical salons and prestigious concert halls in Paris and other European cities within a short time.

On October 17, 1849, the great Chopin died at the age of 39. This day remains one of special significance to Poles. He suffered towards the end of his life and never lost the longing for Poland. He left a week before the 1830 November Uprising that crushed Poland and forced it to remain in exile. Nonetheless, Chopin and his music lives on in the hearts and minds of Polonia around the world, and his piano compositions are some of the most beautiful and popular ever played and heard.

Throughout *Bonsoir, Monsieur Chopin*, poems by several renowned Polish poets are used: *The Magic Piano* by J. Zajczkowski, *The Meeting with Chopin* by Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, *Żelazowa Wola* and *Etudes* by Roman Brandstaetter, *He is the One* by Kornel Makuszyński, *Chopin's Concert* by Artur Oppman, and *Chopin's Motherland* by Stanisław Bagiński.

*"We may be sure that a genius like Mozart, were he born today,  
would write concertos like Chopin and not like Mozart."*

*Robert Schumann*

**Presented and sponsored by:** The American Institute of Polish Culture; Florida International University - Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center for Excellence, European & Eurasian Studies Program, Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, and Dept. of Theater; Council for Student Organizations (CSO); European Student Association, Embassy of the Republic of Poland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland; The Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Miami; The Chopin Foundation of the US.

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[www.ampolstitute.org](http://www.ampolstitute.org)

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**Thursday, November 10, 2016 at 7:00 pm**

**Following the performance there will be  
a piano recital by Professor Kemal Gekic, Music Dept, FIU**

**Reception with artists and VIP guests**

**FIU Biscayne Bay Campus – Mary Ann Wolfe Theater  
3000 NE 151<sup>st</sup> St., North Miami, FL 33181**

*"Simplicity is the final achievement. After one has played a vast quantity of notes and more notes, it is simplicity that emerges as the crowning reward of art."*

*Frédéric Chopin*



Flamboyant, daring, provocative, exciting, seductive and sensitive are some of the words used to describe one of today's most formidable pianists, **Kemal Gekic**, whose playing has been acclaimed worldwide by public and critics alike. His daring approach to tone and form, marked him as a maverick in the musical world, a distinction he welcomes: the very strength of his artistry challenges, provokes, intrigues.

*"Gekic rides the charismatic edge of genius."*

*R. Dyer, Boston Globe*

Performing worldwide from a vast repertoire, he presents fascinating, uncompromising and ever-changing interpretations, always generating frenzied audience enthusiasm. As a recording artist, Prof. Gekic has won accolades in Europe, America and Japan for insightful, original views of the music. His outstanding Rossini-Liszt transcriptions (Naxos) won "The Rosette" of The Penguin Guide for Music, while his recording of Liszt's Transcendental Etudes (JVC) is generally considered to be the best recording of a set in history.

Born in Split, Croatia, he got his early training from Prof. Lorenza Baturina, went on to graduate the class of Prof. Jokuthon Mihailovic at the Art Academy of Novi Sad, and was immediately given a faculty appointment by the piano department which he eventually directed until 1999. He has been the Artist in Residence at Florida International University in Miami since 1999.

*"He is something like a general who has learned all the rules in the book, and is therefore free to ignore them in the time of war."*

*James Roos, Miami Herald*

*"His playing is transcendental as well as incandescent."*

*John Ardoin, Dallas Morning News*

## Bonsoir Monsieur Chopin

Presented by

Blanka Rosenstiel Lecture Series on Poland at FIU

Performed by **Maria Nowotarska and Agata Pilitowska**

from The Salon of Poetry, Music and Theatre in Toronto, Canada



**Maria Nowotarska** graduated from the Academy for the Dramatic Arts in Krakow, Poland and performed under the direction of most of the renowned theatrical directors. She also appeared in a number of films and TV productions. After emigrating to Toronto, Canada in 1990, she co-founded "The Salon of Poetry, Music and Theatre." Collaborating with Kazimierz Braun and her daughter, Agata Pilitowska, they have presented many original plays about celebrated Polish women, including actress Helena Modrzejewska, artist Tamara Lempicka, and singer and actress Pola Negri. She also

created an Actors' Studio to introduce young people of Polish origin to the stage. She has received awards for her contributions to the Polish arts: the Medal of Polish Senate, Cross of Merit by the President of the Republic of Poland, "Gloria Artis" medal, "Distinguished Advocate of Polish Culture" title by the Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage, and the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Polish Culture, Miami, in 2011. In 2013, Ms. Nowotarska and Ms. Pilitowska performed the play, *Radiation* about Marie Sklodowska Curie, at FIU as part of the Blanka Rosenstiel Lecture Series on Poland.



**Agata Pilitowska**, a graduate of the Krakow School of Drama, has portrayed many famous and accomplished Polish women in over 100 stage productions throughout North America, South America and Europe. Her successful collaboration with her mother, Maria Nowotarska and Kazimierz Braun in "The Salon of Poetry, Music and Theatre" in Toronto, Canada has earned her widespread acclaim and recognition. Her artistic achievements have been honored with the title of "Merited for Polish Culture"

conferred by the Polish Government, and in 2006 she received the prestigious medal "Gloria Artis" from the Minister of Culture and the National Heritage of Poland along with her mother.

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