

Masterful Recital by Marek Drewnowski in Austin



Marek Drewnowski during his concert in Austin, photo by Jacek Gwizdka

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Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka (*Austin, Teksas*)

Endless Standing Ovation - This was the reaction of the audience gathered at the University of Texas Recital Hall in Austin to the masterful

performances of Chopin, Scarlatti, and Bartók by Marek Drewnowski. „It was a feast for the soul,” people said after the concert. „A wonderful cultural event - may there be more like this!”

Before the concert, the audience had the opportunity to watch a short film directed by Krzysztof Zanussi, *Chopin's Concerto*, which transported them to the era of the great composer. Chopin's Piano Concerto in E minor, presented with rich visual elements, resonated throughout the Royal Łazienki Park in Warsaw. The staged scenes and period costumes recreated the authentic 19th-century atmosphere, with Marek Drewnowski himself playing the role of Fryderyk Chopin. After the film, the piano virtuoso appeared on stage in Austin.

The first part of the concert featured sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti as well as Chopin's mazurkas and waltzes. Scarlatti's inclusion in the program was symbolic - it was Drewnowski's performance of Scarlatti's sonatas, broadcast on American radio, that began his acquaintance with Leonard Bernstein, ultimately leading to a performance of Brahms' concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Tanglewood and opening the doors of the world's greatest concert halls to the young pianist.

The second part of the concert included Chopin's songs interpreted by Franz Liszt and a bravura performance of Béla Bartók's 1926 sonata. In this challenging, modern composition, Drewnowski showcased his extraordinary artistry, masterful technique, and unique interpretation. The pianist's energy and vitality spread to the audience, who stood up and applauded after each section.

We can also say: Bravo, Maestro! We are thrilled to have had the rare and exceptional experience of hearing a pianist of such caliber live.

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Marek Drewnowski during his concert in Austin, photo by Jacek Gwizdka



The audience during Marek Drewnowski's concert in Austin, photo by Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka

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MAREK DREWNOWSKI PIANO

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 26, 2024
6:00-8:30PM**

MUSIC & RECITAL HALL BUILDING AT UT AUSTIN
Recital Studio, MRH Room 2.408
2406 Robert Dedman Drive, Austin, Texas

Join us for a special piano recital by Maestro Marek Drewnowski, featuring works by Scarlatti, Chopin, Liszt, and Bartók. Preceding the recital is a free screening of "Chopin's Concerto", directed by Krzysztof Zanussi and starring Drewnowski as Chopin.

Presented by the Austin Polish Society, this event is a must for discerning music connoisseurs. Don't miss your chance to hear a world-class pianist discovered by Leonard Bernstein.

Tickets: \$20. Students: Free.
For details and tickets, visit austinpolsociety.org or scan the QR code.





Marek Drewnowski and Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka after the concert

See also:

The Wisdom of a Great Master

The concert was organized by the Austin Polish Society, the organizer of the Austin Polish Film Festival, which will take place from November 7-10, 2024.

<https://www.austinpolfilm.com/>

Marek Drewnowski's Summer Concerts in Polish Residences



Marek Drewnowski during an outdoor concert at the Mała Wieś residence, photo by J. Gwizdka

In the spring and summer of 2024, renowned Polish pianist and champion of Fryderyk Chopin's music, **Marek Drewnowski**, captivated audiences with a series of concerts in extraordinary venues: the Museum of Romanticism in Opinogóra, Royal Łazienki Park, and the Palace in Mała Wieś. Each performance was not only a top-tier musical experience but also an opportunity to appreciate the beauty of art in some of Poland's most historic settings.

For many years, Drewnowski has been dedicated to promoting Polish culture worldwide. His work extends beyond the concert stage—he also conducts masterclasses, records albums, and collaborates with distinguished artists, including

Krzysztof Zanussi, who featured Drewnowski in the film *Chopin's Concerto*. These events, where art intertwines with history and the beauty of surrounding gardens, consistently attract a large following of music enthusiasts.



Krasinski Residence in Opinogóra, photo by Andrzej Sokołowski

Museum of Romanticism in Opinogóra

On April 28th, the 38th meeting of the „Eliza’s Salon” series took place in the Palace Orangery, hosted by **Zofia Humiecka**. The event featured **Piotr Witt**, a historian and essayist who has lived in Paris for many years, and **Marek Drewnowski**, who provided the musical accompaniment for the evening. Both men, closely connected to the legacy of Fryderyk Chopin, brought energy and charm to the event, creating

an unforgettable atmosphere.

During the evening, Witt shared reflections on his book *Inferno of Fame: A Treatise on Chopin* and discussed his experiences with Radio Free Europe. Interspersed with Drewnowski's performances of Chopin's compositions, the audience was transported back to the composer's era. Among the interesting facts shared was that Chopin used Scarlatti's sonatas as warm-up exercises before larger concerts—pieces that attracted the attention of **Leonard Bernstein**, who subsequently invited Drewnowski to collaborate.

Opinogóra, the historic seat of the Krasieński family, holds immense significance for Polish Romantic culture. It was here that **Zygmunt Krasieński**, one of Poland's great Romantic poets, created many of his works, making the Museum of Romanticism an ideal venue for events dedicated to Chopin.



Marek Drewnowski, Zofia Humięcka, and Piotr Witt, photo by A. Sokołowski



Zofia Humięcka and Piotr Witt, photo by J. Sokołowska-Gwizdka

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Royal Łazienki Park in Warsaw

Chopin concerts held at the Fryderyk Chopin monument in Royal Łazienki Park are a long-standing tradition, attracting music lovers and tourists from around the world. The monument, designed by **Wacław Szymanowski**, was unveiled in 1926 but destroyed during the war. Rebuilt in the 1950s, it has been the site of summer concerts organized by the Fryderyk Chopin Society since 1959. More recently, Stołeczna Estrada and the Royal Łazienki Museum have also helped organize these

concerts.

On June 2, 2024, **Marek Drewnowski** performed as part of this concert series. Despite occasional rain, the audience gathered in large numbers on the lawns, captivated by Chopin's music. Of particular note was Drewnowski's rendition of *Chopin's Songs*, transcribed by Franz Liszt as a tribute to his Polish friend. These same *Songs* will be featured during Drewnowski's upcoming concert in Austin.

Marek Drewnowski performing at the Chopin Monument in Royal Łazienki Park in Warsaw

Palace in Mała Wieś

The palace in Mała Wieś, located near Grójec, was built in the 18th century at the initiative of an advisor to King **Stanisław August Poniatowski**. Over the years, the estate was owned by several prominent families, including the **Zamoyski**, **Lubomirski**, and **Morawski** families, who not only oversaw the development of the palace but also played active roles in Poland's independence movements.

After World War II, the palace was nationalized and served various purposes, including as a school and a summer residence for Polish prime ministers. In 2008, it was returned to the Morawski family, and in 2015, it was purchased by **Leszek** and **Wiesława Barański**, who completed a thorough renovation. Today, the palace operates as a luxurious hotel and service center, with a restaurant, orangery, and rose garden.

On July 7, 2024, as part of the „Gardens Full of Music” series, **Marek Drewnowski** gave a concert at this enchanting venue. The intimate atmosphere, proximity to nature, and the beauty of the picturesque park created the perfect setting for a musical event that left a lasting impression on the audience. After the concert, attendees had the opportunity to meet the artist, who shared his passion for the history of the places where he performs and discussed his unique approach to interpreting Chopin's music.



The Palace in Mała Wieś, near Grójec, photo by J. Sokołowska-Gwizdka

Concerts Bridging Art and History

Marek Drewnowski's performances in Opinogóra, Royal Łazienki Park, and Mała Wieś were a rare opportunity to experience classical music in its most authentic form. These historic venues provided a one-of-a-kind atmosphere where the piano's sound could resonate with full depth and emotional richness.

Through events like these, tradition meets the present, inspiring new generations of music lovers and artists alike. Marek Drewnowski demonstrates that the music of Fryderyk Chopin and other great composers remains vibrant and timeless, finding its place both on the world's grandest stages and within the historic landscapes of Poland.

Compiled by: Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka

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