

POLAND

The Warsaw Movement

by Alessandro Gandolfi





Dancers from a Krakow dance company prepare for a show at Fort Sokolnickiego.



IN DARK AND THREATENING TIMES MUSIC OFFERS SOME RESPITE IN THE POLISH CAPITAL

In Warsaw, the capital of an increasingly nationalist and fervently catholic Poland, music offers some daily respite through levity and creativity.

Along the River Vistula there are numerous theatres, conservatoires, music and dance schools, philharmonic societies and music festivals. There is one for jazz lovers and one for electronic pop enthusiasts, one for lovers of contemporary music and one for Mozart, and naturally one dedicated to Poland's cultural hero.

The prestigious International Chopin Piano Competition, in fact, is the most important

piano competition in the world for pianists and is an event broadcast live on television across the nation. Once every five years (the most recent edition was held in October 2021) the competition transforms Warsaw into the world capital of classical music and visitors arrive from as far afield as Japan and South Korea as Chopin mania takes hold.

Music penetrates every corner of Warsaw. Piano concertos are held every Sunday in Łazienki Park, in the cafes along the city's most famous street Krakowskie it is not unusual to hear a young graduate play a Polonaise. It is also possible to sit on one of the city's marble benches that, at the press of a button, play Chopin's nocturnes.



A view of the city from the top of the Palace of Culture and Science. On the left is the Złote Tarasy shopping centre.



Students visit the Narodowy stadium, built for the 2012 European football championships.

Finalist in the Chopin Piano Competition, South Korea's Hyuk Lee is interviewed at the National Philharmonic.





A mural in a neighbourhood to the south west of the centre depicts political activist Jan Lityński.



A young woman applies lipstick while waiting at the bus stop for the Stare Miasto 02 bus.



Some students visit the POLIN, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.



At the Chmury bar in the Praga district.

Some young men admire the Cadillac that belonged to Józef Piłsudski and which is on display at the entrance to Łazienki Park.





A music student learns about conducting an orchestra in a room at the Chopin University.



Two young women arrive at an evening of music and theatre at the Polish Theatre Arnold Szyfman.

The concert hall is full for the International Chopin Piano Competition at the National Philharmonic.





In the basilica of the Church of the Holy Cross, where Chopin's heart is still conserved. On the 172nd anniversary of his death the orchestra prepares to play Mozart's Requiem, as is the tradition.



Two young women chat at the Paloma Nad Wisłą café.



In a rehearsal room at the Chopin University of Music the eventual winner of the International Chopin Piano Competition, Canadian pianist of Chinese heritage Bruce (Xiaoyu) Liu, prepares for his performance in the final.



A view of the city and the Świątokrzyski Park from the top of the Palace of Culture and Science.



A pregnant woman is photographed by her friend at the Neon Museum which commemorates a form of lighting that became popular after the Second World War.



Diners at the U Wieniawy restaurant dedicated to the Polish General Bolesław Wieniawa-Długoszowski, who is depicted in the portrait on the wall.



At the National Philharmonic, during the International Chopin Piano Competition, attendants and spectators wait for the concert hall to open.



The Nowy Świat-Universytet underground stop, which opened in 2015.



In a practice room at the Fazioli piano company, Spanish pianist Martín García García, who eventually came third in the International Chopin Piano Competition, prepares for the final concert.



A Polish actress takes a break from filming outside a hairdressing salon.

A night-time view of Solidarność Avenue with the Royal Castle on the left.





At the National Philharmonic, during the International Chopin Piano Competition, a spectator takes a photograph with Japanese pianist Kyohei Sorita (who eventually came joint second in the competition together with Italy's Alexander Gadjeiv).



At the Koncertowa Fryderyk Hall, Japanese pianist Sohgo Sawada prepares for an evening recital after being eliminated in the second round of the International Chopin Piano Competition.



People enjoy an autumn walk in a park in the city.



A student prepares for a flute exam in a room at the Chopin University of Music.

