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## **THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS OF POLISH CHILDREN FOLK ENSEMBLES**

The result of Poles' emigration was a constant homesick of a family country. It caused the formation of Polonia communities cultivating national traditions. Through the cooperation of the Polonia with organizations and social communities in Poland, it was possible to maintain the Polonia communication with the home country. The best way to maintain the national identity was the presence of Polonia in the homeland. The folklore festivals organized in Podkarpacie served this purpose perfectly.

The aim of this work is to present the history as well as the organization and process of Festivals of Polish Children Folk Ensembles.

The research material consists of source documents collected in the Documentation Center of the Polish Art Movement of the "Wspólnota Polska" Association (branch in Rzeszów).

The "Wspólnota Polska" Association sought to cooperate with Polish and Polish-American organizations in order to create Polish community festivals in Poland. An example of such a festival was the Festival of Children's Polish Folklore Groups. These festivals were organized in Iwonicz-Zdrój due to the infrastructure of the spa. Concerts were held in many cities of the Podkarpacie region. The organizers of the festival were: the Provincial Office in Krosno, the Municipal Office in Krosno, the City and Commune Office in Iwonicz-Zdrój and the Provincial Culture Center in Krosno. Local authorities, as well as private and individual companies, were also involved in its organizations. Individual tasks were dealt with by committees set up by the Festival's organizing office. The festival program consisted of contests, gala concerts and a number of accompanying events. Every year, 6-17 children's ensembles participated in the festivals. The Festivals of Polish Children Folk Ensembles was a chance for Polish children to get to know and cultivate the traditions of their ancestors. Children also had the opportunity to interact with their peers from Poland and exchange experiences, as well as practice Polish.

**Keywords:** folklore, Polonia, festival, community, social groups.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Rzeszow branch of the Polish Community Association included 4 cities from Podkarpackie Voivodeship: Krosno, Przemyśl, Tarnobrzeg and Rzeszów. This part of the Republic of Poland was especially predisposed to have folk ensembles blossomed for hundreds of thousands of people have emigrated from these particular provinces over many decades. The descendants of the old exile, as well as the contemporary emigrants are numerous and respectable community members in the countries of current residence. Scattered around the world, trying hard to settle down, looking for financial stability, they did not

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forget about their old country. They often reminisced about it, and many of them sacrificed a lot in order to visit their homeland once again. Having members of their families, friends and acquaintances in Poland motivated the emigrants to make the trip back home.

In Poland, there were many social organizations that fostered contacts between Polish emigrants and their homeland by organizing various events, symposiums and festivals, including the festival of folklore ensembles. The Polish Community Association worked hard to fill their statutory obligation of fostering the relationship between Poles and people of Polish origin living abroad hence the Rzeszow branch would organize international festivals every year, especially during the summer season, in order to meet the expectations of Polish communities from abroad<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this work is to present the history as well as the organization and process of Festivals of Polish Children Folk Ensembles.

## 3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research material consists of source documents collected in the Documentation Center of the Polish Art Movement of the “Wspólnota Polska” Association (branch in Rzeszów).

## 4. THE ROLE OF THE POLISH COMMUNITY IN ORGANIZING THE FESTIVALS

Hundreds of thousands of job seekers emigrated from Rzeszów and its neighboring towns and villages. The result was that the area has become the cradle of Polish-American folklore festivals in recent decades. Its culture and traditions made our fellow countrymen abroad feel nostalgic for folk culture. The Polish-American song and dance bands were able to present authentic Polish culture, its richness and beauty as well as the history and national heritage of our country; they soon became very popular and arose admiration among different societies. Rzeszów folk festivals inspired other countries to host similar events, for instance in America, Canada, France, Belgium and Sweden. Not only did the festivals remind the Polish communities abroad about their national heritage but also, and most importantly, they made Polish folklore popular abroad<sup>3</sup>.

The festivals enabled former citizens of Poland to return to the place once called Galicia. They returned after many years in the persons of their children. Now they who could not cross the Bug River before were, finally, able to visit the previously forbidden part of Poland and admire the riverbanks of Wisła, San or Wisłok<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> M. Grudzień, *Raduje się serce...* [w:] *II Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, Krosno–Iwonicz-Zdrój 1994, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, *Drodzy, najmłodszy przyjaciele*, b. p.

<sup>4</sup> *Serdeczne powroty* [w:] *III Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, Krosno–Iwonicz-Zdrój 1997, b. p.

The Polish Community Association striving to develop strong ties between the Motherland and Poles living abroad eagerly supported the cooperation of all Polish and Polish-American organizations. As a result, the festival participants were treated as members of extended Polish family. They felt as if they were at home. One of the main aims of the Association was to promote and organize courses of Polish culture and language, summer camps, courses for teachers, floral workshops, art festivals, sports competitions and other events that took place in Poland<sup>5</sup>.

The Association undertook numerous efforts to sustain the ties between the Polish Community abroad with Poland stronger and more prosperous. Throughout the years, many supporters contributed to the projects. Social activists, the authorities and institutions of southeastern Poland that for years have created a favorable atmosphere have been significantly helpful whereas the largest and most important projects have turned out to be the festivals of folk groups<sup>6</sup>.

## 5. FESTIVAL CITIES

Since their first launch, the festivals were organized by the community centre in Krosno with the main location of the festival in Iwonicz-Zdrój.

Iwonicz-Zdrój is located in the valley of Beskid Niski, in the district of Krosno, and in very specific climatic conditions. The location of the city is linked to the good state of the environment, which is a necessary condition for the functioning of spa treatments. The city offered therapeutic stays as well as fitness and weight-loss facilities to artists and holiday-makers. They also organized camps, green schools, trainings, conferences and various events. Amongst many others, sanatoriums offer neurological, rheumatic, orthopedic, digestive or otolaryngology treatments. The best values of the village are clean air and the location perfect for walking around the town whilst admiring the historic architecture, or even visiting the neighboring towns. The available facilities such as: indoor swimming pools, saunas, salt caves, gyms, tennis courts, an outdoor swimming pool with a children's playground and a volleyball court can help you to relax and rest. Tourists have the opportunity to practice winter sports, for instance cross-country skiing and downhill skiing on a professional downhill slope with a ski lift<sup>7</sup>. For the convenience of sanatorium patients and tourists some walking paths or cycle lanes around the spa and between the spas in Iwonicz and Rymanów have been created after 2000<sup>8</sup>. The places worth seeing are located in the old town and some of them are even dated back to 1837<sup>9</sup>.

Iwonicz-Zdrój has a long-standing tradition of organizing cultural events. This tradition dates back to 1837. Vincent Pol, Kazimierz Chłędowski, Ferdinand Hoesik and Władysław Bełz wrote about the social life, parties, concerts, balls and lectures in Iwonicz-Zdroj<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, Drodzy, najmłodszy przyjaciele, b. p.

<sup>6</sup> A. Stelmachowski, *Chłuba Polonii i Polski* [w:] *II Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, Krosno–Iwonicz-Zdrój 1994, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> P. Komornicki, *Iwonicz Zdrój zaprasza* [w:] *VI Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, Iwonicz-Zdrój 2006, b. p.

<sup>8</sup> J. Michalak, *Iwonicz Zdrój i okolice*. Krosno 2003, p. 53–54.

<sup>9</sup> J. Michalak, *Iwonicz Zdrój*. Krosno, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> J. Michalak, *Iwonicz Zdrój i okolice*. Krosno 2003, p. 49–50.

Even nowadays, apart from participating in festivals, the visitors could take part in vocal and acting workshops, folklore festivals of the Carpathian Euroregion and the Kropa regional contest of folk songs and folk music. A number of other artistic events, leisure activities, meetings with authors, lectures and exhibitions of folk art were organized too. On top of that, sports and recreation events such as international road runs and ski jumping competitions were put in motion<sup>11</sup>.

The origins of Krosno date back to the eleventh century when on a hill close to Wisłok an agricultural settlement was founded. Krosno is a medium-sized city. It is, however, one of the major industrial centers in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. The biggest company in that region is Krosno Glassworks. Because of its location and tradition, this area is widely considered to be the capital of Polish oil. In Podkarpacie, especially in the region of Krosno, worked Ignacy Łukasiewicz. The first mines and oil refineries were created there<sup>12</sup>. The city was substantially prosperous between XIV and XVII century. Krosno was an important center of trade and commerce. Some important trade routes leading to rich Black Sea ports and Hungary crossed there. Merchants from Krosno stored Hungarian wines that were supplied to the royal and magnate courts. Krosno was also famous for brewing, linen and drapery making. For centuries it was a multicultural city. The population of Krosno consisted not only of Poles. Other occupants came from Germany, Russia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Scotland, the Netherlands and Armenia<sup>13</sup>.

Krosno, which used to be called “parva Cracovia” (small Kraków), is located in the southern part of the Podkarpackie region. It captivates the beauty of medieval churches and historic houses<sup>14</sup>. The downtown of Krosno has a well-preserved urban layout and a lot of valuable monuments. In that area there are more than 60 historic buildings coming mostly from the XVI, XVII and XVIII century<sup>15</sup>. Historic ‘beauties’ of the city are the Gothic church, the bell tower with one of the biggest bells in Poland (called Urban), Franciscan Gothic church and late Baroque church of Capuchin<sup>16</sup>.

The unique atmosphere of Krosno is created by cultural events, which are usually organized by the Community Centre in Krosno. From the beginning, they were responsible for organizing concerts, theatrical performances and other events. The most popular events were the Theatre Festival in Krosno and some outdoor events, which were hosted regularly, such as the fair in Krosno, Hungarian wine festival or Mountain Balloon Competition, which is the most spectacular event in the city. Krosno is also an ideal base for exploring the surrounding areas of Beskid Niski and Pogórze. Fans of hiking can explore Czerwonozki Protected Landscape Area, in which there is a reserve of rock ‘Prządki’ and the ruins of the Castle “Kamieniec”; Aleksander Fredro’s, one of the greatest Polish writers, masterpiece ‘Zemsta’ is based on the events that took place in this castle<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> P. Komornicki, *Iwonicz Zdrój zaprasza* [w:] *VI Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>12</sup> S. Kłos, *Krosno i okolice*. Warszawa 1987, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> J. Michalak, *Iwonicz Zdrój...*, s. 121–122.

<sup>14</sup> *Krosno – niepowtarzalne miasto w wyjątkowym miejscu* [w:] *VI Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>15</sup> S. Kłos, *Krosno...*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> *Krosno – niepowtarzalne miasto w wyjątkowym miejscu* [w:] *VI Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

## 6. ORGANIZING THE FESTIVALS

For years, The International Festivals of Polish Folklore in Rzeszów was attended by many teams consisting of two age groups with separate programs for adults and children, for example 'Krakowiak' from Boston, 'Lech' from Toronto, 'Kultura i Tradycja' from Coureelles les Lens, 'Warszawa' from Dijon, 'Mazur' from Le Creusot and many others. Taking into consideration the art value and the program, the organizers of the festivals in Rzeszów had always wanted to separate the adult performers from the children performers. These dreams came true thanks to the hospitality of Krosno authorities and the courage of young artists and their parents, who agreed to let them visit Poland and participate in the festival<sup>18</sup>.

These young artists came from various parts of the world in order to visit the homeland of their ancestors. Love and appreciation for national culture, traditional folk music, singing and dancing, united them in a beautiful and special way<sup>19</sup>.

By participating in this extraordinary event, the young could socialize; make friends with other contestants of Polish origin from European countries or different continents<sup>20</sup>.

The youngest artists presented Polish folklore on festivals in Rzeszów with joy and pride, and also graced dozens of events in the countries of their residence with their presence.

The achievements of Polonia teams and their great skills not only did testify about artistic talents and immense diligence, but also about patriotism and love for Polish culture. These teams have become the pride of the Polish community abroad and of Poland. Moreover, they met with high praise in their countries. In the era of mechanical music, computers and satellite television, love to folk music – rooted in the rich tradition of folk culture – has become a testament to the deep humanism and unrelenting bonds of different cultures and different nations<sup>21</sup>.

During one of the festivals Prof. Andrew Stelmachowski, the president of the Polish Community Association said to the participants: Cultivation of Polish culture is one of the most important tasks for our *community*. The awareness of national belonging, identification with the community of the same traditions, especially for compatriots residing abroad, is the foundation to build something more; it is not just a way to answer the question of who I am, who my parents are, or who my grandparents were<sup>22</sup>.

The organizers of this project were the representatives of the Polish Community Association, people who are selflessly committed to maintaining the ties with our compatriots abroad and some other volunteers, lovers of culture who are often not fully appreciated. The town councilors from Iwonicz and the management of spas helped to organize the festival. They made a great effort to ensure that the stay for young artists were pleasant and joyful<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, *I Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> P. Komornicki, *Serdecznie i gorąco witam wszystkich* [w:] *Informator. 4 Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, Iwonicz-Zdrój 2000, b. p.

<sup>20</sup> S. Jucha, *Tu są wasze korzenie* [w:] *II Polonijny Festiwal...*, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> A. Stelmachowski, *Chłuba Polonii i Polski* [w:] *II Polonijny Festiwal...*, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, R. Sudyka, *III Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych – podsumowanie*, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> S. Jucha, *Tu są wasze korzenie* [w:] *II Polonijny Festiwal...*, p. 5.

This city became their second home throughout the entire festival<sup>24</sup>. The representatives of the youngest generation were greeted here warmly and treated as the pride, joy and hope of Poland and Polish community abroad<sup>25</sup>. The first festival director was Ryszard Sudyka. He held this function for three consecutive launches of the festival. Then, from 2000 to 2009 Mariusz Grudzień took over the responsibilities of the director. Andrzej Zajdel and Nina Wojturska became artistic managers and choreographers who collaborated with Alina Kościółek-Rusin, Roman Małkiewicz and Mariusz Koziółkiewicz<sup>26</sup>.

## 7. PREPARATION FOR THE FESTIVAL

Preparations for such a large international event lasted many months. Practically, the first steps towards the next festival usually take place during the current one. Networking, gaining new contacts, accepting the early registrations for next year are conducted even though the current festival is not finished yet. The festival guests were taken care of to such an extent that without any reservations they expressed a desire to return again<sup>27</sup>.

The organization of the festival was coordinated by the Organizing Committee appointed by the governor in consultation with the Rzeszow branch of the Polish Community Association. The funds for the organization of the festival came from the contributions of participants, the Polish Community Association and the Local Municipality Government in Krosno<sup>28</sup>.

As it was previously established, the Polish Community Association was responsible for organizing the visits of teams for the festival, the costs of transport, accommodation, food, publishing houses, as well as the costs associated with the implementation of the program of the festival. The mayor of Iwonicz-Zdrój was responsible for preparing the facilities, such as the stage and its design for the festival. The Municipal Office organized proper lighting, sound system and stage design in the market of Iwonicz-Zdrój<sup>29</sup>.

The festival Organizing Office established by the community centre in Krosno conducted legal and economic activity. The office presented the estimated budget to the Association and the Voivode of Krośnienski region to approve the costs of the event<sup>30</sup>.

The artistic staff of the festival looked after the participants attentively and carefully. In addition, each team participating in the festival was taken care of by a guardian. The guests from abroad, stayed in the most beautiful parts of southeastern Poland for over a week. It was a time of hard work and strenuous preparations. This challenging experience, however,

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<sup>24</sup> P. Komornicki, *Serdecznie i gorąco witam wszystkich* [w:] *Informator...*

<sup>25</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, *Drodzy, najmłodszy przyjaciele*, b. p.

<sup>26</sup> ARCKP, R. Sudyka, *Tożsamość tańcem i śpiewem zapisana*, b. sygn., p.1-2.

<sup>27</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, R. Sudyka, *III Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych – podsumowanie*, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, *Porozumienie*, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *IV PFDZF Relacje zewnętrzne*, sygn. T-064, *Sprawozdanie z IV Polonijnego Festiwalu Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060..., s. 1.

enabled them to share their impressions with their families and friends after returning to their countries<sup>31</sup>.

The organizers of the festival were: the national board of the Polish Community Association and its office in Krosno, Municipality of Krosno, Community Centre in Krosno and Municipal Office in Iwonicz-Zdrój<sup>32</sup>. The festival was organized according to some organizational and artistic rules. They impose the need to present an independent concert lasting about 45 minutes on each team. For the opening concert and a gala concert a part of the program presented by each group was chosen. Each team must have its own full accompaniment. The organizers expected the individual teams to present the dances from the area of their residence. They did not employ any Polish artistic staff in the form of choreographers, accompanists or members of folk bands. Teams should have their own costumes. However, in some special cases, the organizers, if only they had been previously informed, tried to prepare some folk costumes. The participants of the festival were obliged to strictly follow the program prepared by the organizers, Participation in rehearsals and concerts, street animations and other events were compulsory. The event program was given to the participants upon the arrival in Iwonicz. The program of the festival consisted of the following information: arrival and accommodation of the teams, the teams departure after the festival, information about the festival: ceremonial opening of the festival, the gala concert, parade through the streets, performances of live bands participating in the festival, in cities and municipalities of the Krosno province. There were also some accompanying events such as fairs of folk art works, visiting the museums, excursions, discos, bonfires, performances by Polish amateur artistic groups, meetings with the organizers of the festival and concert organizers<sup>33</sup>.

Traditionally, more tourists, students and youngsters visit Poland in summer. This country is not known for its tropical heat waves that could attract tourists and yet this is the when a vast number of Polish emigrants plan their trips to the homeland in order to see Poland once again, to visit their relatives and memorable places, enjoy the scenery of the Carpathian Mountains, the Tatra Mountains and the Baltic coast<sup>34</sup>.

## 8. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PAST FESTIVALS

An agreement between the Rzeszow branch of the Polish Community Association, and the Governor of the Krosno about the preparation and the organization of the festival was signed before organizing The I International Festival of Polish Folklore in Krosno and Iwonicz. As a result, The I International Festival of Polish Folklore was held between 11<sup>th</sup> –19<sup>th</sup> July in 1992<sup>35</sup>. Six teams from 5 countries, over 200 people came to Poland<sup>36</sup>. That first festival became an important event, not only for the young people from the Polish Community, but also for the inhabitants of the Subcarpathian area. Since that, it became

<sup>31</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, *I Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Założenia artystyczne i organizacyjne festiwalu* [w:] *III Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>33</sup> *Założenia programowo-organizacyjne* [w:] *III Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>34</sup> L. Jeczeń, *Polonijne lato, to nasze wspólne lato* [w:] *II Polonijny Festiwal...*, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, *Porozumienie...*, p. 1–2.

<sup>36</sup> ARCKP, R. Sudyka, *Tożsamość tańcem i śpiewem zapisana...*, p. 1.

a permanent event in the region of Krosno<sup>37</sup>. The second launch was held in 1994 – the number of participants doubled at that time. There were already 13 teams from 10 countries and a total number of over 350 participants. Three years later, in 1997, the third festival was organized in which more than 250 participants from 10 teams participated<sup>38</sup>. From 14<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2000 The IV International Festival of Polish Folklore was held. Once again, the hospitable land of Krosno welcomed the dancing and singing young people from Polish communities abroad. That time 12 teams from 10 countries visited Poland. Belarus was represented by a team of ‘Raduńskie Słowiki’ from Radunia under the direction of Mrs. Franciszka Gabis, the Czech Republic – ‘Łączka’ from Bistrita, Canada – ‘Biały Orzeł’ and ‘Mała Lechowia’ from Toronto, Lithuania – ‘Truskaweczka’ and ‘Zgoda’, Latvia – ‘Kukuleczka’ from Daugavpils, Russia – ‘Gaik’ from St. Petersburg, from Sweden, Norrköping – ‘Malwa’, from the US, Boston – ‘Krakowiak’, from Ukraine, Vinnitsa – ‘Rainbow’, from Hungary, Budapest – ‘The two Bratanki’. Similarly to the previous years, the main location of the festival was Iwonicz-Zdrój. The IV festival, which started on 15<sup>th</sup> of July, was entitled ‘A farewell to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century’<sup>39</sup>. All subsequent events organized by the Polish communities either in Poland or in other countries marked the beginning of the new twenty-first century and the new third millennium<sup>40</sup>. The V International Festival of Polish Folklore was held between 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2003. It was a great celebration of joy and youth<sup>41</sup>. It was attended by 16 teams from a record number of countries – 11. VI launch was held in 2006. It gathered more than 400 people, 13 different teams from 5 countries. The VII festival brought together yet the greatest number of participants. There were 17 teams and more than 500 people dancers. There were some teams that had participated in majority of the previous editions among the participants of this festival. The record holders are: ‘Zgoda’ from Lithuania, which performed in Iwonicz 5 times and ‘Mała Lechowia’ from Canada and ‘Gaik’ from Russia participated 4 times. Several of the teams participated in the festival three times. These were: ‘Łączka’ from the Czech Republic, ‘Karolinka’ from Belarus, ‘Dwa Bratanki’ from Hungary, ‘Koroliski’ from Ukraine and ‘Malwa’ from Sweden<sup>42</sup>.

The singers and dancers were watched by thousands of spectators during the festival concerts. This number was difficult to estimate as concerts were held in the open air on summer stages in the town centers, in health resorts from Nowy Żmigród to Solina and Ustrzyki Dolne. Sometimes the weather conditions did not allow to host outdoor concerts. One of the gala concerts was held in the cinema ‘Wczasowicz’ in Iwonicz due to bad weather conditions.

During the festival, the teams performed more than 20 times. They executed their routines every day in Iwonicz, several times in Krosno, Polańczyk, Brzozów, Dukla, Jasło, Lesko, Nowy Żmigród, Rymanów, Sanok, Ustrzyki Dolne and Zagórz. They were welcomed warm-heartedly, rewarded with ovations and invited to visit once again. After each

<sup>37</sup> S. Jucha, *Tu są wasze korzenie* [w:] *II Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, Krosno–Iwonicz-Zdrój 1994, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> ARCKP, R. Sudyka, *Tożsamość tańcem i śpiewem zapisana...*, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *IV PFDZF Relacje zewnętrzne*, sygn. T-064, *Sprawozdanie z IV Polonijnego Festiwalu Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> M. Grudzień, *Folklor łagodzi obyczaje* [w:] *Informator. 4 Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, Iwonicz-Zdrój 2000, b. p.

<sup>41</sup> J. Kurp, *Drodzy młodzi przyjaciele* [w:] *Informator. 5 Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, Iwonicz-Zdrój 2003, b. p.

<sup>42</sup> ARCKP, R. Sudyka, *Tożsamość tańcem i śpiewem zapisana...*, p. 1.



show the children returned to Iwonicz feeling happy and fulfilled. They were very often given some nice gifts by the locals. Thanks to that, they returned to their families, schools and their Polish community with valuable experience, memories and interesting stories. In return, they had a chance to move the spectators with their beautiful and unique performances and put a smile on their faces<sup>43</sup>. The highlight of the event in Iwonicz was that all the teams performed collaboratively in the opening concert and at the ending gala concert of the festival. An additional attraction were the daily afternoon concerts very popular among patients and guests. The young artists met with sympathy, hospitality and spontaneous and positive reaction of the audience both in Iwonicz and in other towns of Podkarpackie region<sup>44</sup>. The showcased dances were not evaluated or scored by the committees. The main purpose of the event was to show the results of their hard work and that is why the Polish community festivals were joyful and spontaneous<sup>45</sup>.

The International Festival of Polish Folklore in Iwonicz-Zdrój and the accompanying events taking place in all major cities and the municipalities of the Krosno province have become one of the largest and most important events of the Polish Community Association.

The audience was particularly astounded and touched by the youngest performers, who have just fallen for the folk music and folk dances. They aroused a particular fondness and longing for the homeland of their ancestors, the Polish language and culture. Joy and emotions intertwined with each other, when foreign language chatter of children on stage turned into a well-known, though perhaps not very often performed song 'Płynie Wisła płynie, po polskiej krainie...' <sup>46</sup>.

The children's folklore teams prepared for the Polonia Festival in Krosno and Iwonicz-Zdrój during artistic workshops. The Polish Community Association had been preparing a packed program throughout the whole period prior to the summer holiday, which permanently entered the calendar of local events. Hence, it adopted the name of 'The Polish Community Summer' <sup>47</sup>.

As a part of the 'The Polish Community Summer' in our region, lovers of folk songs and dances took classes in the School of Polish Dances in Rzeszów. Many young choreographers were educated there. The annual workshops of Polish dances, which train many lovers of folk dances during the holiday season, are always heavily occupied<sup>48</sup>. A summer business school operates in the city of Rzeszów and trains and educates young businessmen from Ukraine. In this way, they help young Poles from Ukraine to set up their own firms; companies or organizations so as to gain the knowledge of corporate governance and improve their knowledge of the market economy.

During the festival, Iwonicz-Zdrój was filled with youth and enthusiasm of the participants as well as with the limitless colors of Polish folk costumes. You could hear the folk

<sup>43</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, R. Sudyka, *III Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych – podsumowanie...*, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *IV PFDZF Relacje zewnętrzne*, sygn. T-064, *Sprawozdanie z IV Polonijnego Festiwalu Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> ARCKP, R. Sudyka, *Tożsamość tańcem i śpiewem zapisana...*, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> M. Grudzień, *Raduje się serce...* [w:] *II Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, Krosno-Iwonicz-Zdrój 1994, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> M. Grudzień, *Folklor łagodzi obyczaje* [w:] *Informator. 4 Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, Iwonicz-Zdrój 2000, b. p.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*.

songs and music resounded for many days of the festival, and not only on stage, but in every corner of Iwonicz-Zdrój where the young participants enthusiastically performed the folk art pieces<sup>49</sup>. Many colorful parades of folk dancers took place at the Dietla Square too<sup>50</sup>. The youngest members of Polish Community abroad were invited by the authorities of the Krosno province, who appreciated and understood the need for the development and support of these great and deep-rooted traditions of Polish folk culture not only here in our country but also among millions of Polish emigrants scattered around the globe<sup>51</sup>.

The International Festival of Polish Folklore has become an excellent opportunity to showcase the city and the Voivodeship in a colorful and attractive way<sup>52</sup>. It can be achieved thanks to the young Polish people from around the world performing the national dances and songs are presented around the world<sup>53</sup>.

The International Festivals of Polish Folklore, which are located in the picturesque scenery of Iwonicz and the surrounding areas, begun to be considered just as important as the festivals in Rzeszów. These events, involving the youngest participants of the Polish Community abroad, have already become a fixed celebration of Polish heritage in the cultural calendar of this region. Moreover, the number of participants, not even taking into account the number of dancers who wanted to participate in the festival but could not come, testifies how important it is for the Polish Community abroad to support the Polish traditions and to educate the younger generation about Polish heritage<sup>54</sup>.

It has been noticed that during each consecutive festival, the dancers and their performances have been masterfully reaching new levels of this difficult craftsmanship called folk dancing. The beautiful concerts, exceeded the expectations of the organizers and the spectators. At each successive festival one might have easily observed the development of folk art, the results of hard work of the choreographers, musicians and teachers of Polish language. The festivals would have never come into existence if it was not for the effort and dedication of parents and educators who taught the young hearts and minds to respect and love other people, culture and the world. Majority of the participants came to the Podkarpackie region once again, which created the possibility to compare the development of the contestants. They were getting better with every following festival, and gradually, they were turning into authentic and professional dancers. The dance bands meticulously worked on the dance technique and the selection of appropriate costumes and music. The children's festivals were an experience that cannot be compared to any other. It was a unique way to experience Polish culture and traditions by participating in a folk festival in the homeland of their ancestors. Every single performance of the youngest contestants caused happiness and emotions among the members of the audience. The fact that these little 'Poles', who often were the fifth generation living abroad, had so much energy and enthusiasm that they attracted peers of other nationalities, and together they were singing and dancing Polish folklore, which made this celebration even more unique and soul-stirring<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> P. Komornicki, *Iwonicz Zdrój wita serdecznie* [w:] *Informator. 5 Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>50</sup> P. Komornicki, *Serdecznie i gorąco witam wszystkich* [w:] *Informator. 4 Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>51</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060, *Drodzy, najmłodsi przyjaciele*, b. p.

<sup>52</sup> T. Markowski, *Drodzy młodzi przyjaciele* [w:] *Informator. 5 Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>53</sup> P. Komornicki, *Iwonicz Zdrój wita serdecznie* [w:] *Informator. 5 Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>54</sup> T. Markowski, *Drodzy młodzi przyjaciele* [w:] *Informator. 5 Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>55</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *Polonijne Festiwale Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych*, sygn. T-060,

## 9. CONCLUSION

The International Festival of Polish Folklore in Iwonicz-Zdrój is one of the events that gives joy and hope to all folklore enthusiasts, to all people who love, appreciate and respect the deeply-rooted traditions of folk art and Polish heritage. Because of that, many new dancers and singers are willing to discover the world of Polish folk art and they are keen on becoming members of newly-created song and dance ensembles in Polish communities around the world. The participants of the festival in Iwonicz are children under 15 years of age. A large part of these dancers come from the eastern border of Poland. All the teams present Polish folk art with grace, charm and childlike simplicity that captivates and entertains the audience and makes them feel genuine joy and delight<sup>56</sup>.

The festival is a testament to the cultural wealth of our nation and the creativity of the young generation of Poles from our country and abroad. We should be thankful to those activists who, through traditional folk dances and songs nourish the greatest Polish traditions. The festival in Iwonicz-Zdrój interested lots of young people from all over the world who wanted to get to know the Polish culture and visit the most beautiful places in our country. These events provided all the participants with many unforgettable memories<sup>57</sup>. The festival is an important educational and patriotic happening, which proudly presents the beauty of the Polish language in many dimensions – not only in the songs, music and dances but also in much wider context. Cultivating the national traditions is extremely important for it helps to preserve the bonds between Poles and the Polish emigrants. The participants of the event came from various parts of the world, from different continents and countries. They only know the homeland of their grandfathers and fathers from the stories of their relatives and from the media coverage. This short stay in Poland during the festival encouraged them to promote the Polish culture and traditions with even greater enthusiasm in the area of their current residence<sup>58</sup>.

How great a nation is can be mirrored by how people respect their traditions and their national heritage. The more devoted they are, the more eagerly they should inform their countrymen about their achievements. It is primarily important when it comes to our compatriots living abroad, who thus provide the next generation with the enthusiasm to continue the national folk traditions. Being interested in the achievements of Poles may not be enough. The contacts and bonds between Poland, Poles and Polish emigrants must be strengthened. The festival in Iwonicz enabled the youngest members of the Polish community abroad to proudly present their achievements in sustaining the tradition of Polish folk art and allowed them to experience a direct contact with the country of their ancestors, their residence and Polish heritage. This type of meetings of young Poles from abroad with Polish youth living in the country have contributed to exchanging experiences, making friends, expanding their knowledge about Polish culture, and thus maintaining their national identity<sup>59</sup>.

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R. Sudyka, *III Polonijny Festiwal Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych – podsumowanie*, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> M. Grudzień, *Folklor łągodzi obyczaje* [w:] *Informator. 4 Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>57</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *IV PFDZF Relacje zewnętrzne*, sygn. T-064, *List Wojewody Podkarpackiego Wiesława Różyckiego do Piotra Komornickiego*, Rzeszów 14.07.2000 r.

<sup>58</sup> J. Kurp, *Drodzy młodzi przyjaciele* [w:] *Informator. 5 Polonijny Festiwal...*

<sup>59</sup> ADPR, Teczka: *IV PFDZF Relacje zewnętrzne*, sygn. T-064, *List Marszałka Województwa Podkarpackiego Bogdana Rzońcy do Mariusza Grudnia*, Rzeszów 26. 06.2000 r.

After taking into consideration all of these facts, one may conclude that the Podkarpackie region is passionate about Polish folk art and creates favorable conditions for the development of all those who love and appreciate it<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> M. Grudzień, *Folklor łagodzi obyczaje*. [W:] *Informator. 4 Polonijny Festiwal...*

### POŁONIJNE FESTIWALE DZIECIĘCYCH ZESPOŁÓW FOLKLORYSTYCZNYCH

Wynikiem emigracji Polaków była ciągła tęsknota za krajem rodzinnym. Powodowała ona tworzenie się polonijnych społeczności kultywujących tradycje narodowe. Dzięki współpracy Polonii z organizacjami i wspólnotami społecznymi w Polsce możliwe było utrzymanie łączności Polonusów z krajem ojczystym. Najlepszym sposobem na podtrzymywanie tożsamości narodowej była obecność Polonii w kraju ojców. Doskonale służyły temu organizowane na Podkarpaciu festiwale folklorystyczne. Celem niniejszej pracy jest przedstawienie historii oraz organizacji i przebiegu Polonijnych Festiwali Dziecięcych Zespołów Folklorystycznych. Materiał badawczy stanowią dokumenty źródłowe zgromadzone w Centrum Dokumentacji Polonijnego Ruchu Artystycznego Stowarzyszenia Wspólnota Polska Oddział w Rzeszowie. Stowarzyszenie „Wspólnota Polska” dążyło do współpracy polskich i polonijnych organizacji celem utworzenia festiwali polonijnych w Polsce. Przykładem takiego festiwalu był Festiwal Dziecięcych Polonijnych Zespołów Folklorystycznych. Festiwale te organizowane były w Iwoniczu-Zdroju z uwagi na infrastrukturę uzdrowiska, a koncerty odbywały się w wielu miastach Podkarpacia. Organizatorami festiwalu były: Urząd Wojewódzki w Krośnie, Urząd Miejski w Krośnie, Urząd Miasta i Gminy w Iwoniczu-Zdroju oraz Wojewódzki Dom Kultury w Krośnie. W jego organizację włączały się także władze samorządowe, a także firmy prywatne i indywidualne osoby. Poszczególnymi zadaniami zajmowały się komitety powołane przez Biuro organizacyjne festiwalu. Na program festiwalu składały się koncerty przeglądowe, galowe oraz szereg imprez towarzyszących. W festiwalach brało udział co roku od 6 do 17 dziecięcych zespołów. Festiwal Dziecięcych Polonijnych Zespołów Folklorystycznych były dla polonijnych dzieci szansą na poznanie i kultywowanie tradycji swoich przodków. Dzieci miały też okazję nawiązywać kontakty ze swoimi rówieśnikami z Polski i wymieniać doświadczenia, a także ćwiczyć język polski.

**Słowa kluczowe:** folklor, Polonia, festiwal, wspólnota, grupy społeczne.

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