

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to announce that Saint Louis Polonia Inc., in collaboration with [Lira Ensemble of Chicago](#), is currently working on a gala concert to celebrate 100 years of Poland's independence. The event is tentatively scheduled to take place on **Sunday, December 9, 2018, at 2 PM at 560 Music Center** (formerly known as COCA) in University City.



The Lira Ensemble is the nation's only professional performing arts company specializing in Polish music, song and dance. Its mission is to bring the best of Polish culture into American life. Founded as the Lira Singers in 1965, the ensemble now makes about 50 appearances per year in the Chicago area, across the Midwest, occasionally around the nation, and has made six concert tours of Poland. Lira presents the full spectrum of Polish music and dance, both classical and folk, with informative and witty English language narrations that explain the traditions and history behind the works performed. Polish Americans have long trusted Lira as an expert culture bearer. Lira has won high praise, as well as awards, for its series of concerts performed jointly with Mexican Americans and African Americans and its outreach concerts for the American Jewish community, as well as outreach to other ethnic groups.



The proposed gala will be a major (2-hour) concert in celebration of Christmas and the 100th Anniversary of the Re-Birth of Poland. It will be performed by the Lira Singers, Lira Dancers and Lira Chamber Players and it will be narrated in English. The program will include beautiful Polish and American carols, patriotic and light classical music, folk songs and dances in authentic regional folk garb. This production is a major organizational and financial effort required to support 35 members of the Lira Ensemble including singers, dancers, musicians and support staff. Such performances typically cost from \$40,000 to \$60,000.

Despite our efforts, we were unable to secure a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to date, although in the past Lira Ensemble did receive consistent support from NEA. Projected revenue from ticket sales will cover approximately 50% of the cost. Saint Louis Polonia Board committed \$5,000 toward this project. With support from Washington University in St Louis, we have also secured the venue. However, we can't meet our goal without raising an additional \$20,000. As community leaders, we have responsibilities that often require us to step outside our comfort zones. **Thus, I am asking you to join our fundraising effort and identify individuals and corporations or institutions who can provide support for this project.** This is a unique opportunity to bring together the entire Polish-American

community in the St Louis area to celebrate our heritage, pride and joy of freedom.

Our contractual deadline for this pledge is **June 25, 2018**. Please contact me via e-mail or telephone if additional information is needed about sponsorship levels and associated benefits.

Regards,
Jarek Czernikiewicz
President

Saint Louis Polonia Inc.
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