

Remarks: CMR Reception, Beethoven Easter Festival April 2, 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen. Szanowni Panstwo. Good evening. Dobry Wieczor. It is Elaine's and my pleasure to welcome you here this evening. Before I continue, please join me in congratulating tonight's performers, Doris Yarrick Cross, artistic director of the Yale School of Music's Opera program, and the organizers and sponsors of the Ludwig Van Beethoven Easter Festival for bringing us an evening of beautiful music. Thank you for sharing your talent and your hard work.

Tonight we are celebrating cooperation between two leading Polish and American cultural institutions, the Ludwig van Beethoven Foundation and the Yale School of Music. For sixteen years now, the Beethoven Foundation has organized an Easter Festival, which has become a premiere musical and artistic venue, with many of the most brilliant artists of our time gathering in Poland for concerts and master classes.

It is thanks to the Easter Festival that we were able to enjoy tonight's performance of *L'amore dei tre re*. Americans got an opportunity to hear Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Warsaw Philharmonic Choir, while our Polish friends got to hear five exceptionally talented American performers: Eric Barry, Jorge Prego, David Pershall, Sara Jakubiak, and Nikolai Didenko.

In fact, I believe Mr. Barry and Mr. Prego performed during last year's festival. It's good to see you again, and thank you for your excellent performance. We hope to see you all again next year.

I'm also honored that the Yale School of Music is with us again this year, as is the Yale Club of Poland. As many of you know, Krzysztof Penderecki himself spent some time at Yale. Tonight's performance, just like last year's performance, is yet another fruit of that residency from many years ago. It's also an apt illustration of the benefits that come from cultural and educational exchanges, which build bonds of friendship and reinforce shared understanding.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Elzbieta Penderecka and the Ludwig van Beethoven Foundation for the significant role you play in bringing American musicians to perform in prestigious venues in Poland. This is the second year that I've had the pleasure of being part of the Easter Festival, and it's already become one of my favorite events on the cultural calendar.

So, Pani Elzbieta, thank you for your hard work and dedication, and thank you for giving us all a reason to be here tonight. With that, I'd like to offer you the microphone.