



# Polish Profiles

## The Cabaret Man

By: **Kaya Mirecka Ploss**, Ph.D., Executive Director  
Jan Karski Institute, Baltimore, MD

Ja sam nie wiem, czy ja liryk  
Czy piosenkarz, czy satyryk  
Czy poeta, czy kupieciarz,  
Tyle wiem, zem Kabareciarz.

I don't know if I am a lyrical man  
Or a satire man  
Or maybe a poet, or just a rhyming man  
But this I know, that I am a Cabaret man.

That little frivolous poem written by Marian Hemar, described him to the teeth. That's how Marian Hemar was known and that is how he is remembered. But there was much more to him. Hemar's real name was Jan Marian Hersheles. He was born in Lwów in 1901. There in Lwów he studied medicine for four years, but never finished. Instead he became a Cabaret Man.

Always ready to serve his country, Hemar was very patriotic and served in the Polish Army in the years 1919 and 1920. That Polish-born Jew plucked a leaf from a tree in his garden in Warsaw before he left Poland in 1939, never to return, and kept that leaf between the pages of a poetry book until he died. That Polish leaf plucked from his garden, was put at his request in his coffin 33 years later.

One of the best Literary Cabarets in the twenties was the famous Qui Pro Quo in Warsaw. After a successful career in Lwów as a newspaper columnist, and a writer for the city's Cabaret, Hemar moved to Warsaw. There he joined the Qui Pro Quo. Luminaries of the art world like Fryderyk Jarossy, Konrad Tom, Hanka Ordonówna, were already well established there.

In the late twenties, Hemar met his future wife, the well known actress Maria Modzelewska. She had a pleasant, though small, singing voice. It was for her that Marian Hemar wrote his best known songs. But before he met Modzelewska, Hemar was deeply infatuated with a small time singer, Olga Ziemilska. Unfortunately, the lady was married. Hemar seriously believed that he couldn't live without her and tried to commit suicide by shooting himself right through the chest. Fortunately he survived; otherwise we wouldn't have known that beautiful song "NIKT TYLKO TY," which he wrote for his next love and childhood friend from Lwów, Janina Romanówna. For her he also wrote the song "NADEJDĄ KIEDYŚ TAKIE DNI."

When Marian Hemar first met his "true love", as he often said, Maria Modzelewska was married to a well-known architect, Stefan Norblin, and she never gave Hemar a second glance. Yet he won her over with his songs written especially for her. The song "WSPOMNIJ MNIE" won not only Modzelewska's heart, but all of Poland's. The next songs written for her were just as successful. They were "PENNSYLVANIA" and "KTO INNY NIE UMIAŁ BY TAK DRĘCZYĆ JAK TY". The fourth song "CHCIAŁABYM A BOJE SIĘ" was known, whistled and sang by everybody.

Together with Modzelewska, Hemar established in Warsaw the TEATR NOWA KOMEDIA. There he directed not only his own plays, but adapted for the stage numerous well known writers' plays and books, which he also directed.

In 1935, Marian Hemar made a great and serious decision. Mostly he did this for his beloved "Marysia". In that year Hemar converted to Catholicism. Soon after he and Modzelewska married in a Catholic ceremony, the two bought a large and beautiful villa with a garden on Madalińska Street in Warsaw.

They seemed to be very happy, yet after only four years of marriage, Modzelewska wanted out of the marriage. In September 1939, when the war was already raging, on the fifth day after the outbreak, Modzelewska packed her belongings and left.

Marian Hemar departed a few days later, first for Lwów, and from there to Romania, then France and finally, in 1942, he settled in London, England. Soon after he was busy

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## Heifer had a little farm

By: **Justyna Ball**

Five bucks may not buy much these days. But if you put your mind to work, you may come up with an idea of how to use it to the fullest. Like putting several kids and babcia in your car, and driving to the nearest Heifer farm. Because that's how much it would cost you to enter (per car) its 260 acres, and to be provided with an entire day's worth of entertainment for the whole bunch.

I spent last weekend there entertaining others. For a few years now, my family has been volunteering proudly representing Poland at Heifer's Global Village. We cover one event in June and the harvest festival in October.

For those unfamiliar with the project, Heifer's primary mission, when created, was to breed animals and distribute them all over the world in areas where livestock is most needed. These days, rather than being shipped, the animals are bought in the country to help the economy and save on transportation.

Until now, Poland was one of these places, although as a member of the EU, it's probably less and less dependent on Heifer. The headquarters of the Carpathian region are based in Warsaw. We can trace every Polish family in the Podkarpacie area that received a sheep or a goat.

When communism fell, the new government was preoccupied with the more or less important problems while many farmers had a hard time surviving the new reality. Heifer came to the rescue. Then when in the 90s, some farmers lost their animals due to floods, Heifer reached out to them as well.

The foundation's goals of "working with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the Earth" go beyond its boundaries. Poland is an example where the political situation plays no role. There will always be someone left out. The part that I like the most is that people do not just receive an animal, but they learn to share it (by giving away the firstborn) with others and the "gift of giving" continues...

It all started with Dan West, an American relief worker who distributed powdered milk to the children of Spain during the Spanish Civil War when he realized that, "These children don't need a cup, they need a cow." To make a long story short, heifer cows were picked, because they were young and the families who received them were obligated to give a female offspring to another family in the village and so on.

Look through the pages of the online catalog and you will discover that, for example, \$150 buys you a llama, \$20 will

get you a share of it, or you may pay \$30 for the gift of honeybees. Water buffalo may not be appreciated in Slovakia nor a camel in Romania, but it will make some, let's say Filipino family, very happy. And look at the benefits! It is used for power for planting rice and potatoes, for milk, its manure for fertilization but also for ... fuel. And all it eats is the grass that is not "suitable for harvesting." How cool is that?!

The farm located in Rutland, MA, is an education site and is open to the public for a variety of events throughout the year. Locals from neighboring churches visit, as well as busloads from as far as New York. Volunteers either live on the farm, like students from Texas or Mexico and some even from Poland) and others only come for the event, from states like Vermont or New Hampshire.

My own first encounter took place when a Heifer representative came to my local senior center with the slide show on Ukraine. Someone suggested that I set up a Polish display to introduce Poland alongside. And I'm glad that I came, because the slide show showed no distinction between Poland and Ukraine, so at first I just rolled my eyes, sighed, and then decided to put my foot in the door to see what I can do to improve understanding of other cultures (mainly the Polish culture).

It turned out that Heifer hosts an annual International Fair where countries like Ghana, Kenya, Guatemala, China, Chile, Mexico represent areas of the organization's posts. The United States is represented by Maine, and Poland covers Central and Eastern Europe.

I found out that the so-called Global Village was a camp-like setting of tents and clay huts spread out in the woods, and from whatever your site was, you could barely see another. On hot summer days your only access was through a dusty narrow road, which on rainy days, the path turned muddy. Child volunteers would help to bring your stuff to the site.

They used to carry it all in a wheelbarrow. Back then there was only one, so if you were late (once we were stuck on the main road, behind a cavalcade of motorcycles!), the wheelbarrow was already being used in... the animal parade.

Still, I was more than happy to become their "Polish liaison." I took over the tent with no floor but full of people constantly tripping over the tree roots. Typical were live chickens picking up the crumbs of my gingerbread cookies and vanilla fudge candy from Poland called "krowka" with a cow logo. On hot days, we served an apple mint drink from Poland or blackcurrant juice, both chilled. Student helpers made cutouts keeping the children busy, while I had a chance to chat with their parents and introduce them to Polish

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## NEWS OF POLONIA

### A MONTHLY PUBLICATION

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Annual Subscription Rate - \$25.00

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## Calendar of Events

**To Jan 4, A Blessing to One Another: Pope John Paul II and the Jewish People, Exhibition at Getty Gallery, Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Info at www.skirball.org**

**To Jan 21, 2009, Santa Ana - All The World's a Stage, Modjeska' Arden at Old Courthouse Museum,, 211 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Info: at (714) 973 6605  
www.ocparks.com/oldcourthouse**

**29 - Dec 5, Polish Heroes: Those Who Rescued Jews (Opening reception: October 29, 5 - 7 p.m.), exhibition at Hillel at Stanford University. Info: (650) 736-1199.**

**31, Fri, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. The Lady and the Star: How Modjeska Conquered late Nineteenth Century America, Old Courthouse Museum, 211 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Santa Ana: Reservation are required (714)973-6610.**

**29, Sat, Andrzejki Dance sponsored by PNA-ZNP Group 3259 "Piast", at Polish Center of John Paul II, 3993 Rose Dr., Yorba Linda Info: Greg at (714) 744-2775.**

**Dec 7, Sun, 1:30 pm. Oplatek - luncheon and Awards Banquet sponsored by the Polish American Congress - Our Lady of the Bright Mount church hall in LA. Award recipients... Frank Kosowicz, Posthumous Awards Zbigniew Janczur and Henry Silka Advance reservations are necessary. More info on page 8...: Info: (626) 577 9797.**

**13, Sat, 5:00 pm. Christmas Celebration, Clubhouse7, Polish Club of Laguna Woods, Infor: (949) 206 9122.**

**14, Sun, Nativity Play & Christmas Eve Dinner by the Polish School at the Polish Center of John Paul II, 399 Rose Dr., Yorba Linda, CA; Info: (760) 863-5302.**

**31, Wed, New Year's Eve Dance, Pope John Paul II Polish Center, 3999 Rose Dr., Yorba Linda, CA, Info: (760) 863-5302.**

**Please send information for the calendar to Bish Petryka - e-mail: zbyskoopet@aol.com ★**