

# Little Moscow in Miami

Beata Paszyc

The American Institute of Polish Culture and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Poland sponsored the Polish movie *Little Moscow (Mała Moskwa)* at the 2010 International Film Festival "Romance in a Can." The film, directed by Waldemar Krzystek, was judged Best Film at Poland's National Gdynia Festival.

Polish, American, French, Italian and Cuban movie goes gathered for the presentation in the Tower Theater on May 8, 2010 and enjoyed Polish homemade sandwiches, wine and vodka sponsored by SELECT VODKA prior to screening.

Isabelle Lambert, Director of Romance in a Can, welcomed the audience and introduced Beata Paszyc, Executive Director of the Institute. Mrs. Paszyc together with her father, Professor Stefan Paszyc, prepared an introduction for the viewers on the historical background of life during the 1950s and 1960s in Poland. The visual presentation was done by Miriann Guazzini.

In her speech Mrs. Paszyc said: *The film "Little Moscow" is based on a true love story. In order to give you a better idea of how things were in Poland during the communist regime 1945- 1989, I asked my Dad who lived through those times to share with us his memories and personal stories from those gloomy days.*

*"Things that we take for granted...were virtually impossible during those times..."*

Professor Stefan Paszyc narrated the slideshow and explained: *It is true that it is hard to believe that the situations you are about to see in this movie really happened. Things that we take for granted, such as the baptism of a child, were virtually impossible during those times not only for Russians stationed in Poland, but for Poles who were part of communist party, military or police. I personally knew Communist party members who secretly baptized their children in church, often away from the cities they lived in. They did not participate during the ceremony fearing repercussions. In one such case, a Communist party high official lost his job when it came to the attention of the authorities that his children had their first communion in a Catholic church. He was the only bread-winner of a family with three children.*

He continued: *I would like to emphasize that as you watch this movie you should keep in mind that those things really happened. For me, a person who lived through WWII and the socialist regime that followed, the memories are still vivid. You have no idea of the damage totalitarian systems have made to peoples lives, to their minds and to their spirits. I am happy that those days are over and we can enjoy a democratic and economically stable Poland today.* ☺



Luis Sanchez, Isabelle Lambert, Christine Caly-Sanchez

*Little Moscow* is a smoothly produced period melodrama unfolding in the south-western Polish city of Legnica, headquarters to the Soviet forces stationed in Poland from 1945-90, "Little Moscow" traces the politically dangerous love affair between Vera (Svetlana Khodchenkova), the beautiful wife of a Russian military pilot, and Michał (seductive Lesław Żurek), a dashing Polish lieutenant. Delving into a period of Eastern bloc history not previously exploited by popular cinema, noted Polish writer-director Waldemar Krzystek paints a broad-strokes but no less affecting portrait of the tension-filled Soviet-Polish "friendship" of the times.

*"You have no idea of the damage totalitarian systems have made to peoples lives, to their minds and to their spirits."*





Paul, Teresa, Francesca Lowenthal



Beata Paszyc, Professor Stefan Paszyc



Matthew Wideroff and Katarzyna Drabiak



Dana Kyparisis, Professor Stanislaw Wnuk and Elzbieta Wnuk



Miriann Guazzini, Amedeo Guazzini

## Romance in a Can 2011

Melissa Szwanke

The movie festival is in its fifth year, with this being the fourth year of cooperation and sponsorship by the American Institute of Polish Culture. Running from May 5-10, 2011, the festival showcased films by independent European filmmakers, exposing South Floridians to European quality and innovation. The festival is the only one of its kind and serves the important role of presenting this creativity to the American market.

Two Polish films were featured in the festival, with screenings at Miami Beach Cinematheque and Florida International University. Additionally, films from France, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Germany, Romania and Spain were screened. ☺

**Robert Mitchum is Dead (2010)**, directed by Olivier Babinet/Fred Kihn in a Polish and French coproduction.



Franky (Pablo Nicomedes), an unemployed actor, is carried away by his manager in a stolen car. Arsène (Olivier Gourmet) claims that he has an appointment with Franky's idolized Director above the Arctic Circle. A "melancholic" odyssey across all of Europe.

**A Year of the Quiet Sun (Rok Spokojnego Słońca) (1984)**, directed by Krzysztof Zanussi.

Shortly after WWII an American soldier (Norman) and a Polish refugee (Emilia) fall deeply in love. Eventually he will return to USA and both expect that she will soon follow him.



Emilia's mother is sick but would recover by available medicine. Somehow the mother but not Emilia knows that there will only be one ticket. Realising that Emilia would never abandon her, the mother secretly throws away the daily doses given her by Emilia - and dies. Somehow Emilia discovers her mother's sacrifice and refuses to benefit from it. She gives the ticket to a female friend and retreats to a cloister. Decades later she learns Norman has died and has bequeathed his fortune to Emilia. From that moment Emilia's religious devotion flies away...

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