

# A celebration of Paderewski

**Paderewski Anniversary Concert.**  
**Joanna Lawrynowicz (piano), Arts**  
**Centre Great Hall, September 26.**  
**Reviewed by Martin Setchell.**

One hundred years ago, Christchurch was privileged to hear the legendary pianist, Ignacy Jan Paderewski.

To mark the anniversary, the Polish Association arranged this piano recital by a gifted young Polish pianist, Joanna Lawrynowicz. A winner of international competitions, she graduated from, and now teaches at, the Chopin Academy in Warsaw.

Reviewing Paderewski, my illustrious predecessors have referred to him as the poet of the piano, an interpreter of moods from the most powerful to the most tender.

Appropriately it was the poetry of Lawrynowicz's playing that impressed in a programme which included many works played here by Paderewski in September 1904.

Incidentally, I remain mystified by the popularity of Paderewski's Minuet in G; is it because everyone feels they can have a stab at this rather facile piece?

Petite of build and of hand, Lawrynowicz nevertheless packed punch when required, as for example in the double octave repetitions of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6 or the quasi-orchestral dramatic flourishes in his Funerailles.

But tender lyricism rather than power was her forte, and much of the beauty of her playing came from delicate understatement and exquisite contrasts of touch.

Especially satisfying was her use of limpid, singing tone in the right-hand melodic lines, supported by firmly

articulated basses and neutral-coloured harmonic filling.

Not surprisingly, she was at home in the all-Chopin second half, which extended the printed programme of famous waltzes, nocturnes and polonaises by three encores, ending with a fine account of the Fantasia-Improvisu in C-sharp minor.

More than merely an excellent piano recital, and an appropriate anniversary event, this was an intimate and heart-warming celebration of Polish artists and culture.