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**Celebrated Polish Musician of Contemporary Yiddish Music Performs
in United States for First Time**

*Ola Bilińska headlines Hanukkah event at Polish Embassy, brings repertoire
inspiring renewal of Yiddish culture to Bay Area, Los Angeles*

SAN FRANCISCO – Award-winning Polish composer and performer of contemporary Yiddish music [Ola Bilińska](#) and her ensemble, **Libelid**, continued their first-time U.S. concert tour this weekend when they visited the Bay Area on Saturday, December 8, for a free, public concert at the San Francisco JCC. San Francisco-based foundation [Taube Philanthropies](#) presented the concert, as a means to share Bilińska’s music with U.S. audiences. Photos are available at the links provided below.

At the 30th annual Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków earlier this year, the foundation recognized Bilińska’s contributions to Yiddish culture and music by honoring her with the foundation’s 2018 [Irena Sendler Memorial Award](#). She is the first musician to receive the award.

“Ola Bilińska’s acclaimed work has focused on preserving and celebrating Yiddish music through bringing traditional songs, both popular and obscure, back to life by presenting them in modern, compelling forms,” said **Shana Penn, executive director of Taube Philanthropies**. “In doing so, she honors artists of the past while presenting the wealth of Yiddish culture on the contemporary stage. She is clearly committed to the continuity of Yiddish culture in Poland and internationally.”

The December 8 concert was co-sponsored by [Taube Philanthropies](#), [Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington, D.C.](#), and the [Jewish Community Center of San Francisco](#), and co-hosted by the [Graduate Theological Union](#), Honorary Consuls for the Republic of

Poland in the San Francisco Bay Area, [Jewish Family and Children's Services](#), [San Francisco-Kraków Sister Cities Association](#) and [KlezCalifornia](#).

On December 3, Bilińska and Libelid, from Sejny, Poland, performed at a Hanukkah celebration at the Polish ambassador's residence in Washington, D.C. In honor of the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining independence and the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, Polish Ambassador Piotr Wilczek and Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer came together to host the candle-lighting and concert celebrating the intertwined cultural, culinary and social ties between their two countries.

"Poland values her Jewish community, and her doors are always open to our Jewish friends," **Ambassador Wilczek** shared in his remarks at the Hanukkah celebration. "The Jewish people have been an integral part of the fabric of our society." Together Ambassadors Wilczek and Dermer lit the Hanukkah menorah.

Also in attendance was **Janusz Makuch, director of the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków**, who was the first honoree of the Irena Sendler Memorial Award, in 2008, and the first Polish citizen to receive Israel's prestigious accolade, "Friend of Israel," in 2018. Makuch said of Bilińska during his remarks at the Hanukkah celebration in Washington, D.C., "Ola Bilińska is one of the most eminent, talented musicians who discovered for us the treasure of Yiddish music, created and composed mostly in Poland and Eastern Europe. She is living proof that when we come back to the source and interpret it in a modern way, we uncover the values of the so-called traditional world."

Following her appearance in San Francisco, Bilińska performed in Los Angeles on December 9, at the Pico Union Project.

"In the face of misunderstandings, conflicts, festering wounds and lack of dialogue, one of the routes to overcoming these obstacles is art," Bilińska said. "And the purest and most abstract of the arts – music – perhaps works the most profoundly, because it operates at the level of emotions; it refers to the deepest, most unnamed layers of our humanity."

PHOTOS FROM SAN FRANCISCO CONCERT:

[Photo 1](#) and [Photo 2](#)

Caption: Award-winning Polish composer and performer of contemporary Yiddish music Ola Bilińska (second from left) and her ensemble, Libelid, performed for the first time in the Bay Area on Saturday, December 8, 2018, at a free, public concert at the San Francisco JCC. San Francisco-based foundation Taube Philanthropies presented the concert, as a means to share Bilińska's music with U.S. audiences. Photo credit: John Orvis

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About Taube Philanthropies

For more than 30 years, Taube Philanthropies has been a leader in supporting diverse educational, research, cultural, community, and youth organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area, Poland, and Israel. Founded by businessman and philanthropist Tad Taube in 1981, and now led by Tad and his wife Dianne Taube, the organization works to ensure that citizens have the freedom and opportunity for advancement of their goals and dreams.

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