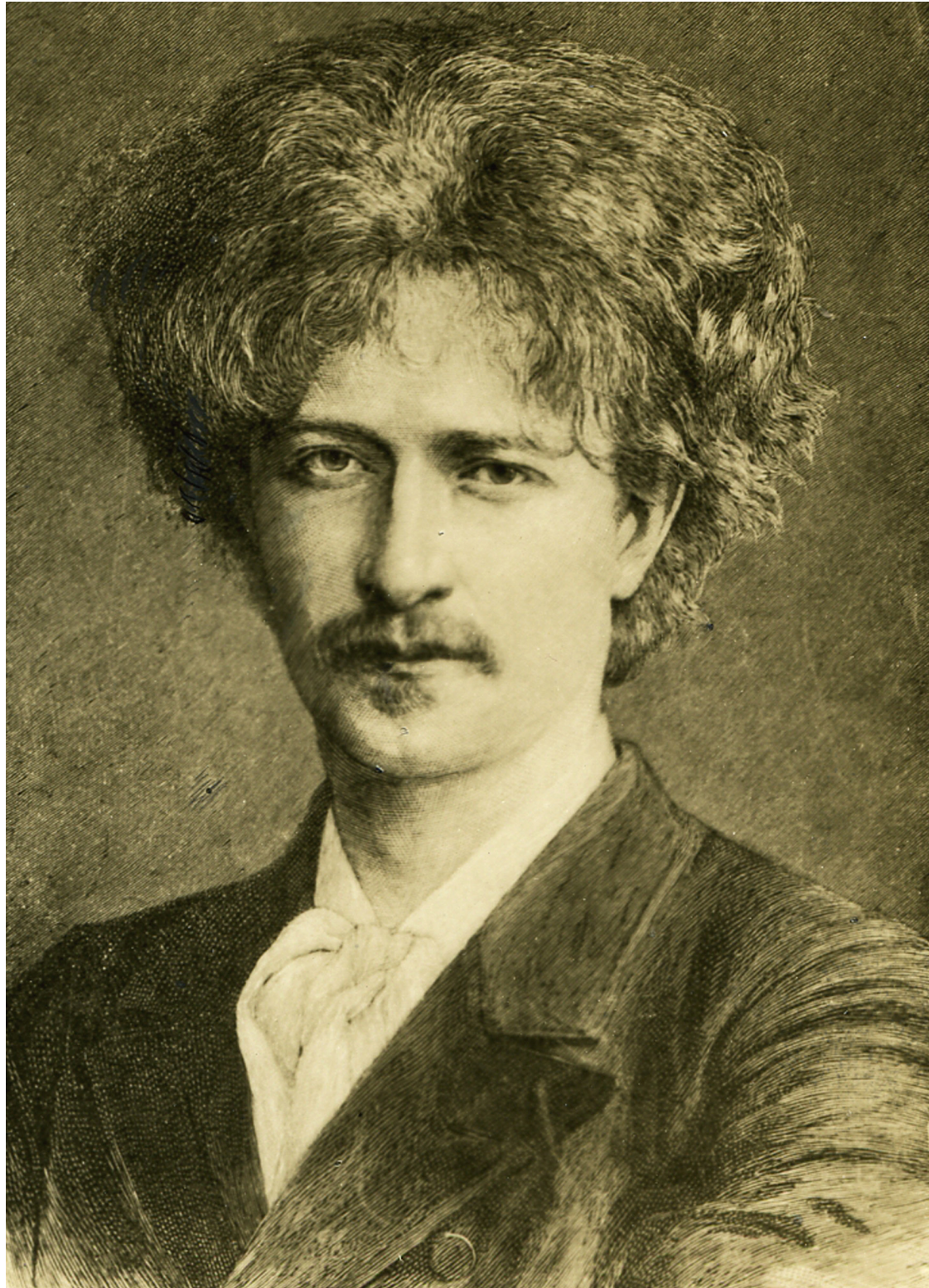


Ignace Jan Paderewski

Polish diplomat, pianist (1860 – 1941)



Paderewski was born in the village of Kurylowka, then in the Russian Empire (now Ukraine). At the age of 12 he was admitted to the Warsaw Conservatorium, and graduated in 1878. In 1884, he moved to Vienna, where he made his musical debut three years later. He soon gained great popularity and his appearances in Paris in 1889 and London in 1890 were major successes. His triumphs were repeated in the U.S. in 1891.

He was also a substantial composer, including many pieces for piano. In 1901, his lone opera, *Manru*, received its world premiere at Dresden, then made its American premiere in 1902 at the Metropolitan Opera.

At the height of his fame in 1913, Paderewski settled in the United States. A year later he bought a 2,000 acre property near Paso Robles, California, and began planting Zinfandel grapes.

During World War I, Paderewski became an active member of the Polish National Committee in Paris, which was soon accepted as the country's representative. Following the armistice, Paderewski became the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs for the newly independent Poland, and he represented it at the Paris Peace Conference. In the summer of 1919, he signed the Treaty of Versailles. After being abandoned by many of his supporters, Paderewski resigned in December 1919, and became Poland's ambassador to the League of Nations.

He returned to his musical life in 1922 and his first concert was held at Carnegie Hall, followed by a tour of the U.S. in a private railway car. In 1923, Paderewski was elected to the Century where he was a popular member, renowned for his wit. He was once introduced to a polo player with the words: "You are both leaders in your spheres, though the spheres are very different." "Not so different," Paderewski replied. "You are a dear soul who plays polo, and I am a poor Pole who plays solo."

In 1940, he became head of the Polish National Council, a parliament in exile in London. The 80-year-old artist also restarted his Polish Relief Fund and gave concerts to raise money for it. He died suddenly in New York in June 1941.