

*Stas and Stella's  
Mostly Traditional  
Polish Wedding!*



*By Ron Urbanczyk*

*Stas and Stella's Mostly Traditional Polish Wedding*

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# Dedication

This book is dedicated to my biggest fan and dear wife Kathy, who has supported and inspired me throughout my entire working and musical career.

Also to my children Lori and Brian, who have learned to enjoy the customs, traditions and music of our ancestors and my Mother Adele, for dragging me out to music lessons once a week with my accordion.

And to my fellow Polka Musicians especially the guys and girls from the City Side Band; Ted Szymanski, Jim Raczkowski, Gene Rzeznik, Bob Krupka and Dennis Ratajczak, and the Polka DJ's and the Polka Fans who keep our music playing on the radio, internet and in the dance halls. "Special Thanks" to my wife Kathy, daughter Lori, son Brian and Lynn Ginter for helping me with the proofreading and to Ted Szymanski for helping with the lyrics and music. Love you all!

*Music by:*



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## About the Author

Ron Urbanczyk earned both a Master and Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Technology from the State University of New York College at Buffalo. He held the title of Corporate Director of Performance Development at a leading Multi-national printing company where he managed several departments, including industrial engineering, productivity support, technical writing, training and development, and commercial technology evaluations. Ron has also led corporate productivity improvement, waste reduction and cost reduction projects.

Studying job activities and analyzing work places throughout his entire working career, has led Ron to become proficient at organizing, planning, scheduling and implementing improvement programs.

So why is Ron writing a play?

Ron is the type of individual who challenges himself to undertake new projects. This is his first attempt at fiction and theatrics. He is an accomplished musician and songwriter, plays the accordion, bass guitar, concertina and keyboard, and is one of only a hundred or so musicians specializing in “Northern European” ethnic music,

most often referred to as Polka Music in the United States today.

Ron has performed this music for almost 40 years and over these years, has helped to preserve many of his family's Polish traditions, including those surrounding the Traditional Polish Wedding. These traditions are brought to life in this book and play in a somewhat cynical, but amusing way.

Over the years, Ron has performed at hundreds of weddings, so he has some experience in how wedding receptions should be run. This experience was the most valuable asset Ron had in writing the script and music for this book.

Ron's first book, *The Fundraising Guide for Chairpersons*, focused on the planning and coordinating phases of fundraising events and working with volunteer workers.

This book brings out his creativeness not only in storytelling but also in detailing a production with musical adaptations.

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## **Table of Contents**

The Invitation .....	viii
Foreword .....	x
Cast.....	xv
Preface.....	xxiii
<b>Act One: The Wedding Ceremony (<i>Wesele</i>).....</b>	<b>1</b>
Act 1 - Scene 1: The Parents' Blessing.....	2
Act 1 - Scene 2: The Best Man Won! .....	7
Act 1 - Scene 3: The Wedding .....	10
Intermission One	
<b>Act Two: The Reception .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Act 2 - Scene 1: The Bridal Party.....	25
Act 2 - Scene 2: The Toast and Prayer.....	27
<b>Act Three: The Marriage Feast .....</b>	<b>32</b>
Act 3 Scene 1: Dinner is Served .....	33
Act 3 Scene 2: Cutting the Wedding Cake .....	45
Act 3 Scene 3: Stella's Bouquet.....	47
Act 3 Scene 4: Stas Throws the Garter .....	49
Intermission Two	



# The Invitation

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As with most wedding celebrations, one usually finds out all the details about the wedding on the “Invitation”.

The invitation in the case of Stas and Stella’s Mostly Traditional Polish Wedding is the admission ticket to this dinner theatre event.

Once the date and times have been locked in with the church, banquet hall and band, the wedding invitations can be printed.

The details of this audience participatory wedding event are printed on the invitation.

At the time of purchase and in the media ads, the invited guests will be asked to arrive early, wearing casual to formal attire, and to volunteer for a key role in the bridal party.

The admission ticket can be printed in a 5½”x 8½” format as shown in the sample that follows.

*You are cordially invited to attend  
Stas and Stella's Mostly  
Traditional Polish Wedding!*

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*At St. Zosia's Church  
Saturday, (month, day, year)  
Followed by an Adult Reception  
At The Potts Dinner Theatre  
123 Get Hitched Avenue  
Anytown, USA*

*Doors Open at 6:30 pm  
Show starts at 7:00 pm- Dinner at 8:00 pm  
Entertainment until 11:00 pm  
Presented by the City Side Players*

*Audience Participation is encouraged!*

*Sign up to play – Stas, Stella, The Best Man,  
The Maid/Matron of Honor or a Parent of the  
Bride or Groom! Dress Code – Casual to Formal!  
Call 123-456-7890 for details and reservations!*

*Admission: \$35.00 per person  
Cash Bar Available      Guest No. 001*

# Foreword

## *Stas and Stella's Mostly Traditional Polish Wedding*

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Audience participation adds to the enjoyment of any evening, and in following the lead of other interactive performances, Stas and Stella's Mostly Traditional Polish Wedding is intended to maximize audience involvement.

The invitations (tickets) suggest that the guests dress in formal or casual attire for the evening. Guests are encouraged to dress up as if they are attending an actual wedding.

As the audience enters the Banquet Hall, they will be escorted to their pews in St. Zosia's Church.

Members of the audience will be given the opportunity to play in a starring role such as Stella, the bride, or Stas, the groom, or as one of their family members. Volunteers can sign up to play these parts when they purchase their show tickets.

If a person does not want to be directly involved in the experience, they can just sit back and enjoy the show as an invited guest.

As this fun-filled evening and festive nuptial celebration with Stas and Stella unfolds, everyone will become a participant through many of the traditional song and dance opportunities throughout the evening.

From the start of the wedding ceremony, festivities happen all around. The main plot thickens as Stella's past relationships with the boys in the band are exposed one by one. The fun begins when Stella's secrets are revealed and the entire audience finds out that she has dated each member of the band at one time or another.

This causes everyone to think about the ghosts in their closets and brings back some haunting memories and embarrassing moments for the newly married couple.

You will need to stop and pinch yourself, as you get so involved in the action that you'll forget this is just a play.

The evening begins at St. Zosia's Church as the guests arrive and are seated as a guest of either the bride or the groom.

Before the wedding procession to St. Zosia's Church and the wedding ceremony, the soon-to-be married couple meets with their parents, family, and friends at the Bride's house for the traditional

“Parents’ Blessing,” the first of the Polish traditions to be enacted.

Following tradition, the boys in the band lead a procession to church.

Father Eugene, an old family friend, conducts the not so real, but funny wedding ceremony.

After the wedding, the “Newlyweds” greet their guests in a reception line. The guests proceed to their designated dinner table for the wedding feast.

Once the reception line is exhausted, the guests will be asked to take their seats and the “Wedding Party” is introduced.

Father Eugene will say grace and a couple of the groomsmen will present Stas and Stella with good luck toasts.

The guests will enjoy a traditional Polish Wedding meal that may include: a bowl of Chicken Soup (Rosół z Kury) and a traditional Polish Buffet that could feature Polish Sausage (Kielbasa), Breaded Pork Chops (Kotlety Schabowe), Sauerkraut (Kapusta), Mashed Potatoes (Kartofle Tłuczone), Cabbage Rolls (Gołabki) and filled dumplings (Pierogi).

Of course, no Polish Wedding would be complete without a wedding cake, the throwing of the bouquet and garter, the Unveiling Ceremony and live Polka music!

The “Party” continues with a live band, no sound system at this wedding. The City Side Band fills the night with traditional Polish Wedding songs, and polka and dance music.

In addition, it is essential at a Polish Wedding for the band to play these traditional songs: the Hokey-Pokey, the Dupnik, the Bird Dance and the Bridal Dance, (sometimes referred to as the Money Dance).

This will surely be the “Polish Wedding” of the year!

The music is so energetic and entertaining that you will not want to get off of the dance floor.

If you have never gone to a Polish Wedding or remember how much fun they were as a kid, Stas and Stella’s Mostly Traditional Polish Wedding is one you won’t want to miss.

Yes, there have been Italian, Irish and Greek interactive audience participation weddings but the Polish traditions, Polish foods and Polish music are all very different.

Come and be a part of this unique, interactive and mostly traditional experience.

# The Cast

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*(The author's main objective in writing this script was to feature the six members of the polka band. The rest of the cast (volunteers from the audience) for the most part, do not have talking parts. Any words out of their mouths will come from prompting or will be spontaneous! The characters in the play are meant to be fictitious. Any resemblances and similarities to actual people are purely coincidental.)*

### **Here are the City Side Players:**

1. **Ted – the master of ceremonies, the church organist, the leader of the band, vocalist, accordion and keyboard player.** He's called Teddy the Entertainer for a reason; he is entertaining. Ted keeps the show moving, provides insights to the customs and traditions being depicted, and shows off his musical talents throughout the night.

2. **Father Eugene – the parish priest of St. Zosia’s Church and also the bass and guitar player in the band.** Father Eugene is an old friend of the family and once dated Stella, although Stella did convince him to become a priest.
3. **Ron – a groomsman in the bridal party and the concertina player in the band.** Ron is a good buddy of Stas, however; he still adores Stella because they were high school sweethearts.
4. **Dennis — a groomsman in the bridal party plays clarinet and sax and is a singer in the band.** Dennis was Stella’s boyfriend around her twenty-first birthday. He remembers many good times with Stella and introduced her to beer, wine and liquor.
5. **Jim – a groomsman in the bridal party and the drummer in the band.** Jim has the biggest secret of them all; he meets Stella frequently and helped her make the decision to marry Stas. Stella tried to stop seeing Jim however; Jim has broad shoulders for her to lean on. Jim is Stella’s best friend next to Stas.
6. **Bob – the photographer and trumpet player in the band.** He is an amusing

character who seems to stick his nose into everything. They don't call him "Flash" for nothing. You better pay attention when he's around with the flash camera. Stella still regrets her one night out with Flash.

*Anyone can be a star in this play. The guests will be given the opportunity to sign up and volunteer for one of the key family roles in the play.*

*These characters do not have any lines to rehearse; they will, however, be directed by the band members occasionally on what to say and do. They will be encouraged to adlib whenever they want to.*

7. **Stas – the Groom** – a male volunteer from the audience will play the part of a “traditional” groom at the wedding. He is expected to participate in the traditional blessings and wedding ceremony, walk with Stella in the processions, wedding party introductions, sit at the head table next to Stella, cut the wedding cake, take verbal shots from the other characters and participate in the traditional Polish Wedding customs, which includes kissing the bride and participating in the songs and dances.
8. **Stella – the Bride** - a female volunteer from the audience, will play the part of a “traditional” bride at the wedding. She is

expected to participate in the traditional blessings and wedding ceremony, walk with Stas in the processions, walk down the aisle with her father, wedding party introductions, sit at the head table next to Stas, cut the wedding cake, take verbal shots from the other characters and participate in the traditional Polish Wedding customs which include kissing the groom and participating in the songs and dances.

*(An engaged couple seems like the best stereotypical couple to choose to play the roles of Stas and Stella, however, any couple will work regardless of the relationship, age or nationality. Two strangers might even be a better selection because of the situations they will be placed in. They may even become real good friends after this experience. Make sure neither came with a jealous partner, because kissing and close dancing will need to be tolerated!)*

9. **Best Man** – a volunteer from the audience. The best man plays an important figurehead role, but does not have much to do in the play. He will be part of the bridal party, an escort to the Maid/Matron of Honor walking her down the aisle and participating in the wedding party introductions, garter toss and unveiling ceremony, and will participate in the traditional dances.

10. **Maid/Matron of Honor** – a volunteer from the audience. The Maid/Matron of Honor plays an important figurehead role, but does not have much to do in the play. She will be part of the bridal party and will be escorted down the aisle by the Best Man. She will participate in the wedding party introductions, bouquet toss and unveiling ceremony, and will participate in the traditional dances.
  
11. **Mother-of-the-Bride** – a volunteer from the audience. The Mother-of-the-Bride plays an important figurehead role, but does not have much to do in the play. She will play a key role in the Parents’ Blessing and will be asked to join in the processions, be escorted down the aisle by a groomsman and will participate in the wedding party introductions, the unveiling ceremony and in the traditional dances.
  
12. **Father-of-the-Bride** – a volunteer from the audience. The Father-of-the-Bride plays an important figurehead role, but does not have much to do in the play. He will play a key role in the Parents’ Blessing and will be asked to join in the processions, and wedding party introductions. His main part will be to escort Stella down the aisle and to participate in the unveiling ceremony and in

the traditional dances. He is also responsible for paying the bills for the evening. (*This is a joke!*)

13. **Mother-of-the-Groom** – a volunteer from the audience. The Mother-of-the-Groom plays an important figurehead role, but does not have much to do in the play. She will play a key role in the Parents’ Blessing and will be asked to join in the processions, be escorted down the aisle by the Father-of-the-Groom, and will participate in the wedding party introductions, the unveiling ceremony and in the traditional dances.
  
14. **Father-of-the-Groom** – a volunteer from the audience. The Father-of-the-Groom plays an important figurehead role, but does not have much to do in the play. He will play a key role in the Parents’ Blessing and will be asked to join in the processions. He will accompany the Mother-of-the-Groom down the aisle and will participate in the wedding party introductions, the unveiling ceremony and in the traditional dances.

## **Costumes:**

1. Band members will be in tuxedos.
2. Father Eugene, will wear a black gown for the wedding ceremony and a tuxedo the rest of the night.
3. The rest of the cast will remain dressed as they are.

## **Props Needed:**

- *Programs with Songs Sheets*
- *Prayer Book for Father Eugene*
- *Black Judge's Gown*
- *Bread, Salt, Wine and Wine Goblet.*
- *Bottle of Vodka and Shot Glasses*
- *Genealogy Chart for Dennis (folded paper)*
- *Wedding Cake (provided by the caterer)*
- *Veil for Stella (piece of material)*
- *Stella's Garter*
- *Deck of Playing Cards*
- *Bouquet of Flowers for the Bride*
- *Flash Camera and Film or Digital Camera*
- *Unveiling Hat for Stas*
- *Veil or Czepek for Stella*
- *Chairs – at the Brides house, in St. Zosia's Church and for the Unveiling Ceremony.*  
*See seating diagram on the next page.*  
*Time Setting: 6:30 pm Doors Open –*  
*7:00 pm Ceremony Begins*  
*(Or when everyone is seated in church!)*

## Banquet Hall Set Up –

*Set up the dance floor with rows of chairs facing the bandstand separated by a center aisle as shown to accommodate all the guests.*

Chairs set up like a chapel  
(One for each paid guest)



**Scene Three:** Stas with Friends



**Scene Four:** The Wedding Ceremony

Fr. Eugene  
Stas-Stella

Groom's  
Side

Bride's  
Side



**Scene One:**

Parents' Blessing

X  
X

XXXXXX



**Scene Two:**

Procession to  
back of  
St. Zosia's



*All four scenes in Act One  
should be set up before the doors open!*

# Preface

## *Stas and Stella's Mostly Traditional Polish Wedding*

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“Tradition” is defined as an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior. It is the handing down of information, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth or by example, from one generation to another, without written instruction.

This may explain why no two families can agree on what the real “old country” tradition actually is. Over the years, each family has tweaked the tradition to fit their lifestyles and likes.

So **MY** traditions, the one’s our cast will be portraying, may just be a little different than those that you and your families may be accustomed to.

Growing up in a Polish family with grandparents who emigrated from Poland, meant every holiday was extra special and rich in tradition.

We always had many colorful decorations. All were handmade from left over materials. They always seemed to be bigger and better than store-bought decorations, too.

Most immigrant families carried on the customs and traditions of their homeland and those learned from the generations before them because they really didn't have any other way to celebrate the occasion.

My grandparents were among the many people who emigrated to the U.S. from Poland in the early 1900's. Both of my parents were first generation Americans and every holiday was an important day to celebrate their heritage. They would put up holiday decorations and knickknacks to liven up the walls and furniture for every festive occasion, which usually were connected to a religious holiday.

As a kid growing up, I looked forward to each holiday as it brought different traditional songs, foods and customs.

For instance, at Christmas, we looked forward to Wigilia, the meatless Christmas dinner, which included those special dough-filled treats called "pierogies" and mushroom soup made from those famous "string-dried" mushrooms from Poland. We also sang Koledy, the Polish Christmas hymns.

At Easter, smoked polish sausage (kielbasa) and ham, butter lambs and hard-boiled eggs, which we decorate and are called "pisonki", made up the Easter feast called the "Swięconka."

Easter Monday in Buffalo is equivalent to St. Patrick's Day, Mardi Gras and New Year's Eve. It is called "Dyngus Day" and celebrates the end of Lent with a ritual that consists of sprinkling water and being swatted by a pussy willow branch. The tradition goes back to the birth of Christianity in Poland 966 AD. The Polish-American celebration of Dyngus day only goes back 40 years.

We have all grown up following customs and traditions since we were born. At my Christening, I wore the "Family Christening Gown" which was made by my maternal grandmother in 1920 and has been worn by every aunt, uncle and cousin in the family since my mother's oldest brother was born.

This "Christening Gown" is over 90 years old and is now being worn by the fourth generation of cousins at their baptisms.

The next big event growing up in a Polish family was receiving your "First Holy Communion." This occasion meant a big party in your honor and more Polish customs in church and at home. It was also the first time you realized how generous your "Godparents" were and the type of gifts you could look forward to in the future.