

Polish Journey

Newsletter of the Polish Cultural Council • Vol. 24 • Summer/Autumn 2026

Message from the President

As the United States of America marks 250 years as a nation, we honor not only its defining history, but also the enduring hope that has carried this great country through every challenge. Across generations, Americans have come from different backgrounds, held different beliefs, and dreamed different dreams. Yet we have always shared a common future of hope.

This anniversary is an opportunity to remember that unity does not require uniformity. We can disagree with respect, listen with compassion, and work together with a shared commitment to the values of freedom, justice, opportunity, and dignity for all.

This year, Poles around the world mark an important anniversary as well. The strength of the Polish people has long been reflected in resilience, perseverance, and deep commitment to family, faith, culture, and freedom. Polish history is a testament to enduring extraordinary hardships while preserving identity, traditions, and hope. Courage and determination

continue to inspire future generations, demonstrating that true strength lies not only in overcoming adversity but also in supporting one another and building a better future.

No one recounted this history through cinema better than Andrzej Wajda, the world-renowned filmmaker who brought Poland's unwavering truths to the screen. He showcased the emotional and

political language of contemporary Polish film and the power that Polish cinema can yield. His films are a must watch chronicling of Poland's political and social evolution, paralleling modern Polish history.

The year 2026 celebrates the 100th anniversary of Wajda's birth. In honor of this historic milestone, the Polish Cultural Council is presenting a special program this August and

September featuring six of his epic films. We encourage you to come to all showings and experience Wajda's genius on the big screen.

In addition, the Polish Cultural Council will continue to sponsor our annual Polish Film Festival this November with film selections released in the fall. Plan to attend this highly professional and polished cinematic program embracing

Polish brilliance in film.

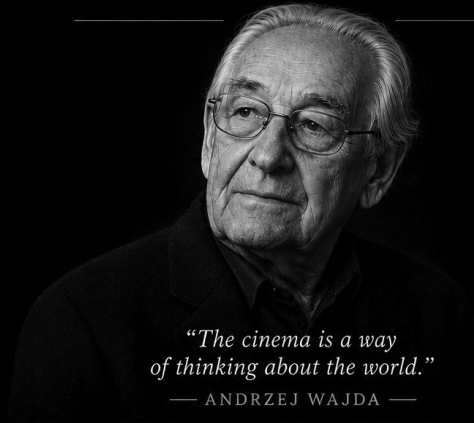
As we celebrate these anniversary milestones, may we recommit ourselves to being good neighbors, thoughtful citizens, and faithful stewards of the generations that will follow.

Happy 250th Anniversary America. Happy 100th Birthday Andrzej Wajda.

Warmly,
**Czesław/
Chester Wawrzonek**

— CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY OF —

ANDRZEJ WAJDA



"The cinema is a way of thinking about the world."
— ANDRZEJ WAJDA —

The year 2026 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Andrzej Wajda, one of the most influential filmmakers in world cinema.

— A FILM SERIES —

Ashes and Diamonds
(AUGUST 28)

Danton
(SEPTEMBER 3)

Man of Marble
(SEPTEMBER 10)

Man of Iron
(SEPTEMBER 17)

The Promised Land
(SEPTEMBER 24)

Wałęsa: Man of Hope
(OCTOBER 1)

— ALL MOVIES WILL BE SHOWN AT —

ROW HOUSE CINEMA
PITTSBURGH

Brodnica

By Magda Rybka



There is a region in Poland that is particularly close to my heart: Brodnica. There I have spent a large chunk of my life. There I spent quite a few winter and summer vacations and somehow, I never get enough of it. The Brodnica lake district spreads between the towns of Brodnica and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie.

The charm of this area depends on the purity of numerous lakes, fresh air and the density of forests. The blue and green landscape is really easy on the eyes. The soothing views of picturesque wetlands, fairly steep hills and the Drwęca river which crosses the region on its way from Dylewska Góra to Toruń are certainly worth seeing, enjoying and respecting.

Nothing here is especially big or spectacular but everything is nice, quiet and somehow touching. This land also offers human beings some sport opportunities. One can swim, cycle, do kayaking on lakes and rivers, exercise while picking mushrooms and blueberries. This winter season we even managed to do some cross-country skiing near the historic train station of Kaługa.

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"The opinions expressed by authors do not always reflect the views of the PCC."

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We took advantage of a nice biking path which leads along the nonexistent now rail route from Kaługa to the historic center of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie. This pretty little town is situated in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship. Its total population is about 10,089. It started its long history as a Prussian settlement, then it was invaded and conquered by Bolesław Krzywousty in the 12th century. In the 14th century, the town became a seat of the Teutonic Knights. In 1440, the town was a founding member of the Prussian Confederation, an association of towns and gentry that opposed the policies of the Order and wanted the region to become part of Poland. In the Second Peace of Thorn (1466) the Teutonic Order renounced any claims to the area, and the reincorporation of the town into the Kingdom of Poland was confirmed. Nowe Miasto Lubawskie became the capital of Nowe Miasto County. For the next few centuries in the aftermath of partitions and world wars the town changed hands a few times and then finally after 1945 Neumark was incorporated to Poland.

There is a small but pretty old town with partly preserved medieval walls with Gothic gates and towers which are nice examples of historic defensive architecture and of incredible craftsmanship of medieval masons. The most important landmark is Brodnicka tower which hosts the Muzeum Ziemi Lubawskiej. The exhibition shows many interesting historical objects picturing the lifestyle and the know-how of town inhabitants. In the market place you cannot admire the old town hall which was destroyed in 1807 and has not been rebuilt. You may see there though some cute townhouses and a large building of an old evangelical church which now hosts some cultural institutions.

In Nowe Miasto you may also visit the Gothic church of St. Thomas the Apostle dating from the 12th-14th centuries. The creation of the church was supported by Teutonic Knights. The church has the rank of basilica minor due to its beauty and historical importance.

Very close to Nowe Miasto Lubawskie is situated the village of Kurzętnik. In the Middle Ages it was a chapter town belonging to the capitulum of Chełmno. The castle was built there on the mount

called Kurnik (which can be translated as a chicken coop). It is primarily known to have been on the path of the army of Władysław Jagiełło to the nearby fields of Grunwald during the war with the Teutonic Order in 1410.

Now the place offers some surprising attractions. Besides a nice climb to the castle hill you will be also astounded to see an overwhelming ugly construction raised on Kurza Góra (Hen Mountain). Despite its controversial aesthetics this ambitious project offers much entertainment for the visitors. The tower built on the mountain is 35 metres high and includes a tree walk made of robinia wood. The tower serves as an observation point and an educational trail. On Kurza Góra there is also a Ski and Bike resort which offers interesting sport opportunities for everybody.

All in all, it is a lot of fun to visit these places, admire the lakes of Zbiczno and Partęczyny, take a walk along the Drwęca and take a look at all this beauty from the high tower in Kurzętnik.

Concluding, I must explain that Kaługa, which was previously mentioned, is not a town in Russia. No, we did not try to invade this territory. It is just a point on the Polish map, the crossroads in the snowy forest but it used to play a much more important role in the past. It was an old Slavic settlement and its name comes from the preslavic word kalati which meant mud. This shows that this area has always been a waterland.

Much later Kaługa was a seat of the royal Prussian forester who was responsible for collecting wood and fighting with poachers. Kaługa station, whose old building is still inhabited, (we have seen the laundry lines hanging near the building) served not only human passengers but was also used for wood transport.

Last but probably not least Kaługa is situated on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostella in Spain and is a part of so called Camino Polaco. I am not sure if I am able to express my fascination with such unobvious tourist sites but I am certain that they are definitely worth our attention. Only in such places you can see stars in the black, black sky and hear the sound of deer hooves on the frozen ground.

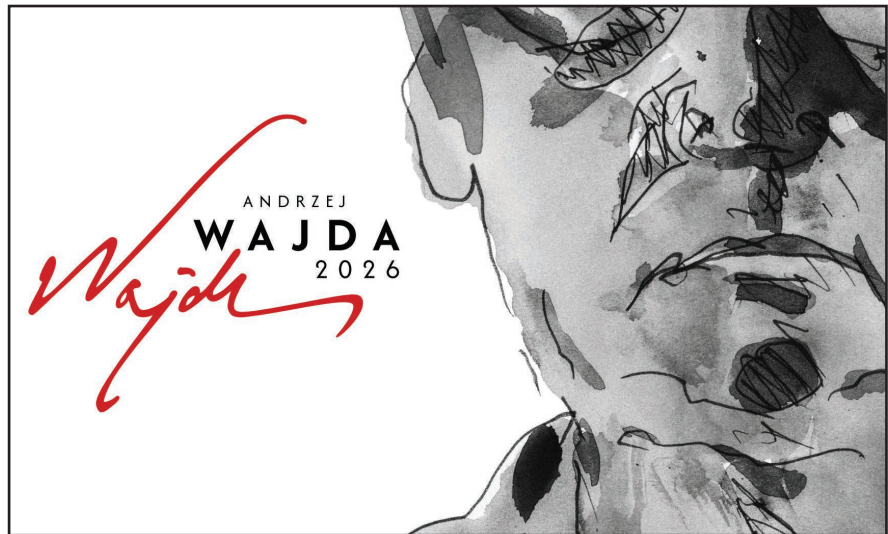
Framing Family and National Narratives Through Wajda's Cinema

By Natalia Kaniasty,
filmmaker and educator
www.nataliakaniasty.com

Let me begin with a small memory experiment. Think back to your childhood. Whether you grew up decades ago or more recently, in Poland or here in the United States, whose names echoed through family conversations with a special kind of reverence? Perhaps Kościuszko, Wojtyła, Skłodowska-Curie, Mickiewicz, or many others. In countless families, those names became part of their own story, passed from one generation to the next.

I spent my formative teenage years in western Pennsylvania in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In our home, my parents, lifelong cinephiles, often spoke about Andrzej Wajda. I cannot remember which of his films I saw first, but I know I began watching them far too young. I still remember waking from anxious dreams stitched together from their haunting images. Yet those films became much more than unsettling stories. Through Wajda's characters and landscapes, I encountered my own family's past long before I understood Poland's history. In many ways, my Polish identity was not simply inherited; it was directed, edited, and produced through Wajda's cinema.

Watching *Kanal* (1957), I learned that my grandmother had been a teenage messenger during the Warsaw Uprising. After seeing *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958), I came to understand my grandfather's stories about the underground Home Army in a new way. *Man of Marble* (1977) struck my college aged parents like lightning. It revealed a Poland trapped by lies, censorship, fear, and state violence, yet it also offered hope that change was possible. Three years later, as Solidarity emerged, my mother stood among thousands gathered outside the locked gates of the Gdańsk Shipyard during those extraordinary days in August 1980. Soon afterward, my parents attended one of the first Polish screenings of *Man of Iron* (1981), with Wajda and Wałęsa in the audience, just months before martial law changed the course of their lives, and, ultimately, my own. Decades later, *Wałęsa: Man of Hope* (2013) completed that story, honoring the workers, students, and intellectuals whose solidarity helped dismantle communist rule and inspired democratic change across Eastern Europe.



Looking back, I realize these films became the language my family used to tell its own story. Like countless Polish families, ours found echoes of its past in Wajda's cinema.

My family's story is only one of many. For generations of Poles, Wajda's films have been a gateway to our history, our literature, and the conversations that continue to shape our national identity. Whether revisiting the traumas of the Second World War in *Lotna* (1959) and *Katyn* (2007) reimagining the dream of Polish independence in *The Ashes* (1965) and *Pan Tadeusz* (1999), exploring the moral compromises of communist Poland in *Without Anesthesia* (1978) and *The Conductor* (1980) or bringing masterpieces of Polish literature, including *The Wedding* (1973), *The Promised Land* (1974), and *The Revenge* (2002), to the screen, Wajda never offered simple answers. Instead, he invited audiences to look again at Poland, and at themselves.

Yet Wajda's films are not only about Poland. Their questions feel just as urgent today. In *Danton* (1983), he warns that governments driven by blind ideology eventually become indistinguishable from the oppression they once fought. In the *Man of...* trilogy, he portrays the enduring struggle for truth in societies shaped by dogma, disinformation, and the cult of personality. Across his work, he reminds us that civic courage and fidelity to truth are indispensable to preserving freedom and human dignity. His films also remind us that today's heroes can be manufactured, manipulated, and discarded by the very systems that create them, revealing the enduring power of propaganda of any shade.

Finally, Wajda was simply one of cinema's great artists. His films are beautifully structured, visually unforgettable, and superbly acted. They have inspired generations of filmmakers and continue to shape world cinema. Maciek Chelmicki, portrayed by Zbigniew Cybulski in *Ashes and Diamonds*, remains one of cinema's enduring tragic heroes, a young man torn between duty and conscience. His influence echoes in Charlie Cappa in *Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973), Mike Vronsky in *The Deer Hunter* (Michael Cimino, 1978), Captain Willard in *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979), and Private Joker in *Full Metal Jacket* (Stanley Kubrick, 1987).

The year 2026 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Andrzej Wajda, one of the most influential filmmakers in world cinema. Join us at the Row House Cinema to celebrate his visionary work with six remarkable films spanning more than six decades, *Ashes and Diamonds* (August 28), *Danton* (September 3), *Man of Marble* (September 10), *Man of Iron* (September 17), *The Promised Land* (September 24), and *Wałęsa: Man of Hope* (October 1). Whether you have loved Wajda's films for years or are discovering them for the first time, we hope you will join us. Bring your family. Bring your friends. You may come to discover one of cinema's greatest directors, but you may also discover something about your own history. Few filmmakers have explored freedom, truth, courage, and human dignity with such honesty, or with such beauty.

Eva Tumiel-Kozak Revisits the Successes of Jakub Polaczyk

For many years, we have proudly featured Polish artists in our newsletter. We are pleased to highlight another international success of Jakub Polaczyk—renowned contemporary composer, pianist, educator, and an active presence in New York’s cultural life. He holds a doctorate from Carnegie Mellon University, among many other academic achievements. We are delighted that Jakub agreed to speak with us



Jakub Polaczyk

ETK: Hello Jakub—congratulations once again! With your many recent honors, it’s hard to keep up. I understand that not a long time ago you had another success: pra-premiere of your Medical Symphony.

Jakub: Yes, it was a very special occasion—the 75th anniversary of Lublin Medical University. At the end of 2024, the Rector, Wojciech Załuska, contacted me and invited me to compose a new work for the celebration. I had been recommended by the well-known Dr. Henryk Ciolek from New York City. I promised to create a piece that would address the theme of medicine. Interestingly, I myself, once considered studying medicine in Lublin about twenty years ago, so the subject felt personally meaningful and also my father is a medical doctor.

ETK: What was your main source of inspiration?

Jakub: I began by searching for texts at the New York Academy of Medicine Library. Initially, I wanted to write a piece about Hippocrates, but the concept gradually expanded to include other cultures as well. Later, I incorporated the names of Nobel Prize winners in medicine and imagined letters from patients representing different continents and cultures constructed by the help of AI. These texts are performed in

various languages corresponding to their origins. In the end, the work draws on three main textual sources: medical ethics, the names of Nobel Prize laureates, and letters from patients. There is also a Hymn for Medicine that I created with the assistance of AI.

ETK: Since contemporary music can be challenging for some listeners, could you briefly explain the symphony’s structure?

Jakub: The idea of a symphony today is quite different from when the form first emerged in Mannheim. Since then, thousands—perhaps even millions—of symphonies have been written. For me, a symphony represents a complex musical world reflecting the complexity of life, itself, but it is also a musical diary of our civilization. The structure can change depending on the movement and the ideas it expresses. Contemporary music can sometimes be challenging, but I believe maintaining a clear narrative line helps listeners follow the story. In this piece, my musical language is closely tied to the idea of gratitude. There is a meditative quality, almost like a prayer. I wanted to express thanks to all the doctors who have helped humanity.

I also incorporated elements reminiscent of Gregorian chant, chorales, and recitative. The choir plays a central role, presenting key texts and universal principles, while the imagined letters from patients are delivered by a solo narrator.

ETK: How did you express medical ethics—compassion, moral responsibility, and scientific progress—through sound?

Jakub: Music itself can be healing. Many cultures use instruments for healing purposes—such as Tibetan bowls or the bullroarer in Native American traditions. I included instruments inspired by these traditions in the symphony, along with sounds such as sirens, which evoke the urgency of medical care. To convey compassion, moral responsibility, and scientific progress, I focused on pure sound and simple melodic lines with syllabic text, supported by orchestral dialogues.

ETK: How did you convey the Hippocratic tradition and Aristotle’s principle primum non nocere (first, do no harm)?

Jakub: That principle appears at the beginning of the piece and forms its core message. It reminds us that above all, we must not harm others.

ETK: I had the privilege of hearing the recording and was deeply impressed by how powerfully you communicated these ideas to listeners outside the medical field.

Jakub: Thank you—I’m very glad you enjoyed it. It took me several months to compose the work. I’m also grateful to Maestro Wojciech Czepiel, who prepared many Krzysztof Penderecki works and who worked very hard also to prepare the very accurate premiere of my recent work.

ETK: It’s no surprise that the symphony has already received the Golden Award at the Brahms Online Competition, First Prize at the Beethoven Online Competition, First Place at the Swiss Online Competition, and First Prize at the Mozart Online Competition. Bravo!

Jakub: Well, it’s not the Polar Prize or Pulitzer—but I’m happy that the piece is receiving some attention from juries and also from a few conductors who have expressed interest in performing it..

ETK: Thank you, Jakub, for speaking with us. We are always delighted to follow your achievements and wish you many more successes. Please stay in touch!

Jakub: I certainly will. Best regards also to my first home in the United States—Pittsburgh.

ETK - PS: Since the interview, Jakub, always busy and prolific, had many more successes. Here is his note, with the update.

Jakub: Recent highlights of my artistic activities include performances at the New York Composers Circle and the Composers Now Festival in NYC, where one of my vocal works was presented and awarded the Howard Brant Fund by the ASCAP Foundation.

In addition to my compositional work, I have had the opportunity to present lectures and guest appearances at Northwestern University, the University of Toronto, and the University of California, Santa Barbara. I also did a piano recital at the Polish Consulate in Chicago. I was honored to be named a Finalist in the American

Polish Athletes in the 2026 Winter Olympics

by Kristine Danowski

Songwriting Awards composition competition and to receive the Paderewski Award Statuette from the Polish & Slavic Center during a Polish Heritage ceremony at the Polish Consulate in New York in June. For that ceremony I composed *Red Hair Mazurka*, written in memory of Ignacy Jan Paderewski. The work was inspired by an idea associated with Sigismund Stojowski, who encouraged composers to create new works from a single musical measure of Paderewski after the passing of his Red-haired Friend. Using one measure connected to Paderewski as a point of departure, I developed an entirely new composition that pays tribute.

One of the most meaningful premieres for me this year was *Hills of Calvary*, a week after Easter, a work that originally began as a *Stabat Mater*. The composition draws inspiration from the traditional sacred text and poems as well as Marian, including references to *Salve Regina*. Scored for shamisen, soprano, organ, and percussion, the work was premiered at St. Stanislaus Church in New York's East Village. This historic church, the city's only Polish parish, stands just a few blocks from the former residence of Antonín Dvořák and in a neighborhood frequently visited by Paderewski during his stays in New York, making the location especially significant for the premiere. In May 2026, I was selected as one of only three Polish composers to represent Poland at the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) World New Music Days in Bucharest, Romania. My choral work was performed by the National Madrigal chorus and was broadcast on the radio.

Looking ahead, I am excited about upcoming projects and performances during the fall season and working on a few works at the moment. I was selected as the Composer Resident for the New Music Festival in Slovenia. For the next season. I remain committed to creating music that builds connections across cultures, traditions, and communities while exploring new possibilities in contemporary composition.

—Jakub

Sixty athletes, 32 women and 28 men, represented Poland at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milano-Cortina, Italy. Confirmed in January 2026, Team Poland competed across 12 sports, with flag bearers Natalia Czerwonka (2014 silver medalist in speed skating) and Kamil Stoch (three-time Olympic champion in ski jumping) leading the delegation. Poland had no athletes competing in ice hockey, curling, freestyle skiing, or skeleton.

Poland won its first 2026 Olympics medal on February 9. Nineteen-year-old Kacper Tomasiak won the silver in the men's individual normal hill ski jump. Tomasiak is the only teenager ranked in the world's top 20 ski jumpers. His first World Cup event was only one hundred days prior to Milano-Cortina. The Olympic competition was remarkably close, with only eight points separating first from fifth place.

Team Poland's second medal, a silver, was won by speedskater Władimir Semirunnij in the men's 10,000 meters on February 13. However, Euromaidan Warszawa, a prominent Ukrainian organisation in Poland, has criticised Semirunnij because he is Russian-born and was granted Polish citizenship after only three months. He represented Russia internationally until 2026, winning a silver in the 10,000 meters at the 2025 ISU World Championships.

Tomasiak won Team Poland's third medal when he won the bronze in the men's individual large hill on February 14. He is the present and future of Polish ski jumping!

Tomasiak won yet another medal when he and teammate Paweł Wasek won a silver in men's super team ski jumping on February 16. This competition normally has three rounds, but because of hazardous weather, officials stopped it halfway through the third round. At that point, Tomasiak and Wasek were in fourth place. However, the officials counted only the first two rounds. At that point, the Polish jumpers were in second place, so they won the silver.

Team USA women's hockey team head coach is a Polish-American. Originally from Neenah, WI, John Wroblewski has held the same role for the U.S. Women's National Team since August 2022. He led Team USA to its first Women's World Championship since 2019, winning the 2023 and 2025 IIHF Women's World Championships. Wroblewski joined the



U.S. Women's National Team following two years (2020-2022) as the head coach of the Ontario (CA) Reign of the AHL and four seasons (2016-2020) as a head coach with USA Hockey's National Team Development Program. On February 19, Team USA women won the gold medal in Milano-Cortina by defeating their arch-rival Canada 2-1 in overtime.

On February 20, in a frightening moment in the women's 1500-meters semifinal, Polish short-track speedskater Kamila Sellier suffered a blade under her right eye when a competitor slid into her. Sellier was carried out of the rink on a stretcher, received stitches at the venue, then underwent surgery in a Milan hospital. On February 21, Sellier posted to Instagram that she "is doing okay" post-surgery.

At the closing ceremony on February 22, Team Poland's flag bearers were short-track speedskater Gabriela Topolska and silver medalist in long-track speedskating Władimir Semirunnij.

Lastly, Team Poland's pierog mascot became a huge hit in Milano-Cortina. Called Pieroguszka, the unofficial team mascot is produced by the Katowice-based Honolulu Social Cooperative during handicraft workshops for people with disabilities. After Pieroguszka went viral, the Cooperative couldn't keep up with orders. NBC's commentators even mentioned how much they wanted a Pieroguszka during NBC's coverage of the closing ceremony. Of course, here in Pittsburgh we can purchase our own giant pierogi plushes in many stores. Seeing them in Milano-Cortina was fun and unexpected.

To see all the results for Team Poland in the 2026 Winter Olympics, visit <https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026/schedule/pol>.

Congratulations to all athletes from all over the world for competing in the Olympics!

Speaking Polish – Piece of Cake

By Veronica Wojnaroski

Did you speak Polish as a child? Are you planning a trip to Poland? Do you want to learn to speak Polish? If you can say “yes” to any of these questions, please consider the Polish language classes offered by the Polish Cultural Council.

Register for Polish Language Classes

POLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES WILL RESUME ON SEPT 12TH, 2026 AT 10 AM, AT THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHURCH, 3058 Brereton Street Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Classes run until May 2027.

Registration Form 2026-2027

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Email

In the event of an emergency or change of schedule, list the telephone numbers where you should be contacted.

Day

Cell/Evening

Signature

Date

Registration and Class Fee \$250

PCC Membership is required. Please make your check payable to Polish Cultural Council and Mail to:

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Manners, maniery i sposoby

Manners in English

The English words *manner* and *manners* trace back to the Latin word *manus*, *hand*. In various forms which indicate *of* or *by the hand*, *manus* traveled with the Romans to Gaul, and then to Angelcynn (the land of the Anglo-Saxons) with the Norman Conquest. In England, then and to this day, the word *manner* was and is used to describe ways of doing things, and also ways in which to *handle* yourself properly, to *have good manners*. We would use the expression *mind your manners* to encourage a child to behave better. *Manner* can also indicate what *kind* or *sort* something or someone is. (What manner of man is he?). Consider some words from Western European countries which reflect the evolution of words which trace their roots to the Latin *manus*.

French: *main*, *hand*; *manière*, *manner*, *beurre manié*, a paste of flour and butter made by hand

Portuguese: *maneira*, *way*; *maniero*, *handy*, *portable* and, in slang, *cool*.

Italian: *mannaiia*, a meat cleaver, used with the hand

Spanish: *manera*, *manner*

Manners in Polish

So, why all this talk about English and Western European words? Because, while Polish does have a word which derives from the Latin *manus* and is used to express polite ways of being, acting and speaking, the Polish word to express ways of doing things is different from *manner* and derives from a completely different source. From the Latin root, Polish has the words *maniera* (sing.) and *maniery* (pl.) These words are used strictly for the concept of manners as behavior. They are combined in the concept of *dobry maniery*, *good manners*.

To encourage polite behavior, a parent might say to a child, *zachowuj się*, *behave yourself*. This is the equivalent of the English *mind your manners*; it has exactly the same sense of admonishment. You would not say this to an elder or someone above your station at work. *Zachowuj* is a form of the imperative of the verb *zachować*, which has many meanings:

to act, behave, keep, maintain, preserve, retain, observe, hold and sustain. It is formed from the addition of the prefix *za* to the verb *chować*, which means *to put, to put away, to hide, to rear, to keep or to bury*. This is a widely used word with deep, ancient Slavic roots. It derives from a Proto-Indo-European root which means *to cover, to observe or to take care of*. It is present in Czech, *chovat*, Ukrainian, *hovaty* and Belarusian, *havats*. The Polish name for the children's game hide-and-seek is *chowany*; to play it is *bawić się w chowanego*. *Chów* is *rearing, breeding, or animal husbandry*.

Polish ways of doing things

In Polish, the words for the way(s), manner(s) or means of doing things is *sposób* (sing.) and *sposoby* (pl.). *Sposób* is derived from the Proto-Slavic prefix which means *togetherness, good arrangement or completion*. The root is Old Slavic which originally referred to *adapting, being suitable, or making something convenient*. Over time, the meaning shifted from convenience to the means or method by which something is done. *Sposób* is shared in various forms with other Slavic languages such as Ukrainian and Czech.

Here are some Polish adverbs which are based upon *sposób*: *na swój sposób*, *in one's own way*; *na wszelkie sposoby*, *in every possible way*; *w jakiś sposób*, *in some way*; and *w żaden sposób*, *in no way*. If you want to say something like *I have something to fix that*, you can say *mam na to sposób*. To find a way is *wziąć się na sposób*. To figure out a way is *brać się na sposób*.

Every culture has its unwritten rules for polite behavior. Poles are particularly known for their politeness and respect when interacting with people, especially those whom they do not know well. If you would like to learn the ways in which *dobry maniery* are observed in Poland, you can explore the following websites:

<https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/polish-culture/polish-culture-etiquette>
<https://domkaspot.com/blog/polish-culture-etiquette-guide-expats>
<https://www.careersinpoland.com/article/customs/everyday-manners-in-poland>

My Second Soul...Leszek Chudziński



Leszek Chudzinski's poems are rich with humor and irony, capturing the experience of learning a new language with remarkable clarity. He authored two books of poetry: in English/Polish: *Niedzielni Poeci* (*Sunday Poets*, 2018) and *Podlesie* (2022). His writing has appeared in various literary journals and anthologies.

His work resonates deeply with many readers, offering a strong sense of recognition and understanding of those early beginnings. An immigrant himself, Chudzinski writes about many aspects of the life of an immigrant in America. His collection *My Second Soul: My Adventures with English* explores his experiences learning English. Here are several poems he has chosen to share with us.

2***
we applied for financial aid
to study English
at the English Language Institute in Chicago

it took me a week
to complete the applications

a month later
they informed us
the applications had been improperly filled out

I asked the Financial Aid Office at the ELI
if anyone knew how to fill out
the labyrinthine applications

a month later
we got the same reply
the applications had been improperly filled out
they advised us to go the Financial Aid Office at ELI
for help

as a last resort
I wrote a letter to the government organization
in charge of financial aid

I explained that the applications
they just rejected
had been filled out
with the help of the ELI Financial Aid Office
we were at our wits' end –
please help

this time it worked
they cut the red tape
and we got the money

5***
Adam Mickiewicz
a Polish romantic poet
while teaching at the Collège de France
happened to say:

French is an easy language
it takes three days in France
to learn it

one of his students was heard to say,
mon Professeur,
it's your second day in France?

7***
look out the window,
said our ESL teacher,
it is raining

what is raining?
asked one of the students

IT is raining
answered the teacher

how can IT be raining?
asked another student,
I can see the rain
but not IT

what is IT?
asked someone else

IT is rain
so, it is raining
explained the teacher

in winter
when it's cold
it is snowing –
the teacher was trying his best

how come IT
can be raining and snowing?

what happens to IT
when it doesn't rain or snow?

the class was raining questions

these are idioms,
the teacher said,
you just have to learn them by heart,
and collapsed in his chair

but we knew better
he was pulling our leg

8***
to me *dead* and *dad*
sound identical

one time I'd say
my *dead* is *dad*
or, by chance,
I get it right and say,
my *dad* is *dead*

It's quite possible
that you'll hear me say
dad is *dad*
and *dead* is *dead*
which is axiomatic

the same is true
with *bed* and *bad*

Is *bed* *bad*
or is *bad* *bed*?

or take *bald* and *bold*
one is hairless
while the other is courageous

or take *head* and *hat*
if I lose the first
how would I know
whether I lost the other?

on a bad day
it's possible I might lose both

Becoming the doors we've
closed, those I've learned
to open with a tongue.
Justin Danzy

9***
my first composition in English
was a one-page assignment
about my favorite thing –

how difficult could it be?

I could have written my essay in Polish
then translated it into English
but this would defeat the purpose
of my studies

that night I praised
the inventors of paper –
the most patient
and forgiving thing in the world

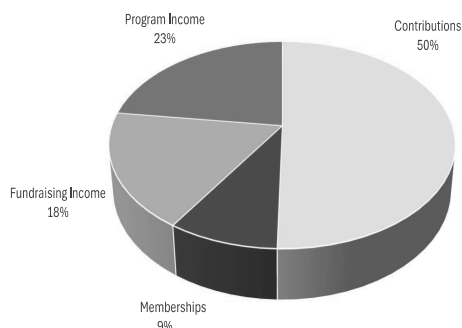
after six hours
of sweat, blood, and tears
my first work in English
was finished

the next day
the teacher asked me
to read it out loud in class –

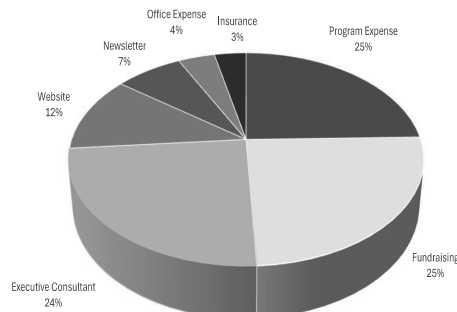
how difficult could it be?

Polish Cultural Council Income and Expenditures for the year ending December 31, 2025

2025 Income Sources Total \$45,500



2025 Expenses by Category Total \$45,000



Thanks to your donations, the Polish Cultural Council had a break even year in 2025, netting just under \$500



LET'S COOK POLISH

Polish Summer Favorites

by Marta Nutini

As temperatures rise, most of us look for ways to stay cool, including in the kitchen. Long before air conditioning became common, Polish families found creative ways to avoid heating up the house during the hottest days of summer. Instead of turning on the oven, they relied on fresh vegetables, seasonal fruit, and simple dishes that were refreshing, nourishing, and easy to prepare.

Many of these summer favorites remain popular today, both in Poland and among Polish American families. From cold soups and crisp salads to fruit-filled comfort foods and homemade drinks, these recipes have helped generations beat the summer heat.

Chłodnik (Cold beet soup)

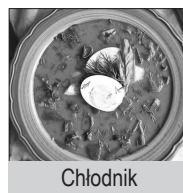
One of the most recognizable summer dishes is *chłodnik*, a refreshing cold beet soup. Its bright pink color comes from beets, while kefir or buttermilk gives it a creamy texture. Served chilled, it is the perfect meal on a hot day.

Ingredients:

- 2 medium-sized beetroots, peeled and grated
- 1 medium-sized cucumber, peeled and grated
- 2 cups plain kefir or buttermilk
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup of vegetable broth
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

Combine beets, cucumber, kefir or buttermilk, sour cream, and vegetable broth in a large bowl. Stir well until all the ingredients are thoroughly mixed. Add the chopped dill, chives, and parsley. Mix again. Season with salt and pepper according to your taste. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or until chilled. Serve cold with hard-boiled eggs and additional herbs, if desired.



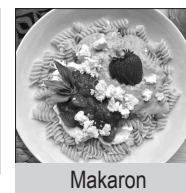
Chłodnik



Mizeria



Kompot



Makaron

Mizeria (Cucumber salad)

Ingredients:

- 2 cucumbers, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup of sour cream
- Fresh dill
- Few drops of lemon juice or vinegar
- Salt and pepper

Instructions:

Lightly salt the cucumbers and let sit for 15 minutes. Drain excess liquid, mix with sour cream, vinegar/lemon and dill. Season to taste. You can add a little bit of sugar if the salad is too sour.

Kompot z wiśni (Cherry compote)

A newer generation may think that fruit-infused water is a modern trend, but Polish families have been making kompot (compote) for generations. Made from fresh or dried fruit and served cold, kompot is a refreshing alternative to sugary drinks.

Ingredients:

- 1 pound (500 g) fresh sour cherries, stems removed
- 6–8 cups (1.5–2 liters) water
- 2–4 tablespoons sugar, or to taste

Instructions:

Rinse the cherries and remove the stems. Leave the pits in for extra flavor. Bring the water to boil in a large pot. Add the cherries and simmer for 10–15 minutes. Stir in the sugar and adjust to taste. Remove from the heat and let it cool completely. Refrigerate until well chilled. Serve cold, with some of the cherries in each glass if desired.

Makaron z truskawkami (Pasta with Strawberries)

No discussion of Polish summer foods would be complete without *makaron z truskawkami*, pasta with strawberries. The dish gained international attention when Polish tennis champion Iga Świątek mentioned it as one of her favorite comfort foods. While many people outside Poland were surprised by the combination, Polish families have enjoyed this simple summer meal for generations.

Ingredients:

- 8 oz, cooked pasta
- 2 cups of fresh strawberries
- 1/2 cup of sweet cream, yogurt, or sour cream
- Sugar to taste (optional)

Instructions:

Slice or lightly mash the strawberries and mix with the cream. Spoon over cooked pasta and serve immediately.

Smacznego!

NEWS BRIEFS

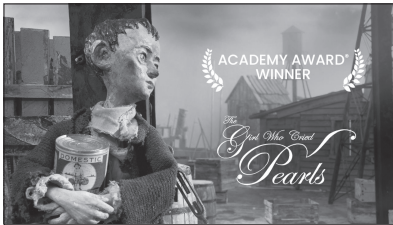
PCC member Emily Drake honored



In May, 2026, Robert Morris University awarded an honorary degree to Emily Drake, a 100-year old WWII veteran and member of the Polish Cultural Council. Emily, was a student at the then-Robert Morris School of Business when she enlisted in the Women's Army Corps in 1944. She served as a stenographer, documenting the sacrifice, service and personal stories of soldiers. Why is this event so significant? Dr. Michelle Patrick, President of the Robert Morris University summarized it the best: "We are so proud to honor Emily and showcase her courage, trailblazing spirit and

lifelong dedication to our country," Dr. Patrick said. "Her patriotism and selflessness continue to inspire our entire community." Emily, we are also very proud to know you and to have you as a member of PCC. We enjoy your indomitable spirit at all our events!

Polish-born director wins Oscar for animated short

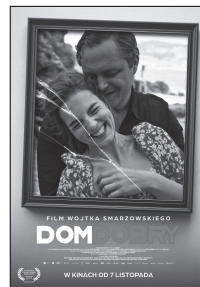


A Canadian animated short film co-directed by Polish-born Maciek Szczerbowski won the Academy Award for best animated short film. Szczerbowski, who was born in Poznań and emigrated to Canada in the early 1980s, accepted the award alongside co-director Chris Lavis for **The Girl**

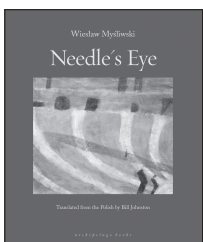
Who Cried Pearls. The 17-minute stop-motion film follows a boy in love with a girl whose tears turn into pearls. The film can be watched on the National Board of Canada's free YouTube channel.

Poland's Eagle Awards for films

Director Wojciech Smarzowski won Best Picture for his film, **Dom Dobry** (Good Home). The film, which explores domestic violence, also won for Best Actor, Tomasz Schuchardt and Best Actress, Agata Turkot. Other winners include Krystyna Janda for Lifetime Achievement, Piotr Domalewski for Best Screenplay, *Ministranci* (Altar Boys) for Audience Award, and Maciej Drygas for Best Documentary, *Pociągi* (Trains). First time director Emi Buchwald was named Discovery of the Year and Mikołaj Trzaska won Best Score for *Dom Dobry*.



Polish Writer's latest novel published in English



Wiesław Myśliwski's latest novel, *Needle's Eye* (*Ucho Igielne*) has been published in English by Archipelago Books, making it available to a wider international readership. The translation is by Bill Johnston. The narrator of the book is a medieval historian in his later years who is surrounded by images of the past. It is a stream-of-consciousness novel that explores memory, wars, and Polish history through the memories of the unnamed narrator; it is a meditation on a half-century

of Polish life as it does not appear in the historical record. The book is available from Carnegie Library.

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- ☐ Help with Arts Events
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Polish Language Classes

Please fill in this form and send it with your dues and donation to the address above or pay online at www.PolishCulturalCouncil.org

Kieślowski archive named Treasure of European Film Culture

The designation, awarded by the European Film Academy, recognizes sites of symbolic and historical value to European cinema that should be preserved for future generations. The Kieślowski Archive, located in Sokołowski, Poland, acquires and manages materials related to the

director's legacy. Kieślowski lived in Sokołowski between 1951 and 1957, where he experienced his first encounters with cinema. The archive includes film scripts, posters, memorabilia and reviews. Some materials are already available online at kieslowski.com.pl.



Pole appointed to Boston Symphony Orchestra



A Polish conductor Jakub Przybycień has been named, along with China's Yiran Zhao, to be the new assistant conductors of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. They will make their BSO conducting debuts during the 2027 season at the Tanglewood Music Center.

Przybycień has previously conducted numerous orchestras in Europe. In 2025, he received the Ernst-von-Schuch Prize, which honors the conductor of the same name.

Warsaw's Poster Museum reopens after major refurbishment

Entitled **Polish Poster. The Collection**, the inaugural exhibition covers a cross-section of the 130 year history of poster design in Poland, from 1899 through the collapse of communism in 1989. 240 works are displayed. This museum was founded in 1968 as the world's first museum devoted exclusively to poster design. Its establishment coincided with the emergence of the Polish School of Poster, notably Henryk Tomaszewski, Waldemar Świerzy, Jan Lenica, Roman Cieślowski and Jan Młodożeniec, gaining worldwide recognition. For more about the Polish School of Poster, see <https://culture.pl/en/article/the-polish-poster-school-the-polish-film-school>.



Warsaw's Museum of Modern Art ranked no. 2 on NYT list of places to go



The newspaper described the museum as *a new landmark that anchors Warsaw's skyline, gleaming beside the hulking Stalin-era Palace of Culture and Science*. In 2026, the museum will feature a major exhibition titled *The Woman Question 1550-2025*. It is a "multi-chapter narrative of nearly 200 works that punctures the myth that few women were artists before the 19th century, threading Renaissance and Baroque painters through modern and contemporary voices".

Kraków named among world's top cities for art and culture



This ranking, at number 10 is from Britain's *Time Out* magazine, which described Kraków as *the country's cultural heart*, noting the architectural heritage and the cultural diversity. Highlights include the Czartoryski Museum, the Wawel Royal Castle, the Kazimierz district and the MOCAK Museum.

The UK's "Telegraph" names Poland as a must-visit destination

Saying that Poland has never been a more compelling destination for British travelers, *The Telegraph* described Poland as *Europe's vibrant all-rounder*, drawing visitors with its diverse landscapes, historical depth and contemporary appeal. Poland is noted for successfully combining rich history with modern cities, mountain ranges, good-value ski resorts and outstanding sandy beaches on the Baltic coast.

The Telegraph

Poland's Bagisz Princess burial re-dated to around A.D. 120



Archaeologists have re-dated the remains of a woman discovered in northwestern Poland and known as the *Bagisz Princess* to around A.D. 120, after reanalyzing the wood from her coffin.

There are unusually rich grave goods and exceptional preservation. The woman's bones and a large wooden log, later identified as a coffin, were discovered after they slid out of a seaside cliff on the Baltic in the late 19th century. The coffin, carved from a single tree trunk, is thought to be the oldest preserved example of its kind in Poland. Objects include bronze and glass jewelry, as well as a bone pin and a wooden stool. Fragments of cattle hide and woolen

clothing also survived. The new date was established by reanalyzing the tree rings in the coffin, a process known as dendrochronology.

Poland's sports stars of the year

Mountain kayaker, Klaudia Zwolińska, is the winner of the 91st edition of the *Przegląd Sportowy* Poll for Best Athlete. Tennis star Iga Świątek placed second, while volleyball player Wilfredo Leon came in third. Team of the Year was awarded to the men's national volleyball

team. Coach of the Year went to Tomasz Dylak, head coach of the Polish women's national boxing team. The *Przegląd Sportowy* is the most respected and long-running sports publication in Poland, recognizing outstanding achievements across all disciplines.





Polish Cultural Council
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PICNIC

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1-5pm

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RSVP with number attending to:
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Please contact us at:
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