

POLAM

July-Aug. 2014

Vol. 36, Number 4

www.pacim.org

Polish Film
Series

see page 3

Freedom Fighters

Agnieszka Holland

Thermopylae



Behind the Scenes



What an exciting summer schedule of festivals and fun we have ahead. The Twin Cities Polish Festival expands to three days this August with a Friday night outdoor concert featuring Boogie Wonderland. The TCPF welcomes more than 20,000 attendees and is a fabulous way to sample Polish culture, history, art and food in a beautiful setting on the banks of the Mississippi River.


For the first time ever, PACIM is sponsoring a film festival surrounding the dates of the TCPF. We are delighted to partner with the Minneapolis Film Society and TCPF to bring Martin Scorsese's *Masterpieces of Polish Cinema* to the St. Anthony Main Theatre. Current PACIM members will receive discounts to all the films. With 21 films in the series, you will want to make sure your membership is up to date.

Finally, I call your attention to the history column's article on the Battle of Wizna. Known as a Polish Thermopylae, the heroic efforts of the outnumbered and out-powered Polish troops evoke the brave Spartans of ancient Greece. The battle inspired the hard-rocking Swedish band Sabaton to write their anthem *40:1*. Isn't it ironic that Sweden, one of Poland's earliest invaders, now honors her soldiers?

Thanks for supporting this magazine and the many other ways you help PACIM. From volunteering at events to making financial donations, you are the backbone of this exciting non-profit.

Do zobaczenia,
Jane Mrazek Flanders, *Editor*

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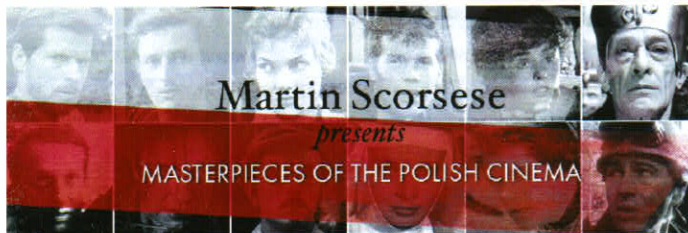
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PACIM Sponsors Masterpieces of Polish Cinema

Renowned filmmaker Martin Scorsese's retrospective Polish film series arrives in Minneapolis this August through the support of PACIM. Masterpieces of Polish Cinema features 21 films from some of Poland's most accomplished and lauded filmmakers from 1957-87. Curated by Mr. Scorsese, each film has been digitally remastered and brilliantly restored on newly subtitled DCPs.

Masterpieces of Polish Cinema opened in New York's Lincoln Center last February

and will tour key cities in the U.S. and Poland for the next 18 months. PACIM is proud to support this powerful cinematic experience tour to the Twin Cities.



Film titles include:

- Ashes and Diamonds (*Popiół i diament*)
- Austeria (*Austeria*)
- Black Cross (*Krzyżacy*)
- Blind Chance (*Przypadek*)
- Camouflage (*Barwy ochronne*)
- The Constant Factor (*Constans*)
- Eroica (*Eroica*)
- The Hour-glass Sanatorium (*Sanatorium pod Klepszdrą*)
- The Illumination (*Iluminacja*)
- Innocent Sorcerers (*Niewinni czarodzieje*)
- Jump (*Salto*)
- The Last Day of Summer (*Ostatnie dzień lata*)
- Man of Iron (*Człowiek z żelaza*)
- Mother Joan of the Angels (*Matka Joanna od Aniołów*)
- Night Train (*Pociąg*)
- Pharaoh (*Faraon*)
- The Promised Land (*Ziemia Obiecana*)
- The Saragossa Manuscript (*Rękopis znaleziony w Saragossie*)
- A Short Film About Killing (*Krótki film o zabijaniu*)
- To Kill this Love (*Trzeba zabić tę miłość*)
- The Wedding (*Wesele*)

For information regarding dates and times for the films, visit mspfilmsociety.org or call PACIM at 612-378-9291.

PACIM members receive discounts to the film series.

Annual Meeting and Director Elections

PACIM will hold its Annual Meeting at 1 pm on Sunday, October 12, 2014, at the Institute, Suite 228, 43 Main St, Minneapolis. Agenda items include voting for new directors and an update on the organization's growth, events and plans for the coming year. Light refreshments will be served. PACIM members interested in running for a spot on the Board of Directors must submit a statement of interest to the Secretary by September 12, and be present at the Annual Meeting. Statements of interest can be sent via email to office@pacim.org as well as standard mail.



Study the Polish Language with PACIM

This academic year, PACIM will conduct a variety of Polish language and culture classes at the PACIM Library, 43 Main Street SE, Suite 228, Minneapolis. A minimum of six students will be required for each class and prospective students are asked to submit a registration form or contact PACIM for more information. Following are details for each class:

Beginning Polish: An introduction to the Polish language, or a refresher course.

- a. 12 week session, first class
September 29, 2014
- b. Instructor: Iwona Srienc, Ph.D.
- c. Class time: Monday 5:30-7:00 pm
- d. Tuition: \$75.00, members \$65

Intermediate Polish: The 2nd class, following completion of Beginning Polish, or instructor consent.

- a. 12 week session, first class
September 29, 2014
- b. Instructor: Iwona Srienc, Ph.D.
- c. Class time: Monday 7:15-8:45 pm
- d. Tuition: \$75.00, members \$65

Advanced Polish: Proficiency with written & spoken Polish recommended

- a. 12 week session, first class
September 30, 2014
- b. Instructor: Iwona Srienc, Ph.D.
- c. Class time: Tuesday 5:30-7:00 pm
- d. Tuition: \$75, members \$65

Email questions to office@pacim.org or call 612-378-9291. Mail registration fee to the address listed above before September 9, 2014.

Agnieszka Holland Directs *House of Cards*

One of

Poland's most famous directors is set to direct several episodes of the upcoming season of *House of Cards*, America's wildly popular political drama. "It's a Shakespearean, opera-like vision of politics," Holland shared with the movie website stopkltka.pl.

The drama's main character, Frank Underwood (played by Kevin Spacey), climbs, scratches and kills his way up through his political party, while his on-screen wife Claire (played by Robin Wright) is Bonnie to his Clyde. The cult series offers gripping suspense and an uncomfortably close look at the darker side of human ambition.

Holland's most noted work, *In Darkness*, garnered her an Oscar nomination in 2011, and her powerhouse career got a start in the 1970s working with two legends in Polish cinema — Andrzej Wajda and Krzysztof Zanussi.

The director's experience with American television stems back to 2006 when she directed the HBO series *The Wire*. She also directed a television miniseries of *Rosemary's Baby*, which received mixed reviews. The original film, directed by fellow Pole Roman Polański, remains a psychological thriller top choice, and a tough act to follow even in a different medium.

Working in television brings excitement, growth and new opportunities even for well-established film directors like Holland. "I get older but my techniques feel much younger than they did 10 years ago," shares the director. *The Wire* is considered one of the best series in television history and Holland was thrilled to be involved. "It is a cult series for young filmmakers. In fact, it seems much more impressive than getting an Oscar nomination to many film school students."

House of Cards represents revolutionary changes taking place in modern television — in part because of the enormous budget (\$100 million for the first season alone), but also due to the method of distribution. Produced by Netflix, the biggest video on demand platform in the U.S., the entire season of *House of Cards* is available for streaming at once. No longer are viewers held hostage to weekly episodes. However, Holland has some doubts about the future of the series and the difficulty of presenting politics in too abstract a way. "It seems like the series' creators have come up against a brick wall... it is hard to image that a vice president is a murderer, even if the president and vice president could be blamed for deaths of thousands of people." Holland has her work cut out for her.

With no dates yet announced for shooting to begin, fans will have to bide their time until February 2015 to know how the series plays out.

Article details courtesy of thenews.pl and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute's culture.pl.





HEAVY METAL POLISH THERMOPYLAE

by Dick Lewis, PhD.

The valor

of Poles is the stuff of myths and legends for good reason. In September 1939, Polish troops defended the village of Wizna from advancing German armies. Echoing the courage of the ancient Greek Spartans, these outnumbered and out-powered soldiers fought to the end in what is seen as a Polish Thermopylae. The memory of those brave Polish troops is honored in a strange twist from one of Poland's earliest invaders from the North.

Before the Second World War, north-eastern Poland was part of Germany known as East Prussia. Some of that area is swampy and includes the Mazurian Lakes region. Militarily, the swamps and lakes act as a natural protective barrier against attack. However, further to the west the flat lands of the broad Vistula River plain leave Poland open to invasion, and the capital city of Warsaw vulnerable to capture. To defend Warsaw from attacks from East Prussia, the Poles built approximately 20 miles of defensive fortifications anchored by the village of Wizna. Some 700 soldiers were assigned to defend the fortifications against 42,000 German invaders in late summer of 1939.

The battle stretched out over four days. Initially, on September 7, the Germans easily advanced as a reconnaissance cavalry unit captured the village of Wizna. Though they crossed the nearby Narew River, the Germans were driven back by the Poles. Recognizing the difficulty of quickly defeating the Polish defenders, German General Heinz Guderian, inventor of *blitzkrieg* warfare, had a mighty force of 350 tanks, almost 1,000 heavy guns and 700 machine

guns from which he steadily reinforced his attacking regiments. The ill-trained and outnumbered Polish soldiers had no tanks and only 30 heavy guns and 20 machine guns. Against superior German firepower and manpower advantage, the Poles had little more than their courage.

On September 9, the German offensive began anew with an attack on the Polish northern flank. After capturing the two northern bunkers, the Germans attacked the Polish center and the southern flank. Fierce fighting continued into midday September 10 as the Germans advanced bunker by bunker using their huge firepower advantage.

By noon on September 10, the 70-80 Polish survivors still held two bunkers in the center. Many of those soldiers were wounded and they were all almost out of ammunition. At that point, the Polish military commander, Captain Władysław Raginis, ordered his troops to surrender. Having pledged to fight to the death, Raginis threw himself on a grenade, dying quickly in the ensuing explosion.

The Battle of Wizna slowed the “lightning” advance of an entire Panzer corps, an unbelievable feat. It permitted tens of thousands of Polish soldiers to escape eastward and, eventually, to fight for the Allies in Italy (Monte Cassino), France and Germany. The memory of Captain Raginis and his comrades has a place of honor at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Warsaw, where the Battle of Wizna is proudly enshrined with other great military feats from a thousand years of Polish history.

Ironically, this story of Polish courage against unbelievable odds was recovered not by Poles but by a Swedish heavy metal rock band, Sabaton.

While Communists were in power in Poland (1944–1988), the pages of Polish military valor in support of the Western Al-



Poland's gallant Spartans at the Battle of Wizna. Above: The band Sabaton.

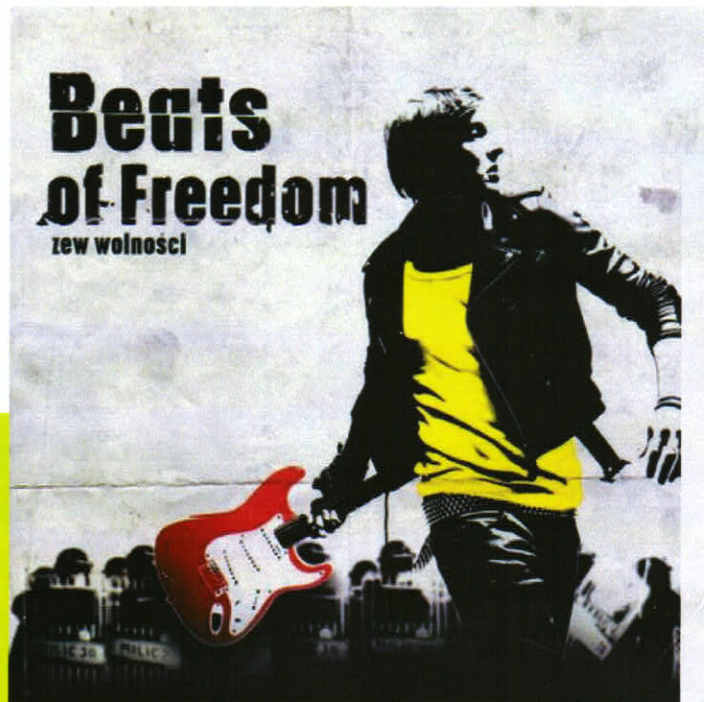
lies during the Second World War were left blank. You could neither praise nor honor the heroism of troops associated with the prewar government. To do so was to undermine the communist narrative of defeating the evil forces of prewar capitalism. In addition, Communists tried to destroy the centuries-old Polish tradition of romantic rebellion — outnumbered Poles fighting desperately and hopelessly for freedom.

In 2008, Sabaton released an album, *The Art of War*, loosely organized around the ideas of the ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu. Included in the album was the song *40:1*, a commemoration of the Battle of Wizna. A YouTube video clip of the fighting at Wizna went viral. In just a few days time there were over a million “hits” from Polish viewers.

In 2010, Sabaton performed at the Polish Woodstock (*Przystanek Woodstock*) summer music festival. Included in its repertoire, of course, was *40:1*. Sabaton returned to Woodstock Station in 2012, again performing *40:1*, and has also performed the song at Polish Constitution Day (May 3) ceremonies.

In the electronic world in which we live, a world undreamed of by the Wizna defenders, a story of Polish valor, told by Swedes, is now known by young rockers the world over.

The constant of Polish courage in the face of enormous odds remains a powerful message.



FREEDOM FIGHTERS



by Jane Mrazek Flanders

Armed with

electric guitars, drumsticks and amplifiers, a generation of Polish rock musicians waged war against the country's communist oppressors. Fortified with rhythms and beats from the West, these bands cried out for freedom and provided rock anthems for Poland's opposition movement. Their front-line combat with censorship and their stealth maneuvers around the authorities made them heroes. Twenty-five years after Poland reclaimed independence, the lyrics, music and impact on the world stage of these bands remain a powerful expression of freedom.

At a time when a casual joke about living conditions in Poland could get a person jailed, young Polish musicians experimented with rock 'n roll as a "call to action." Communist leaders abhorred rock, considering its spontaneous and revolutionary spirit a threat to the regime's tight control. The band Rhythm and Blues performed Poland's first rock 'n roll concert on March 24, 1959. The band's name was their deliberate attempt to dodge the censors. Their concert at Gdańsk's Rudy Kot Klub would eventually rattle the Iron Curtain and firmly establish rock n' roll in Poland.

Playing it safe at first in order to gain governmental approval to perform in public, musicians called the new genre "Big Beat." Bands continued choosing names that kept them off of the censors' radar. Rhythm and Blues morphed into *Czerwono-Czarni* (Red-Blacks) and recorded the country's first proto rock 'n roll album. Another colorful group, *Niebiesko-Czarni* (Blue-Blacks), was the first Big Beat band to perform outside Poland and to introduce the Polish language into their music. Using the slogan "Polish Youth Singing Polish Songs," ("*Polska młodzież śpiewa polskie piosenki*"), the band was endorsed by the communist government which viewed singing in Polish as "safe." However, a "battle cry of freedom" entered their music through the addition of familiar, centuries' old folk tunes. Although their lyrics toed the censorship line, the evocative music stirred the hearts and minds of audiences, speaking volumes more than the lyrics alone would suggest.

Not unlike India's Ghandi, whose non-violent civil disobedience inspired freedom and civil rights, Polish Big Beat bands and rock bands that followed for decades chose less confrontational approaches for their cause. In the 2010 Polish documentary film *Beats of Freedom*, director Leszek Gnoiński reflects on the relationship of rock music and communism:

"Rock never fought with the communist system and it was never even intended to. It described those tough times in simple, at times strong, words, sharp metaphors. These songs broke through stereotypes, created bonds between young people, giving us the chance, even for a moment, to feel free. They showed that aside from the entertainment that was touted by the authorities, there was an underground movement with a life of its own, far from the political cynicism of the government and oppositional uprising."

By the 1970s, the government realized how subversive Big Beat could be. Tighter censorship led both to decreased successes for bands and to waning artistic expression.



Top: Niebiesko Czarni; Center: Breakout; Bottom: Concert poster.

Prime Minister

Tusk's Cabinet has been called to resign by the opposition after a magazine said it possessed a taped conversation which demonstrates the government was involved in an eavesdropping scandal. The tape is claimed to contain a conversation in which Poland's central bank chief asks for the finance minister to be fired in return for the bank helping the government with economic problems.

A growing number of **luxury apartments** are being built in Poland, which rival their counterparts in the world's wealthiest cities in terms of luxury fittings and furnishings.

President

Bronisław Komorowski awarded a prize for championing democracy and human rights to Mustafa Dzhemilev, the pro-Kiev leader of Crimea's Tatar community who was barred from the region after Russia annexed the peninsula.

Poland was **ranked** the 13th most attractive investment destination in the world and 5th in Europe by a United Nations conference on Trade and Development.

25-year-old

Agnieszka Radwańska advanced at the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championship. Radwańska is hoping to beat her final placing at the 2012 Wimbledon and go all the way to winning the Grand Slam this year.

Polish "Rock" Stars



Adam Pieczka joins the "rock" hall of fame with the discovery of pilavite, a previously unknown mineral. Pieczka encountered the mineral while conducting fieldwork at a mine in Piława Górna, Lower Silesia. Pilavite is the

fourth previously unknown mineral to be found by Polish scientists in recent years.

Poland is a country with a considerable and varied base of mineral resources, with mining traditions that can be traced back to the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. The evidence of mining for mineral products dates back to 3500 BC when flint was mined. The Krzemionki Opatowskie flint mine, located near Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski in south-central Poland, has been preserved and is considered one of the most valuable archeological sites in Europe.

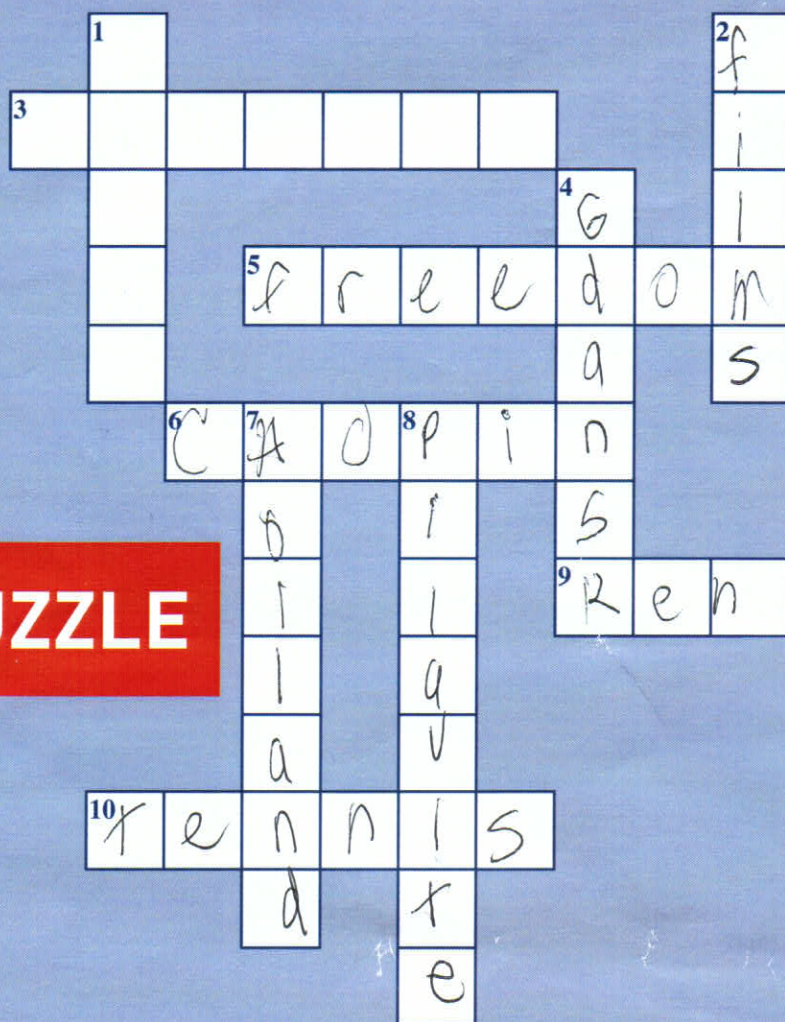
Nature has been generous in Poland with both renewable and non-renewable resources, and it is one of the world's largest producers of hard and brown coal, copper, zinc, lead, sulfur (world's largest deposit), rock salt and construction minerals. Most known for its amber, Poland remains a major supplier (12,000 tons annually) with new deposits recently discovered. Another treasure recently "mined" is geothermal waters (ranked among the richest in Europe); and there is the significant potential of biomass from wastes, which can be used to produce heat.

The Polish Mineral Resources Guide lists information on 23,945 raw mineral deposits, registering more than 9,000 identified and documented deposits of 51 different minerals. Deposits are of different size and importance. The latest explorations and discoveries — pilavite (Adam Pieczka), Morasko meteorite (Magdalena Skirzewska and Łukasz Smuła), six new garnet species (Irina Galuskina), edgrewite and hydroxledgrewite (Evgeny and Irina Galuskin et al), and Morasko iron species (Krzysztof Socha) — continue to add to Poland's diversity and richness in the rock world.

Poland balances further development of the rock world and mining of these resources against depletion, environmental concerns and economic impact, and is looking at the diversification of its energy resources. Although geological mineral resources are large, they are unevenly distributed in different regions of Poland, and occasionally a shortage occurs. Over the past few years, the accessibility of deposits for future exploitation has also decreased due to differing concerns, i.e. ownership of the land, environmental regulations and protections, land development use, the growing desire to cease or severely limit opencast mining. Poland is determined to develop and maintain sustainable mining methods and provide effective management of mineral resources while preserving and protecting the landscape and environment, and to increase the economic viability of its resources.

Pieczka, who led the expedition to Piława Górna, lectures at Kraków's University of Science and Technology and gratefully acknowledges the help in his research by a number of Polish and international scientists. A sample of the mineral has been presented to the Mineralogical Museum of the University of Wrocław.

PUZZLE



Across

- 3 Poland's Proto Rock Music
- 5 Documentary Film on Polish Rock, *Beats of* _____
- 6 TCPF Piano Concert Celebration
- 7 Polish American Author Parejko
- 10 Agnieszka Radwańska's Sport

Down

- 1 Polish Thermopylae
- 2 PACIM Sponsors Classic Polish _____
- 4 City Hosted First Polish Rock Concert
- 7 *House of Cards* New Director
- 8 Newly Discovered Mineral

May/June 2014 Answers

Across: 3. Karski, 4. Beatus, 6. Sparks, 8. Man, 9. Facebook
 Down: 1. Bukoski, 2. Bielaski, 5. Strzalka, 7. Pilka

Freedom Continued from page 7

However, when Martial Law was declared late in 1981, Polish rock music revived, angrier than before. Bands performed music filled with rage and frustration. Emotions and words that were dormant for years erupted with a

new creativity that brought a boom to Polish rock music that still lasts today.

In April 1982, a popular music chart was first broadcast in Poland. *Lista Przebojów Programu Trzeciego* gave Poles a chance to vote for their favorite

songs by calling into the country's few radio stations, one of them being "Radio 3," which aired both foreign and Polish music. Not officially sanctioned by the Communists, the station gained popularity, especially among young listeners who wanted a chance to vote — if not for their leaders, at least for a song.


With the communist rationing of vinyl, albums were hard to come by. Favorite radio songs found a scratchy home on cassette tapes for the relatively few listeners who could buy one on the black market. The new popular music chart introduced Polish rock music to listeners too young to understand the political messages of the music, but old enough to desire what was popular. *Beats of Freedom* co-director Wojciech Słota, who came of age after Poland regained freedom, was one of these listeners:

"I was ten years old when Martial Law was instated in Poland. Soon afterwards, the hit list appeared and I got to know Polish rock music. Following my sisters' example, I recorded my favourite songs on the tape player. Was this the music of freedom? Looking back, I can say it was. The reality of that time gave music an incredible power. I was too young then to understand the lyrics of all the songs, but all those musical fascinations from the '80s strongly influenced what I do today. And, after all, it's worth talking about those things that are important to us."

Fifty-five years after Poland's first rock concert, the genre remains strong. Songs that educate younger listeners and remind the boomer generation of Poland's fight for freedom get airtime. Lyrics and rhythms now reflect music of the U.K, U.S. and Europe without fear of censorship. Punk Rock from the Polish band Lady Pank and Hip Hop beats from WWO and PM Cool Lee find eager fans the world over. In an age of downloaded music, sold-out concerts, and smartphone streaming, it is good to remember the creative and brave performers who pioneered Polish rock and in so doing lit the fuse of freedom.


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Opening Night Concert: Boogie Wonderland



August 8, 9 & 10, 2014

Friday 5-10
Saturday 10-10
Sunday 11-5
Along the Mississippi River
on Old Main Street
Across from Riverplace &
St. Anthony Main
Minneapolis, Minnesota



- Pierogi Eating Contest
- Traditional Folk Dance & Music
- Polish Food & Beer
- Twin Cities Polish Filmfest
- Arts & Crafts
- Polish Sheepdogs
- Children's Play Area

