

# Conference Eurovision Song Contest and the Iron Curtain

26-27  
september  
2024

Institute of Polish Culture,  
University of Warsaw  
Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28  
room no. 5

## Participants:

**IZABELA ANDRZEJAK** – master of Arts in Art and Cultural Studies. Graduate of the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music and the University of Łódź. Currently a PhD candidate at the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School at the University of Warsaw. Since 2016, she has been a dancer in the State Folk Song and Dance Ensemble „Mazowsze”. She represents Polish culture both domestically and internationally. She appeared in Paweł Pawlikowski’s film *Cold War* as a dancer with the ensemble „Mazurek”. She teaches folk dance technique workshops at the Polish Folklore Center „Karolin”. Author of articles on dance theory. Member of the Polish Choreological Forum. Recipient of the Joseph Conrad Fellowship for young humanists organized by the Institute de Republica (2021–2022).

**OSKAR ANESTEN** – journalist and documentary filmmaker at the SVT (national public broadcaster in Sweden). He specializes in arts and culture and has for more than twenty years worked with various titles such as *Kulturmytterna*, the daily arts and culture news programme, *Babel*, the weekly literature magazine and *Kobra*, the most high-end culture programme in Sweden for many years. He is currently a theatre critic and commissioning editor for arts and culture documentaries. Over the years he has produced three documentaries on the topic of Eurovision and politics: *När Franco stal Eurovision* (When Franco stole the Eurovision, 2018), *Schlager i kalla krigets skugga – Intervention Song Contest* (Intervention Song Contest – schlager in Cold War Europe, 2022) and *Schlagerkriget* (The Schlager War, 2024).

**MARCIN BOGUCKI** – graduate of cultural studies, art history and musicology, assistant professor at the University of Warsaw (Institute of Polish Culture, Section for Theatre and Performance). His research focuses on the cultural history of music and modern staging of opera. Recently he also develops projects on queer performance and Eurovision Song Contest. Member of the Polish Society for Theatre Research, secretary of the Society between 2016 and 2020, and member of the Organisation Générale des Amateurs de l’Eurovision.

**ELAD CARMEL** – intellectual historian and political theorist, currently as a Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. He is the author of *Anticlerical Legacies: The Deistic Reception of Thomas Hobbes, c. 1670–1740* (Manchester University Press, 2024). As a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh, in 2023, he organised the workshop ‘Love, Love, Peace, Peace’: Political and Queer Theory in the Eurovision Song Contest.

**KAREN FRICKER** – Adjunct Professor of Dramatic Arts at Brock University in Canada, editorial advisor of *Intermission Magazine*, and writes about theatre for *Toronto Star*. She has been researching the Eurovision Song Contest since 2005 and is co-editor with Milija Gluhovic of *Performing the “New” Europe: Identities, Feelings, and Politics in the Eurovision Song Contest* (Palgrave, 2013). She has covered the ESC for the CBC, RTÉ, BBC, the *Toronto Star*, and the *Irish Times*, amongst other outlets. Her monograph *The Original Stage Productions of Robert Lepage: Making Theatre Global* won the Canadian Association of Theatre Research’s Ann Saddlemyer Award for the best book published in 2021–22. With Charles R. Batson she is co-founder of the Circus and its Others research network, which held its fourth international conference in February 2024 in Bogotá, Colombia. She is involved in a number of practical and research projects in equitable theatre criticism including the free online course [YOUAREACRITIC.COM](http://YOUAREACRITIC.COM).

**HALSZKA FRYŹLEWICZ** – graduate of Russian philology (BA, Jagiellonian University, 2020), art history (BA, Jagiellonian University, 2022) and Russian in Specialized Translation (MA, Jagiellonian University, 2023). Currently working on her MA thesis (art history, Jagiellonian University). Her main research interests are concentrated on relationships between art and political propaganda, ekphrasis as intersemiotic translation and the language of art history specialised language in translation (in the Polish-Russian language pair). In addition to this, she is interested in how pop culture shapes society’s world view.

**VALERIA KORABLYOVA** – Assistant Professor at the Department of Russian and East European Studies and the Leader of the Research Centre „Ukraine in a Changing Europe” at the Institute of International Studies, Charles University. Her expertise covers post-Soviet transformations in Ukraine and the region, with the research focus on performative politics and entangled imperial/colonial legacies. Currently, Dr Korablyova is a co-PI in the Czech-French TANDEM project *A Subaltern That Sings: From Sound Resistance To Musical Diplomacy in Wartime Ukraine*. Her latest publications include: *Fighting Russia’s ‘Dark Power’: The ‘Bright Power’ of Enacted Values in Putin’s Europe. Russian Influence in European Democracy* (European Liberal Forum, 2023); *Why Is Ukraine Important? Challenging the colonial and Cold War legacies in European social sciences in Soziologie* (vol. 52, no. 3, 2023); and editing the special *Topos* issue *Transformations of Society and Academia in the Wake of the Russian War in Ukraine: Urgent Notes* (#2 2022).

**KATARZYNA LEŚNIEWSKA** – for her Eurovision is more than just a music competition – it’s a celebration of culture and community. She joined OGAE Poland just before attending her first Eurovision in Tel Aviv 2019, which led to involvement with the editorial team at *Eurowizja.org*. With a background in French and European studies, and experience working in Brussels, she is particularly interested in how Eurovision fosters European integration. As a sports lover, she sees Eurovision as a unique opportunity for artists to represent their country on a global stage, much like the Olympics. The contest allows her to connect with fellow fans and explore new cultures, something that she deeply value.

**LOUISA MARTIN-CHEVALIER** – associate professor at Sorbonne University, where she teaches music history and the analysis of twentieth-century works, as well as thematic courses such as Music and politics and Musical creation in Eastern Europe. Her current research provides keys to understanding contemporary artistic creation in Eastern Europe. She is co-director of the ‘Institutional and Social Frameworks’ research team at IReMus and coeditor of the journal *Filigrane. Musique, esthétique, science, société*. She is initiating a wideranging research programme to examine the impact of exile on women’s artistic creation, from the Ukrainian musical scene. She participates at several research program such as UkFeMM and TANDEM-CNRS-UK with Valeriya Korablyova *A Subaltern That Sings: From Sound Resistance to Musical Diplomacy in Wartime Ukraine*.

To see more about the TANDEM-CNRS-UK Project *A Subaltern That Sings: From Sound Resistance to Musical Diplomacy in Wartime Ukraine*: [HTTPS://CEFRES.CZ/EN/23972](https://cefres.cz/en/23972)

**WOJCIECH ARTUR PIETRUCHA** – Krakow-born, unserious art historian (BA obtained at Inter-faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities, Jagiellonian University, now the MA student of art history within the Interdisciplinary Individual Studies in the Humanities, University of Warsaw). Interested in modern architecture and urbanism (19th–21st centuries), iconography of architecture, the visual aspect of cults of personalities, critical heritage studies, the borders between the so-called ‘popular’ and ‘high’ culture... but also in the phenomena of Sanremo Music Festival and the Italian pop music industry, Eurovision, Polish sitcoms and many other topics that would be shameful for the Serious Art Historians to deal with.

**IVAN RAYKOFF** – Professor of Music at The New School in New York, where he teaches courses on music history, theory, film music, and

interdisciplinary arts. He studied piano at the Eastman School of Music and received his PhD from the University of California at San Diego. His books include *Dreams of Love: Playing the Romantic Pianist* (2014), which explores the concert pianist as a cultural icon. He co-edited *A Song for Europe: Popular Music and Politics in the Eurovision Song Contest* (2007), and his follow-up book on the contest's music is *Another Song for Europe: Music, Taste, and Values in the Eurovision Song Contest* (2021).

**ANTON SAIFULLAYEV** – PhD, Assistant Professor at the Centre for East European Studies, University of Warsaw; Member of the Belarus-Ukraine-Region Analytical Group. He is the author of the monograph *Postcolonial Histories. The case of a certain medieval period* (in Polish, Warsaw, PAN:2020) as well as numerous scholarly, policy papers and popular science articles. He has extensive teaching experience, teaching courses related to nation-building processes, intellectual life, and socio-cultural conditions in the post-Soviet space. Area of academic interests: postcolonial theory, decolonial philosophy, cultural anthropology of post-Soviet Eastern Europe, theory of historiography, Belarusian history of ideas.

**KONRAD SIERZPUTOWSKI** – music studies scholar, cultural critic, and researcher of contemporary LGBTQ+ culture. A graduate of the Faculty of Polish Studies at the Jagiellonian University. He is a recipient of the Foundation for Polish Science scholarship (2021), the Fulbright Junior Research Award at Columbia University Department of Music (2020), and the Kraków UNESCO City of Literature Award (2023). He was researching Polish queer humor at the Leibniz Center for Literary and Cultural Research in Berlin, since 2024 he works at the Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw. He is also a translator and dramaturge for *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* (Capitol Theater in Wrocław, 2022) and a playwright of *Hamlet* (Polish Theatre in Bydgoszcz, 2024).

**XAWERY STAŃCZYK** – assistant professor at the Department of Sociology of Art, Faculty of Economics and Sociology, University of Lodz. He obtained his M.A. in cultural studies (2009) as well as a Ph.D. (2015) from the Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw, and an M.A. in sociology (2012) from the Institute of Applied Social Sciences, University of Warsaw. In 2017–2019, he participated in the project *Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries* at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. His main fields of interest include youth culture, popular music, visual arts, social movements, and public spaces in socialist and post-socialist Eastern Europe.

**SZYMON STELLMASZYK** – master of law and European studies by education. He spent most of his professional career working in banking and

public administration, specializing in international relations.

The first Eurovision Song Contest he remembers from his childhood took place in 1984. While studying at the KU Leuven in Belgium, he heard radio broadcasts for the RTBF directly from ESC, something he wanted to do for his country. He achieved the goal in the years 2006–2012 by reporting Eurovision for the Polish Radio.

He has also collaborated with other media in the field of ESC, international relations and banking. A long-term Eurovision reporter for Radionews-letter.pl

In 2004, he delivered the founding documents of OGAE Poland to the network meeting during ESC in Istanbul. An acting Head of Press for the Polish Eurovision delegation three times.

For three years he taught classes at the Polish Academy of Sciences' postgraduate studies in cultural management, with a topic of the Eurovision Song Contest as a case study.

**MACIEJ SYCHOWIEC** – postdoctoral researcher at the SWPS University in Warsaw. He has previously worked at the Umeå University (Sweden), World Bank, and the Warsaw-based think tank WiseEuropa. He holds PhD in Political Science from the University of Gothenburg (2021). His research interests are focused on voting behavior, polarization, political economy, and quantitative methods. He has been a member of OGAE Poland since 2007, and between 2016 and 2019 editor-in-chief of the portal – Eurowizja.org. From the research standpoint, his Eurovision interests are focused on the better understanding of cross-national variation in the selection procedure, and looking at the participation in Eurovision as an effect of public good delivery.

**KONRAD SZCZĘSNY** – graduate of Polish Philology at the University of Warsaw and a journalist by profession. He has been interested in Eurovision since 2005, fascinated especially by its political, social and cultural relations and phenomena. He has been in OGAE Poland since 2014, president of the association since 2022. From a research perspective, he is interested mostly in the phenomenon of „Polish Eurovision thought” (his own definition), its twists and turns, and he does not believe that without a long-term strategy and a professional approach, Poland is able to win the competition or achieve broadly understood successes.

**OLIWIA SZELAĞ** – graduate of the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Her research interests are based, among others, on the bias of the ESC voting method, the politicization of music or cross-cultural communication through cultural events.

**ANGELIKA TRACZ** – law graduate at the University of Warsaw (2019). Currently she is preparing her master thesis at the Institute of Musicology of the University of Warsaw. She has published in *Ruch Muzyczny* and she is a member of the

editorial collective of the contemporary music magazine *Glissando*. She worked as a project manager for various cultural events during her cooperation with Adam Mickiewicz Institute (2019–2022).

**FLORIAN WAGNER** – part of the public history team in the House of Austrian History (hdgö), Vienna. He is co-editor of several scholarly anthologies, including book on Critical Theory, Dance in Film and *Eurovision Song Contest – Eine kleine Geschichte zwischen Körper, Geschlecht und Nation* (2015). In 2022 he co-published an essay collection on the history of television in Austria.

**MAJA WOJCIESZEK** – Scandinavian studies graduate with a specialization in Danish language. Editor of Eurowizja.org – the biggest Polish Eurovision-related website. Her research interests include Nordic children's media and Nordic countries in the Eurovision Song Contest. She joined OGAE in 2022 and followed it with a trip to Turin for her first Eurovision. A passionate member of a local rowing club.

**JONAS VANDERSCHUEREN** – Postdoctoral Researcher and Lecturer at Cultural Studies KU Leuven. They specialize in contemporary Polish culture, theatre, and politics, but also research and lecture on the broader CEE region. Currently they are coordinating the transnational research project *Attuning Bodies. Revisiting the uncanny in the tech, bio, and geosphere in the 21st century*, a collaboration between KU Leuven, Jagiellonian University, and the University of Tartu. Previously they were associated with the Polish Academy of Sciences – Institute of the Arts (PAN – IS) and the Department of Eastern European Cultures and Languages at Ghent University. Their latest monograph, *Queering Polishness in Polish Theatre since 2005: Dissenting Bodies*, will be published with Palgrave Macmillan in September 2024.

**DEAN VULETIC** – Luxembourg-based historian of contemporary Europe who specialises in the Eurovision Song Contest, also as a media commentator and public speaker. He is the author of the first-ever scholarly book on the history of Eurovision, *Postwar Europe and the Eurovision Song Contest*, which was released by Bloomsbury Publishing in 2018 and, in Italian, by Minimum Fax in 2022. The book is the result of a research project conducted under a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship at the University of Vienna, where Dean also led a project on the Eurovision Song Contest. Dean is the lecturer behind the world's first university course on Eurovision, which he began teaching at New York University and has since taught at the University of Vienna and Charles University in Prague. He holds a PhD in modern European history from Columbia University. Further information about Dean's work can be found on his website [WWW.DEANVULETIC.COM](http://WWW.DEANVULETIC.COM).