

Leszek Blanik



Blanik was an Olympic champion gymnast, who lends his name to one of the more complex moves on the vault: a double and a half front handspring in a pike position followed by a double back Tsukahara. It was the vault that brought him gold at the 2007 World Championships in Stuttgart and the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Blanik retired in 2010 and set up a training centre in Gdansk, his home since 1996. Asked what a gymnast feels before the vault, he once famously replied: "The last five minutes are a nightmare. Hundreds of thoughts stream through your head but one in particular: let's get this over with."

Jerzy Bralczyk



Bralczyk is a linguistic scholar specialising in the relationship between language and the media, advertising and politics. A professor since 2000, he is an eminent member of the Polish Language Council and Polish Linguistic Society, and also advises on ethics at the Warsaw Stock Exchange.

He became well known as host of television show *Mówi się* (So they say) and now presents a daily radio programme, *Słowo o słowie* (A word about the word). He has still found time to write several books – yet as his hobbies include collecting old manuals of proper speech and conduct, his work is his passion.

Krzysztof Cugowski



Cugowski has been the front man for rock band Budka Suflera right from the start, since 1969. The began performing cover versions of John Mayall, Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin and by 1975 the lead singer was a regular among popular music polls before a hiatus from 1978 to 1984.

His greatest success came with the release of *Nic nie boli, tak jak życie* (Nothing Hurts Like Life) in 1997. The album sold over a million copies and two years later Budka Suflera performed at New York's Carnegie Hall – the touchstone of musical success. His sons Piotr and Wojciech are members of a popular Polish band Bracia.

Anna Dymna



Dymna is an award-winning actress with over 250 film and theatre productions to her name. She is best known for her role of Ania Pawlak in a series of cult comedy movies and, with her striking appearance, was a popular muse for Jerzy Hoffman. She currently works at the Ludwik Solski Academy for the Dramatic Arts.

Dymna is feted for her charity work, earning recognition for her commitment to people with disabilities. She established *Mimo Wszystko* (Against the Odds) in 2003 to improve living conditions for poor and disabled people, and further promotes the cause as co-presenter on television show *Spotkajmy się* (Let's Meet).

Wojciech Gąsowski



Gąsowski is an award-winning singer, guitarist and composer. Two of his albums have gone platinum, 1988's *Party and Where are those parties now*. His 2010 release *I Wish You Love*, features covers of the likes of Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Dean Martin and Ella Fitzgerald.

Born in Warsaw, Gąsowski has collaborated with several Polish groups and also tried his hand at acting, starring in Janusz Morgenstern's *Two ribs of Adam*, including a well-known duet with Karin Stanek. A keen tennis player, he is a fixture at Poland's football games.

Tomasz Gollob



Gollob is the only rider to appear in every season of the Speedway Grand Prix circuit since the competition was launched in 1995. Eight times a winner in front of his home crowd, Gollob twice came second in the riders' championship before 2010 when, aged 39, he became Poland's second speedway world champion.

Eight times a Polish champion Gollob started out at hometown club Bydgoszcz and has represented teams in Gdansk, England and Sweden. Though individual international honours eluded him for a long time he was part of the Poland squad that won five World Cups in seven years between 2005 and 2011.

Robert Janowski



Janowski is the consummate polymath. A trained veterinary surgeon and pianist, he made his name as a rock star and now divides his time in various guises as a singer, actor, composer, poet, radio journalist and television presenter. For a younger generation he is the face of the Polish version of *Name that tune*.

He has won several television awards but retains residency at Warsaw's Drama Theatre. Indeed, amid his many deviations the stage has been an abiding passion. He made his name in the musical *Metro* in 1991 and has accrued acting credits on stage and screen ever since.

Marek Kamiński



Kamiński is an explorer, author and photographer, who in 1995 became the first person to reach the North and South Poles in a single year unassisted. He has led numerous expeditions to both Poles since, as well as climbing the likes of Kilimanjaro and Mount Vinson, Antarctica's highest peak.

Among Kamiński's other adventures he has sailed the Atlantic, journeyed to the source of the Amazon and made a 60-day crossing of the Gibson Desert in Australia. He has produced numerous documentaries and books along the way, started a charity and lives with his wife and daughter Pola in Sopot.

Robert Korzeniowski



Korzeniowski is a four-time Olympic race walking champion and former world record holder. He became the first Polish person to claim gold at three successive games when he defended his title in the 50km walk in Athens in 2004 – he was the first walker to do the 20km and 50km double in 2000.

Hailing from Lubaczow near the Ukrainian border, Korzeniowski also took 50km gold at three IAAF World Championships and was twice named Polish sportsman of the year. He retired in 2004 and has since turned attention to sports broadcasting, business training and organising nationwide running events.

Marek Krajewski



Krajewski is an award-winning Polish crime writer, best known for his series of six novels set in pre-war Wroclaw (which was, at the time, Breslau) with the policeman Eberhard Mock as the protagonist. The novels, starting with the 1999 work *Death in Breslau*, have since been translated into 18 languages.

A classics lecturer at the University of Wroclaw, Krajewski has won a litany of awards, both in the field of crime writing and for his depiction of Wroclaw. He has helped "restore the memory of the city and its former inhabitants" according to a tribute announced as he was given a 2006 President Award.

Tomasz Kuszczak



Kuszczak's career was stalling when, aged 22, he was released by Hertha BSC Berlin after four seasons without a single appearance. A move to West Bromwich Albion FC changed all that as injury to Chris Kirkland gave him his chance in 2005: the ex-WKS Śląsk Wrocław keeper has not looked back.

He joined Manchester United FC and marked his debut by saving a penalty in a 1-0 defeat by Arsenal FC. Largely utilised as an understudy to Edwin van der Sar, he has been in and around the side ever since though neither that nor a rich crop of Polish goalkeepers have curtailed his international career.

Aleksander Kwaśniewski



Kwaśniewski was Polish president between 1995 and 2005, a period that saw the country join NATO and the European Union. He worked tirelessly on reconciling the relationship with Germany and supporting close cooperation between the European Union and former Soviet states.

A former activist and newspaper editor, Kwaśniewski participated in the Round Table Talks in 1989 which initiated the fall of the USSR. Since 2008 he has chaired the European Council on Tolerance and Reconciliation, monitoring tolerance and interethnic relations throughout the continent.

Romuald Lipko



Lublin-born Lipko is a Polish rock institution. Bassist, song writer and later keyboard-player for Budka Suflera since the 1970s, he has collaborated with all the biggest names among Polish female vocalists: Anna Jantar, Urszula, Irena Jaročka, Zdzisława Sośnicka, Izabela Trojanowska and fellow Friend of EURO Maryla Rodowicz.

His greatest success perhaps came with Budka Suflera, however, and the release of *Nic nie boli, tak jak życie* (Nothing Hurts Like Life) in 1997. The album sold over a million copies and two years later the band performed at Carnegie Hall in New York – the touchstone of musical success.

Włodzimierz Lubański



Named Poland's Golden Player in 2004, Lubański's record of 48 strikes in 75 international appearances remains unsurpassed. For two decades he racked up goals in Poland, Belgium and France, adding a litany of honours to Olympic gold in 1972, when he captained the side to glory in Munich.

It all started at Górnik Zabrze, where Lubański won seven league titles and six Polish Cups. He spent seven seasons at KSC Lokeren OV before ending his career in France aged 38. He has since coached in Belgium and, helped by an ability to speak six languages, done television commentary on Polish television.

Bohdan Łazuka



Łazuka is a legendary figure of stage and screen in Poland. He started as a cabaret artist but migrated to theatre, film and even a sideline as a stand-up comic. Since making his debut in 1958 he has accrued over 50 movie acting credits and is familiar in Poland as the voice of Harry Potter's Barty Crouch.

A big football fan, for an earlier generation he is the man behind *Tajemnica Mundialu* (The Mystery of the World Cup), the song Łazuka performed to mark Poland's campaign at the 1982 finals. It has become a hymn for the national side, helped in large part by their run to the semi-finals in Spain.

Grzegorz Markowski



Markowski is the lead singer of Polish rock band Perfect, who rose to prominence during the 1980s. Their songs took on political significance in protest against the political situation in Poland at that time, with *Autobiografia* (Autobiography) becoming an informal anthem for the struggle.

He left the band for four years after 1989, working with other musicians and even running his own construction company before returning to Perfect. He has been with them ever since, while maintaining a productive sideline in movie scores and other ventures – such as a duet on an album for Winnie the Pooh.

Jan Mela



In 2004, a day after turning 16, Gdansk-born Jasiak Mela became the youngest person to reach both the North and South Poles, a feat made more remarkable by the fact he did so without two limbs. Two years earlier, sheltering from the rain in an electricity substation, he suffered a 15,000-volt shock.

After three months of treatment his left thigh and right forearm were amputated. He met Marek Kamiński, however, who set him his Polar challenge. Mela reached the North Pole aged 15 and then, eight months later, reached the South Pole. He has since taken part in expeditions to Kilimanjaro and Mount Elbrus.

Dariusz Michalczewski



Michalczewski is a former world boxing champion who in 2003 came within one fight of tying Rocky Marciano's all-time best for longest undefeated record. Based in Germany since defecting in 1988, the Gdansk-born light heavyweight had 48 wins from as many bouts before defeat by Julio César González.

Two years later Michalczewski lost his final fight but he remains one of the best pound-four-pound boxers of the past two decades. He also held the WBO cruiserweight belt before moving back down – his aggressive style, and resulting nickname, the Tiger, always remained the same though.

Józef Młynarczyk



Młynarczyk is a former Poland goalkeeper who rose to prominence at lowly Odra Opole in the late 1970s. From this unassuming base near the Czech border he broke into the national team in 1979, starring as Poland finished third at the 1982 FIFA World Cup and reached the last 16 four years later.

By then he was at FC Porto, adding two league winners' medals to the two he won at Widzew Łódź in 1981 and 1982. In 1987 he helped Porto to European Champion Clubs' Cup glory before retiring in 1989. He has since worked as goalkeeper coach at Porto, Widzew and within the Polish national-team setup.

Leszek Możdżer



A jazz pianist, composer and producer, Możdżer has gained acclaim from the United States to Chile, where he performed to a crowd of 15,000. The recording of his New York concert with Adam Makowicz went double platinum, as did an album with Lars Danielsson and Zohar Fresco.

A graduate of Gdansk's Stanisław Moniuszko Music Academy, he started in clarinetist Emil Kowalski's band before making his name with his 1994 album, Chopin Impressions. He has since recorded with many of the greats of Polish jazz and other musicians like Pink Floyd's Dave Gilmour.

Janina Ochojska



Head of Polish Humanitarian Action, Ochojska is an activist whose passion for helping others formed after she was struck by polio as a child and travelled to France for surgery. During convalescence she volunteered for EquiLibre, an organisation providing medical help and food for hospitals and centres for ill children in Poland.

In 1989 Ochojska helped establish the Polish wing of EquiLibre, overseeing aid relief in Sarajevo among other projects before, seeking greater autonomy, founding Polish Humanitarian Action in 1994. Her work has been acknowledged by awards at home and abroad. She published a book, *Heaven Is Other People*, in 2000.

Natalia Partyka



Partyka is a two-time Paralympic table tennis champion, one of only two athletes – along with South African swimmer Natalie du Toit – to compete at both Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2008. She was just 11 when she competed at the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney; four years later she won individual gold and team silver.

Born without a right hand and forearm, Partyka is noted for her silky stroke play and tactical acumen. She has won numerous accolades, including a Champion award for the best disabled Polish athlete at the 2009 Masters of Sport Gala and Personality of the Year at the 2009 Sports Gala in her native Gdansk.

Beata Pawlikowska



Pawlikowska is a travel writer and broadcaster, whose journeys have been documented in publications from National Geographic to Playboy. She has been prolific for over a decade, spending a couple of months each year on her travels, often to South America where she has documented the life of Amazonian Indians.

Over 20 of Pawlikowska's *Blonde in...* pieces have appeared in National Geographic, often illustrated with her own photographs and drawings. Since 2009 she has fronted her own travel show, *The Mysterious Blonde*, on television station TVP2 as well as hosting *The World According to a Blonde* on Radio ZET.

Antoni Piechniczek



Piechniczek is a former Poland international and coach who now works in the national senate. A reliable defender, he won three caps between 1967 and 1969 in a playing career that brought honours with Legia Warszawa and hometown club Ruch Chorzów but it is as a coach that he made his name.

Piechniczek guided Poland to third at the 1982 FIFA World Cup and then to the last 16 four years later. He returned to the helm in 1996/97 via spells as boss of Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates, though already his attention was turning to politics. He was elected to the senate in 2007.

Maryla Rodowicz



Maryla Rodowicz is an iconic singer, perhaps most famous for her 1973 number, *Małgośka* (Maggie). Her catalogue of 600 songs have sold over 15m copies and also includes Poland's official anthem for the 1974 FIFA World Cup, *Futbol*. She has attracted a multitude of awards throughout her 40-year career.

Rodowicz has taken to stages across the globe accompanied by her trademark acoustic guitar, and has become a familiar figure at festivals. She is also a respected actor, a regular on television, in musicals, operas and music shows. Her autobiography, *Long live the ball*, was published in 1992.

Magdalena Schejbal



The daughter of Jerzy Schejbal and Grażyna Krukówny, Magdalena was on television from an early age as the child star of *Ja i moje życie* (Me and my life). Yet she was shying away from the profession, studying sociology, before getting her break in the 2001 film *Głośniej od bomb* (Louder than bombs).

Schejbal has not looked back since, gaining widespread acclaim for her four-year stint in the successful television series, *Kryminalni* (Criminal Investigators). In 2006 she secured her first major role on the stage as Cordelia in Woli theatre's *King Leah* and still works in television, film and the theatre.

Andrzej Strelau



As a youngster it was handball in which Andrzej Strelau excelled, representing the Polish national team. His career with the ball at his feet was limited to a solitary top-flight match but his name will forever be linked with the beautiful game after a successful coaching career spanning three decades.

He is best known for assisting coach Kazimierz Górski during Polish football's golden age of the 1970s, a role he combined first with the U21s and then the helm of hometown club *Legia Warszawa*. After spells in Iceland, Greece and Legia again he was national-team coach himself between 1989 and 1993.

Jerzy Stuhr



Stuhr is an acclaimed actor who achieved renown working under prominent Polish directors like Andrzej Wajda, Agnieszka Holland, Juliusz Machulski and the great Krzysztof Kieślowski. As comfortable in comic roles as he is in dramatic pose, Stuhr is the voice of Donkey in the Polish version of *Shrek*.

Stuhr has gained international recognition, notably for his turn as a dim-witted barber in Kieślowski's *Three Colours: White*, and worked extensively in Italy. His autobiography, *Sickness of the Heart*, was published in 1992 and he is now a professor of theatre arts. The first play he directed, 1985's *Double Bass*, still runs.

Maciej Stuhr



Maciej Stuhr is an actor of stage and screen, and ever popular choice as host of major award ceremonies. He presented the European Film Awards Gala in Warsaw alongside French actress Sophie Marceau in 2006, a year after being named a Master of Polish Speech.

Yet it was as an actor that psychology graduate Stuhr made his name, ever since his role aged 13 in Krzysztof Kieślowski's 1988 television serial *Dekalog* (The Decalogue) alongside his father, actor Jerzy. He has had numerous parts since, most famously as Kuba Brenner in *Chłopaki nie płaczą* (Boys don't cry).

Włodzimierz Szaranowicz



Szaranowicz is the voice of modern Polish sport. A graduate of the Warsaw Academy of Physical Education, he played basketball in his youth before focusing on a career in sports journalism. His television debut came on the children's show *Teleranek*, where he succeeded legendary Polish sports commentator Thomas Hopfer.

In 2009 he was appointed head of sport for TVP, Poland's public service broadcaster. Commentating on skiing, athletics, boxing, football and his beloved basketball, he has become synonymous with a wide range of sports, proving his versatility in his involvement with 15 Summer and Winter Olympic Games.

Irena Szewińska



One of Poland's most acclaimed athletes, Szewińska won three Olympic gold medals over a career spanning over two decades. She is the only athlete (male or female) to hold world records in the 100m, 200m and 400m events and was also European long jump champion in 1966.

She participated in five Olympic Games, winning seven medals to add to her haul of 13 at the European Athletics Championships. Szewińska subsequently served as Polish Athletics Federation president (1997-2009) and has been a member of the International Olympic Committee since 1998.

Dariusz Szpakowski



Szpakowski is a sport journalist and commentator. He made his name on Polish Radio before making the switch to television in 1983: he has been a fixture on screen ever since. He has covered Olympic Games, UEFA European Championships and no fewer than eight FIFA World Cups.

In 2000 he won a footballing Oscar as best TV commentator but, a graduate of Warsaw's University of Physical Education, it was basketball that Szpakowski excelled at, playing for Legia Warszawa. He retains an interest in several sports, commentating on anything from hockey and canoeing to cycling.

Grażyna Torbicka



Torbicka is an award-winning television host and journalist. The face of TVP2's *I love cinema*, she is a popular master of ceremony but is just as likely the recipient as presenter with two Victors from academy awards prominent among her accolades. She is a three-time winner at the *Telekamera* national television awards.

FC Barcelona fan Torbicka was decorated with a Silver Gloria Arts Medal for Merits to Culture by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and received a Rose of Gala in a category entitled *Always Beautiful*. In 2007 she became artistic director at the film and arts festival *Two Shores (Dwa Brzegi)*.

Lech Wałęsa



A Nobel Peace Prize winner and the country's president from 1990 to 1995, much of Poland's recent history flows through Lech Wałęsa. An electrician at Gdansk shipyard, Wałęsa led the Solidarity trade union on strike in August 1980 demanding civil rights and labour reform from the Communist authorities.

Nine years later he was the leader of the opposition delegation and one of the signatories of the Round Table Talks which started the democratic system changes that spread throughout eastern and central Europe. In December 1990 Wałęsa became Poland's first democratically-elected president.

Tomasz Zelizewski



Zelizewski is drummer and manager of Polish rock band Budka Suflera. He joined in 1975 and along with bassist Romuald Lipko he is the principal song writer, penning tracks like *Cały mój zgiełk* (My whole uproar), *Jeden raz* (One time) and *Bez aplauzu* (No applause) and the entire 1995 release, *Noc* (Night).

The band's greatest success came with the release of *Nic nie boli, tak jak życie* (Nothing Hurts Like Life) in 1997. The album sold over a million copies and two years later they performed at New York's Carnegie Hall. He is now manager of *Bracia*, which includes two of Budka Suflera singer Krzysztof Cugowski's sons.

Władysław Żmuda



Only Lotthar Matthaus and Paolo Maldini have made more than Żmuda's 21 FIFA World Cup appearances, collected over the course of four consecutive finals between 1974 and 1986. He was part of the Poland team that won silver at the 1976 Olympics, as well finishing third at the 1974 and 1982 World Cups.

They were lofty achievements for a defender who started out at Motor Lublin and made his name at Śląsk Wrocław before spells in Italy and the United States. He moved into coaching, forming part of Poland's staff at the 2002 World Cup and, since 2009, he has been in charge of Poland U16s.

Tomasz Bagiński



Bagiński, from Białystok on the Belarusian border, is a self-taught illustrator, animator and director who won an Oscar nomination for his 2002 short film debut *Katedra* (The Cathedral). *Katedra* did earn top spot at SIGGRAPH, the world's largest festival of animation and special effects.

Two years later he became the first artist to win two main awards with *Sztuka Spadania* (Fallen Art). He created cinematics for *The Witcher* computer game, has produced all sci-fi author Jacek Dukaj's book covers and also takes credit for the distinctive UEFA EURO 2012 promo, *Move Your Imagination*.

Stanisław Bobkiewicz



Bobkiewicz is a well-known football activist and administrator. A former player, he was president of KSZO Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski (he remains honorary president) and has been in the Polish Football Federation (PZPN) review committee since the 1990s, first as secretary and then vice-president.

"I was involved in the UEFA EURO 2012 bidding process from 2003," said Bobkiewicz. "I worked alongside Polish tournament director Adam Olkiewicz to prepare all the documentation. No one believed Poland and Ukraine could stage the tournament but we were serious and always confident we would be successful."

Marcin Daniec



Daniec is a Polish satirist and comedian, who enjoyed his first big break in 1984 when, with Krzysztof Janusz, he formed stand-up duo *Takich Dwóch* (these two). The pair were television regulars, and after a stint with *Pod Egidą*, since 1994 the Wielopole-born, Krakow-educated artist has been performing solo.

He is best known for four stage incarnations: Mr Ignatius, Waldemar K, Highlander and the child-like Marcinek. Winner of four Telekamas at the national TV awards and four Charlie's Blue Bowler Hats at Gdansk's Festival of Good Humour, readers of *Tele Tydzień* named him Poland's greatest all-time satirist.

Krzysztof Dębski



Dębski is a composer, conductor and jazz violinist. He has written more than 60 symphonic and chamber music pieces, including an opera, two symphonies, religious works and nine instrumental concertos. He gained widespread recognition as leader and violinist of *String Connection*, performing across the world.

He cut back his international assignments in 1986 to focus on composing, and has produced the music for over 70 films, made eight platinum albums and wrote the score for the highest grossing movie in Polish history, 199's *With Fire and Sword*. He has composed for José Carreras and Nigel Kennedy among others.

Jerzy Dudek



Knurów-born Dudek is a former Polish international goalkeeper who enjoyed title-winning spells with Feyenoord and Real Madrid CF. Yet is a six-year spell with Liverpool FC that he is best associated, replacing Dutchman Sander Westerveld in 2001 and winning the League Cup in his first season.

He excelled against Manchester United FC in the final, and was similarly inspiring in Istanbul in 2005 as the Reds came from 3-0 down to beat AC Milan in the UEFA Champions League showpiece – saving two penalties in the shoot-out. Unseated by Pepe Reina, he made 12 appearances in four years at Madrid until 2011.

Janusz Gajos



One of Poland's best-known actors, Gajos has been a regular presence on the big screen since making his acting debut in 1964 – not bad considering he was thrice rejected by the National Film School. A year later he was cast as a tank crew member in iconic television series *Czterej pancerni i pies* (Four tankmen and a dog).

He largely moved into theatre, in Łódź and then Warsaw, while maintaining a sporadic film and TV career which has brought numerous awards; not least two Victors and a Super Victor. He gained international acclaim in 1994's *Three Colours: White* under the direction of Krzysztof Kieślowski as Mikołaj.

Robert Górski



A popular stand-up and entertainer, Warsaw-born Górski is best known for his work as chief writer and performer on the popular *Kabaret Moralnego Niepokoju* which has been running since 1996. He has written numerous screenplays and comedy shows, and since 2009 he has hosted *Kabaretowy Klub Dwójki* on TVP2.

Górski has also built up acting and dubbing credits. An established writer, he was a contributor to satirical magazine *Chichot* and with *Kabaret Moralnego Niepokoju* colleagues Mikołaj Cieślak and Przemysław Borkowski published a collection of poems, *Zeszyt w trzy linie* (Issue in three lines).

Olaf Lubaszenko



Lubaszenko is an award-winning actor, director and producer whose love of football was established when he played Olek Grom Jr in 1988 comedy *Piłkarski Poker* (Football Poker). Yet it is his role in as post office worker Tomek in Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Krótki film o miłości* (Short film about love) that made his name.

Only 20, Wrocław-born Lubaszenko has featured in numerous films and theatrical performances since. He is also a familiar face on television, either as policeman Stanisław Olbrycht in the series *Sfora* and *Falszerze – Powrót Sfora* or as host of a magazine programme featuring the lives of Polish ex-pats abroad.

Iwona Schymalla



The director of programming at national free-to-air channel TVP1, Schymalla began her career in educational shows before working her way up to a more familiar presence. She reported on papal visits in 1997, 1999, 2002 and 2006, and in July 2009 briefly became head of TVP1, reassuming the role in October 2010.

She kept busy in between, having a stint on morning show *Kawa czy herbata?* (Coffee or tea?), as well as fronting her own programme, *Profesjoniści* (Professionals). Co-host of religious weekly *Między ziemią a niebem* (Between heaven and earth), Schymalla even finds time for her own show on Radio VOX.

Krzysztof Skiba



Skiba is a Polish musician, song writer, satirist, essayist and actor. Lead vocalist in a multi-award winning rock band (whose albums have sold over 2m copies) he rose to prominence as co-founder of anarchist organisation *Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego* (Movement of Alternative Society).

Music and writing have consumed him since the end of the 1980s. His band have produced 15 LPs and played over 5,000 concerts, and has been a regular contributor to magazine *Wprost*. In 2005 his book, *Skibą w mur*, was published, and he is well known in France as many of his articles are translated by the Sorbonne.

Muniek Staszczuk



Staszczuk is lead singer of rock band T.Love, which he founded in 1982 with three high school friends as Teenage Love Alternative before the name was abbreviated. He is the only surviving member of that original lineup, and has also collaborated with a host of rock, reggae and punk artists.

A published writer and poet, in 2001 he received a Rainbow Laurels award "for constant pacifism and openness expressed in his artistic work." He has since picked up a *Mateusz* for "25 years of independence, everlasting energy, youthful enthusiasm, faithfulness to himself and his music."

Paweł Janas



As a defender (usually centre-back) Janas was capped 53 times and helped Poland to third place at the 1982 FIFA World Cup. The *Widzew Łódź*, *Legia Warszawa* and *AJ Auxerre* player went on to coach the capital club to two titles and the UEFA Champions League quarter-finals, and his country to the 2006 World Cup.

"I feel special emotions about the National Stadium in Warsaw," said Janas, who helped Poland to Olympic silver in 1992. "In the last match Poland played at the old venue [a 1984 UEFA European Championship qualifier against Finland] I scored an own goal. After that the stadium was closed for football."

Patrycja Markowska



Markowska is an award-winning pop singer. Born in London, she released her debut album aged 21 and has produced four more since with her fourth, *Świat się pomylił* (The world is wrong), going platinum. The following year she was named Artist of the Year at the Eska Music Awards.

Markowska is the daughter of another Friend of EURO, vocalist Grzegorz Markowski from the Polish band Perfect. "I see the new National Stadium in Warsaw every day as I live close by," she said. "I know the special feeling you get at live concerts so I can imagine the same emotions happening at a football match."

Ryszard Parulski



Warsaw-born Parulski was an Olympic medal-winning fencer and sports activist. A four-time Polish foil champion between 1959 and 1969, he won the individual foil at the 1961 World Fencing Championships and silver two years later when gold in the team epee brought consolation. He also finished second in the team foil.

The foil was always his strength, and in the Olympic Games he took team silver in Tokyo in 1964. Bronze followed four years later in Mexico City and after retiring Parulski, a lawyer by profession, set up the Gloria Victis Foundation for former sportspeople. He was Polish Olympic Committee president from 1990 to 1992.

Włodzimierz Smolarek



As a midfielder-cum-striker Smolarek was capped 60 times and helped Poland to third place at the 1982 FIFA World Cup. He represented Legia Warszawa, Eintracht Frankfurt, Feyenoord and FC Utrecht but never bettered his spell with Widzew Łódź, scoring 61 goals in 181 top-flight appearances and winning two titles.

Regarded as one of Poland's greatest players and much loved for his fighting spirit, he coached Feyenoord's youth sides after retiring before taking on a youth development role with the Polish Football Federation (PZPN). He is the father of current Polish international Euzebiusz Smolarek.

Leszek Rylski



Rylski served as general secretary of the Polish Football Federation (PZPN) between 1959 and 1972, and his work with UEFA was recognised when he was admitted to the UEFA Order of Merit in Ruby in 2009. One of the architects of the UEFA European Championship, he helped draft the first tournament regulations.

Now in his 90s Rylski, who was a UEFA Executive Committee member from 1956 to 1968, still works for the PZPN, taking care of the federation's memorabilia and archives. It means he has now been in the game for over seven decades, following a playing career with KS Błysk and RKS Marymont Warszawa.