

VISIT

THE CITIZENS' GARDEN



Citizens' Garden Poets for Democracy

Thursday 30 May 2024

18.00 – 20.30

Moderator:



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Philip Meersman

Philip is a Brussels based multilingual poet, curator, moderator, and PhD candidate at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp. He has performed at some of the world's most renowned poetry festivals and is the initiator and co-founder of the ivzw World Poetry Slam Organization, a worldwide network of national slam competitions. He coordinates the itinerant European & World Championships Poetry Slam.

Music:



Abigaille Muaca Vungu, vocals

Abigaille, is a singer-songwriter from Antwerp, Belgium. At a young age, she discovered her love for music and was inspired by icons such as Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, and Lauryn Hill. With her powerful voice and emotional interpretation of songs, she manages to touch her listeners deeply and leave an unforgettable impression. Her musical style is best described as a blend of R&B, gospel, jazz, and soul, combining elements from these genres to create her own unique sound.

Yassine Azaiez, keyboard

Yassine is a versatile artist, known as a pianist, composer, and audio-visual technician at the European Parliament. With a diverse background, he has composed music for both films and series. His musical style is a captivating blend of classical, jazz, contemporary, minimalist, atmospheric and world music elements. Often seen collaborating with poets on stage, he intertwines his melodies with the evocative world of poetry. Inspired by luminaries such as Ludovico Einaudi, Anouar Brahem, Dhafer Youssef, and the Esbjörn Svensson Trio, his work resonates with depth and cultural richness.

EU Poets:



Alison Mooney, European Parliament (Ireland)

Alison is an author, storyteller and dancer who has lived in France, Ireland, Germany, California and Belgium. She won the 2020 Cicero Speechwriter prize for the best motivational speech, from the Professional Speechwriters Association in the USA. Currently she is working as speechwriter for the President of the European Parliament President Roberta Metsola. In 2023, Alison successfully published her first collection of multilingual poetry entitled 'Balance – in mind, in body, in soul.'



© 2024, Silvia Polidori

Silvia Polidori, European Parliament (Italy)

Silvia was born in L'Aquila (Italy), she is a lawyer working for the European Parliament. She has been writing poetry since she was a child. Her poems have been published in different languages and she has won several prizes. Silvia likes to combine her literary work with other artistic genres such as music, painting, sculpture and even gastronomy.



Ben Ray, European Commission (Wales, United Kingdom)

Ben is currently speechwriter for Janez Lenarčič, Commissioner for Crisis Management at DG ECHO, European Commission. He is a skilled public speaker and an award-winning poet and reviewer. His poetry has been published in a wide range of anthologies, journals and websites. Beside his own literary creations he gives workshops on how to better communicate.

European Poetry Slam Champions:



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Marie Darah, 2021 European Champion (Belgium - FR)

Marie was born in Charleroi in 1989 and settled in Brussels to pursue her studies of the art of speech at the Conservatory. As a multidisciplinary artist, she works as a poet, actress, author, slammer and a storyteller. She also practices lyrical singing and dance. She fights against inequalities and considers herself gender fluid.

Elif Duygu, 2022 Austrian Champion (Austria)

Elif was born in Istanbul in 1998 and has lived in Vienna since the age of two. Since 2018, she is a regular slammer on Austrian as well as international stages. She writes her texts in German, Turkish and English and so far, has performed in Austria, Hungary, Luxembourg and Germany. Elif can already look back on numerous publications in anthologies and literary magazines.

Lisette Ma Neza, 2017 Belgian Runner Up and Audience Award Winner (Belgium - NL)

Lisette was born in the Netherlands in 1998 as the daughter of refugees from Rwanda. She studied film in Brussels and has been chosen as Brussels' first ever city poet, an honorary position which she will hold from March 2024 for two years. She speaks Dutch, Kinyarwanda and English, understanding French and loving Portuguese.

Péter Molnár, 2018 European Champion (Hungary)

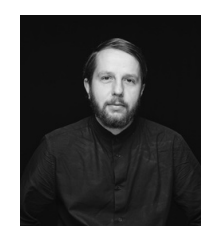
Peter is a founder of Fidesz and a former member of the Hungarian Parliament (1990-1998). He is one of the most active Hungarian slam poets, a writer, voluntary radio host, participatory theatre director and activist. He also is a free speech scholar and since 2010 performs in poetry slams in English and Hungarian. He is the founder and editor in chief of the Underground Slam Academy, a knowledge-based, socially engaged slam space.

Dani Orviz, 2012 first European Champion (Spain)

Dani was born in Asturias, Northern Spain, in 1976. He is a poet, performer, video artist and caricaturist. As an experienced communicator, he gives workshops up to international level and as a talented slammer he has won several prizes. He has published poetry collections and performed in a variety of festivals.

Joonas Veelmaa, 2023 European Champion (Estonia)

Joonas now aged 35 recently won the European Championship in Antwerp in January. He started writing poetry in primary school. Today, he earns his living in advertising, which he sees an advantage as in this area he learned how to sell his ideas well. No surprise that he considers himself as a professional poet and the copywriting as his hobby! In 2022, he published his first poetry collection, a book that is humorous and sad at the same time.



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