

the Mad Man and the Nun

KENNEDY LAB THEATRE

JUNE 7, 8, 9, 10, 1973

THE MADMAN AND THE NUN

OR THERE IS NOTHING BAD WHICH
COULD NOT TURN INTO SOMETHING WORSE

Dedicated to all the madmen of
the world (*y compris* other planets
of our system and also planets of
other suns in the Milky Way and of
other constellations) and to
Jan Mieczyslawski.

By Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz
Translated by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer
Directed by David Johnson
Technical direction by Jim Takahashi
Designed by Alan Reihl
Lighting design by Ken Rohde
Production advisor: Dr. Bernard Dukore

CAST (in order of appearance)

Alexander Walpurg	Earll Kingston
Sister Anna	Jody Mishan
Dr. Jan Bidello	Jip Pruden
Sister Barbara	Holly Lindley
Dr. Ephraim Grun	Paul Cravath
Alfred	Doug Green
Paphnutius	Bob Arterburn
Debris of Metaphysical Transcendence	Jim Takahashi
Professor Ernest Walldorff	Ghulam Sarwar

CREW

Assistant to the director and stage manager ...	Steve Feher
Set Construction	Jim Takahashi
Ken Rohde, Garrett Cho, Mark Buchanan, Alan Reihl	
Leigh Kim, Earll Kingston, Steve Feher, Tom Amarino	
Kitty Heacox, David Cachola, Alan Miller, Mel Gionson	
Buck Buxton, Daryl Kei Kaneshiro	
Lights.....	Ken Rohde, Sandy Riford
Sound	Daryl Kei Kaneshiro, Jip Pruden, Jim Takahashi
Make-up	Brian Furer, Holly Lindley
Costumes	Linda Letta
Suwanna Johnson, Holly Olsen, Sandra Finney	
David Johnson, Maryanne Ficca	
Publicity	Kitty Heacox, Jemm Kerr, Rap Reiplinger

The action takes place in a cell for raving maniacs in the lunatic asylum, at the Sign of the Jugged Hare.

~~There will be ^{No.} ~~no seven minute~~ intermission ~~at the end of~~
~~Act I.~~~~

The following program note was written especially for the Honolulu production of *THE MADMAN AND THE NUN* by Daniel C. Gerould. Mr. Gerould has translated *THE MADMAN AND THE NUN* and many other plays by Witkiewicz into English.

"Better to end in beautiful madness than in gray, boring banality and stagnation."

---Witkacy

WHO IS MAD ?

Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz

February 24, 1885 - September 18, 1939

Witkiewicz, or Witkacy as he called himself, is Poland's outstanding avant-garde artist in the period between the two world wars. Painter-dramatist-novelist-esthetician-philosopher, Witkacy attempted to create a total system capable of dealing with man's position in the universe and he has left an impressive body of work in all the fields which he assayed. However, recognition and understanding constantly eluded him. Witkacy has always been a source of controversy, both in his lifetime and after, and the story of his fortunes has proved as fantastic as any of his plays.

Most of his contemporaries considered Witkacy a drug addict, sex fiend and madman. When his first play to be performed, *Tumor Brainiowicz*, reached the stage in 1921, it was called "the ravings of a syphilitic in the last stages of creeping paralysis," and "an unnatural abortion that should be kept in alcohol and studied by psychopaths." An attempt to revive the play in 1926 led to a revolt by the actors, who refused to appear in such ridiculous nonsense. Of another play, a critic wrote, "The whole thing creates the same effect as being whacked on the head with castanets for several hours without interruption. In the second act the spectator has the feeling the author is a madman. After the third act, he's sure of it."

Assailed as a "madman" throughout his career, Witkacy fought an endless, losing battle with the critics, who made his life miserable. The unrelenting hostility and lack of acceptance never caused Witkacy to give up, but he became deeply discouraged and felt a growing sense of loneliness. He

once said, "There's a whole bunch of fatheads who try to convince people that I'm just playing around and fooling people, and that later on I'm going to say it was just a joke and start laughing. ... There are also those strange half-wits who, on the basis of the deformation in my plays, consider that it's not suitable to treat me seriously... I am and have been completely isolated and alone.

Before the literary establishment categorized him as a lunatic, Witkacy was sympathetically concerned with madness and the question of who in fact is mad in a world gone mad. In 1913 he himself had felt, during a prolonged period of acute depression, that he might be a madman: "I put out the light and I experienced a monstrous feeling, the feeling that I was going mad---this time not figuratively, but really." At this point, Witkacy went to the first Polish Freudian psychoanalyst, Dr. Karol Beaurain for treatment. Here began his life-long interest in psychoanalysis and admiration for Freud, a number of years before André Breton and the French surrealists discovered the Viennese master. Witkacy's apparent mockery of psychoanalysis in The Madman and the Nun is only characteristic of his complex, ironic treatment of all his own cherished beliefs. Dedicated to "all the madmen of the world," The Madman and the Nun is a protest against social institutions that limit and confine the individual. For Witkacy, modern artists must become more deranged because of their inability to quench their metaphysical thirst, except in art. In the regulated mass society of the future, art becomes insanity, and there are only two places left for metaphysical individuals: prison or the insane asylum.

Witkacy committed suicide shortly after the Nazis and Communists invaded Poland. His posthumous artistic recognition has exceeded all expectations. In post-war Poland, his plays had to battle the vagaries of changing ideologies as mysterious and capricious as those depicted in his plays. Pronounced non-existent during the period of socialist realism (1948-1955), Witkacy was resurrected immediately thereafter as the precursor of the Theatre of the Absurd and as the father of modern Polish drama. On one of his self-portraits, painted in 1931, he wrote: "for the posthumous exhibition in 1955," predicting with almost perfect accuracy his discovery after the thaw.

--- New York City, February 1, 1973