

Poetry, Madness and the Erotic

The Powszechny Theater in Warsaw is staging *The Madman and the Nun*, written by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, one of Poland's greatest 20th century writers and playwrights.

Witkiewicz, also known by the sobriquet Witkacy, was a versatile artist, painter, photographer and philosopher.

The Madman and the Nun, whose Polish title is *Wariat i zakonnica*, is one of his most frequently staged plays. Portraying an alienated artist, it delivers a study of an individual misunderstood by society. The titular characters meet in an asylum. The Madman, Mieczysław Walpurg (played by Jacek Beler), has been locked up because of his poems, while Sister Anna (Anna Moskal) has devoted herself to helping mentally ill patients in order to forget about an unrequited love. The two hope to be cured by a novel method called psychoanalysis.

Thrown into the grotesque environment of a madhouse, the protagonists struggle to retain their individuality in a topsyturvy microcosm where the doctors are madder than their patients and where reality mixes with dreams and eroticism with religion. After death, there is revival and new life.

Upcoming performances:

April 11, 12 and 13, 7 p.m.

April 14, 5 p.m.

Powszechny Theater in Warsaw

20 Jana Zamoyskiego St.