

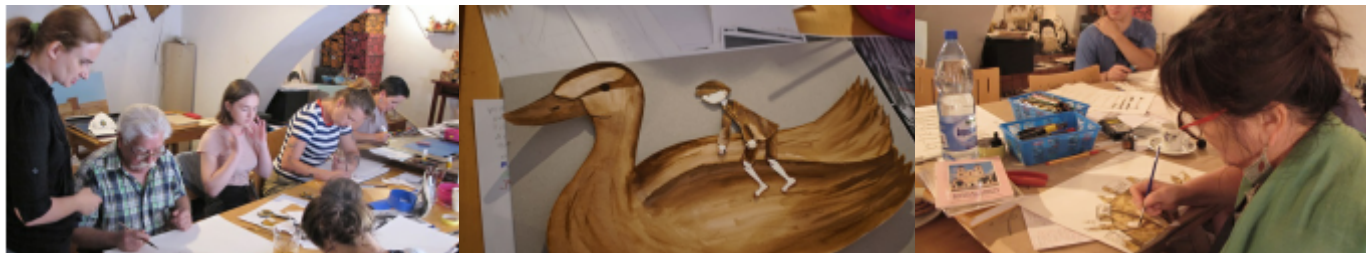
NEWS FROM BORDERLAND

DECEMBER 2018

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CARMEN PERPETUUM OF THE KLEZMER ORCHESTRA OF THE SEJNY THEATRE

NOTES FROM KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI



The Klezmer Orchestra of the Sejny Theatre has already been playing for over twenty years. And only now comes the time for their first original album. Earlier recordings they produced with their Masters. Why so late, and in spite of the encouragement of their audiences and publishers? They did not want to, shrugging their shoulders at market laws, they had more important things to do... They evaded the issue of the final work, one that would finalize the process of creation and research, always the most important features of their work.

Instead of encouraging their fans to buy records, they preferred to invite them to musical feasts of song and dance or jam sessions after concerts; they preferred to build a space of an interpersonal meeting or to journey with the living music to places where it was welcome. You didn't need to convince them much and they would agree to play in a small synagogue or a small village community centre in the opposite corner of Poland. And it all started with the wedding music to the performance of Szymon Anski's Dybbuk. And then they played at real weddings, including the tzaddik of Bobowa, at the Jubilee of the Sejny Hospital and on the platform of the railway station in Suwałki at the farewell of the rabbi and cantor Max Furmanski, born before the war in Sejny. It happened that they played in front of an audience of several thousand in the Great Synagogue of Budapest or in Szeroka Street, at the opening the final concert of the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow. With Mikołaj Trzaska they recorded the score to The Volhynia. The greatest musicians from around the world played with them. The music written of them by eminent composers of contemporary music premièred in the rooms of the Sejny Jazz Cooperative. Starting from New Orleans jazz to minimalism and experimental music.

The audiences often get the impression that they listen to people from all over Poland. They find it hard to believe that such talented people can come from one small town and the surrounding villages. But each place, just like each human being, hides a genius within and it just takes a way to bring it to the light. It is amazing how Wojciech Szroeder with the help of his co-workers is able to awaken the spiritual and creative energy in people who may have not necessarily managed to pass exams to music schools.



Perhaps, it is just due to this overcoming of one's own weaknesses and environmental conditioning, this chance that opens before them, their extraordinary application, but also a life ethos, that a separate quality is born, one that can be later heard in the music of the Orchestra. Many things, usually difficult to notice by outside observers, contribute to the unique sound of the Orchestra. Most remarkable is the way they practice music, which becomes most intensive in the summer. July and August each year, they enter into some kind of trance. On weekdays, they give three big concerts in the White Synagogue, on Sunday one chamber concert at the Miłosz Manor with a première concert in the Sejny Jazz Cooperative on Fridays. Add to it, long, permanent, dragging late into the night rehearsals preceding the première performances. They must be in a kind of alternative state of mind. And they meet outstanding music personalities, the music masters we invite each year from all around the world. All this creates a special creative atmosphere, which undoubtedly later finds its reflection in their music.

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THE FILM COLLECTION OF
BORDERLAND FAIRY TALES

BY BOŽENA SZROEDER



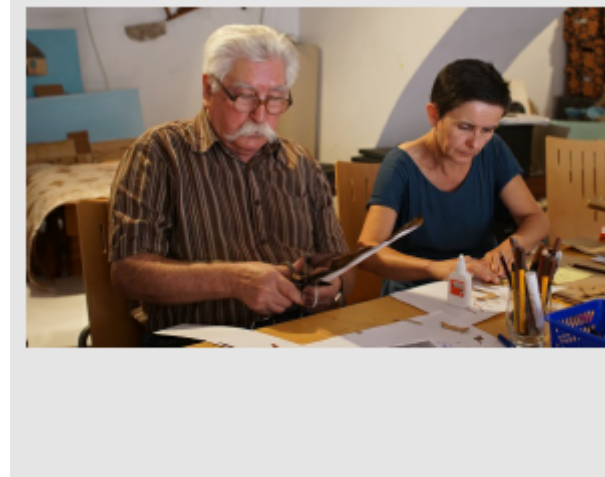
This summer we have worked on the already sixth edition of the Borderland Fairy Tales dedicated to the persons connected with Sejny. Over thirty participants of all ages worked during two intensive workshop cycles. The originator of the entire Collection, Bożena Szroeder, supervised the whole project. She invited for cooperation the directors: Daria Kopiec and Joanna Polak who have been associated with Sejny collections from the very beginning, whereas artistic consultants for the participants were two other artists: Ola Kotarska and Dominika Ludwig. The fruit of the work are six stop-motion animations which contributed to one film. All of them were made using the same techniques: cut-outs and brown ink, sepia-toned paintings.



Bożena Szroeder remembers that there were many outstanding figures worth mentioning. So the materials were divided into small chapter-tales. The collection begins with a witty animation dealing with the phenomenon of Sejny, the place where various languages resound and mix, nature enters urban space: doves take possession of the attic of the White Synagogue, and a stork visits the Basilica.

Other parts feature the founders of the town, its poets, priests, outstanding visitors and former inhabitants. Among those there will be: Moris Rosenfeld, Juozas Laukaitis, Arnold Markowitz and Józef Piłsudski.

Working on the town narratives evoked also emotions among the workshop participants. The oldest of them, 75-year-old Mr. Mieczysław Mieczkowski, tells the story of the life of Moris Rosenfeld, a Jewish poet born in Sejny, one of the precursors of poetry written in Yiddish who emigrated to the United States, where he wrote poems about workers' lives.



Mieczysław, who himself worked for many years in a factory, during the workshops discovered his so far hidden artistic talents. - There is a lot to do - he says. - We cut and paint a lot, you need to prepare as many as 24 frames per second. I have never had any contact with drawing before, but it turned out that I feel comfortable in large formats. They say that they won't let me go away from here.

"MEKASPOET"

BY KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI

ESSAY WAS PUBLISHED IN THE BROOKLYN RAIL; 2018 -
LITERARY NONFICTION EDITED BY VYT BAKAITIS.

You can hardly draw a borderline between Jonas Mekas and poetry. It probably ceased to exist already when as a boy he used to graze cows in the fields around Semeniškiai, the place that was meant to become part of the new Lithuania in the aftermath of World War I. It was not yet there on the map when he was running away from his past, leaving behind the black hole torn by war and European totalitarianisms. It was not yet there when he was returning to his childhood while learning to live in New York, with Bolex camera in hand, in constant search for a new. Separation of life from poetry meant, in his case, being cut off from reality, and eventually exile—incomparably more dangerous than being expelled from one's native country, being a stateless wanderer, émigré or human loneliness in a metropolis. It meant getting out of the mouth of Leviathan who could cling to reality. Having experienced Hell, he bit into life, was born again to remain faithful to the poet inside. Jonas Mekas does not compose poems, he does not set them on paper. He neither invents nor encloses words in refined formal structures. He is a poet, not a creator of poetry.

READING THE OTHER

THIRD SUMMER SYMPOSIUM IN KRASNOGRUDA



Third edition of Symposium **READING THE OTHER** took place in Krasnogruda on July 2018. The cycle was titled **KOŁAKOWSKI IS READING**. Devil and Jesus - Utopia and Totalitarianism - 1968 and Responsibility. Dialogues were conducted by: Krzysztof Czyżewski, Marci Shore, Timothy Snyder.

This time our guide in “Reading the Other” was Leszek Kołakowski, one of the most outstanding philosophers of the twentieth century. The guides of his journey of meditation through the cognition of reality were the priest and the jester. The affection of his readers has been clearly been leaning towards the jester, both, at the time when his famous essay under the title was published, i.e the era of the communist regime, and today, when we witness the recurrence of totalitarian ideologies and creation of new ones.



Yet, we should not forget that if we succumbed to the jester primacy in our thinking and attitudes, we would distort the philosopher's message. "Unlike the priest, the jester cannot himself provide foundations, all he can do is to undermine those already in existence." [194] Marci Shore whom I quoted here, followed the development of Kołakowski's reflection on recognition of utopia and his growing concern for the costs incurred by its application, emphasizes that the author of the essay on The Spirit of Revolution combines it with his conviction that "an answer to lack of ability should not be a fatalist appeasement of all evils. Even though there are no laws of history that would guarantee progress, it does not mean, however, that there are no better worlds than this one.

[MACIEJ ROBERT "A MIRACLE FROM THE INSIDE" IN BIMONTHLY NEW EASTERN EUROPE - ISSUE 6/2018 - NOVEMBER-DECEMBER.](#)

Review of the book - Josef Skvorecky "All The Bright Young Men and Women: A Personal History Of Czech Film.





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